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AID IN FRAGILE STATES:

IMPROVING OUR RESPONSE TO GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN CRISES

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Introduction and Moderator:

ELIZABETH FERRIS
Senior Fellow and Co-Director, Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement
The Brookings Institution

Featured Speaker:

KRISTALINA GEORGIEVA
EU Commissioner for International Cooperation,
Humanitarian Aid, and Crisis Response

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. FERRIS: Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to Brookings. My name is Beth Ferris. I'm a senior fellow here at Brookings and co-director of the Brookings-LSE Project on Internal Displacement. We're delighted to welcome you to this session on "Aid in Fragile States: Improving Our Response to Global Humanitarian Crises," with EU Commissioner Kristalina Georgieva. And this program is jointly organized with Brookings Center for the U.S. and Europe and is part of the EU Rendezvous series.

You know, if you read the headlines in the newspapers or even turn on the television, you're immediately confronted with a series of mega crises in the situation: in Syria and the surrounding countries; Central African Republic, where the level of intra-communal violence is escalating and is horrifying; South Sudan, where people are taking shelter in U.N. peacekeeping operations centers. And on top of that you've still got recovery from Typhoon Haiyan and even from Haiti. The number of crises in the world seems very reminiscent actually of the early 1990s. It's the only time I can remember where there were this many mega crises that were affecting the world.

The whole humanitarian system seems to be overstretched. People are really scrambling for money and staff and trying to figure out best ways of responding. And, you know, in this system these have consequences for donors and for people on the ground and for local NGOs and for international organizations and regional organizations. And, you know, lots of crises, lots of challenges, lots of tensions.

And we're just delighted to have Kristalina Georgieva with us today. She has long experience working with the World Bank; worked there from 1993 to 2010, with various responsibilities, beginning with environmental issues and then working in Russia and then working on sustainable development issues here from Washington. And since

2010, she's been the European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid, and Crisis Response. And so she's going to make some opening remarks and, hopefully, they will provoke lots of questions and discussion, and then we'll have a conversation. So we've billed this as a conversation with Kristalina to hear some of her perspectives when she travels everywhere. And I don't know if you follow her on Twitter, but you're certainly very actively engaged in every region of the world. So you're most welcome and welcome to Brookings.

MS. GEORGIEVA: Thank you very much. Good evening to all. Thank you for this introduction and, more than anything else, for the opportunity to be here in Brookings.

It is for the humanitarian community indeed a time that we can hardly remember in recent decades of more mega catastrophes at the same time and many humanitarian crises of significant dimension being under the radar screen because of this overwhelming impact of Syria, South Sudan, Central African Republic. When you pause and you think -- how many of you are from the humanitarian community here? Great, brothers and sisters. Great to be with you.

When you pause and think, the humanitarians are like the canary in the mine. We feel trouble before the rest of the world is to feel it. And what we feel these days is that for sure the world is becoming more fragile and the drivers of fragility are here to stay. One is climate change, unquestionably leading to more frequent, more devastating disasters. Here in Washington you enjoyed a remarkable winter whereas we in Brussels surprisingly had a lot of sunshine. But that is not what is dramatic. It is dramatic when people die and when people's livelihoods are wiped out by disasters, and that is becoming more frequent. Just think of the Sahel. In 7 years, between 2005 and 2012, the Sahel experienced three overwhelming droughts that normally come every 10

to 15 years. And now in 2014, we are worried that we might be stepping into yet another cycle of hunger.

Secondly, we see the impact of extremism of radicalization in more profoundly complex conflicts. And what is also here to stay, unfortunately, at least in the observable future, is that these conflicts are no more fights between two armies under international fighting -- under the law of war, respecting international humanitarian law. They're more and more asymmetric in which some of the parties of the conflict couldn't care less about international law of any kind. They're actually very happy to violate it and this is their main purpose.

We then face very rapid population growth in parts of the world that least can afford to sustain it. The five top population growth countries are in the Sahel and in the Horn of Africa. And when you think of Niger and Chad and Somalia, obviously the population growth there is not simply, you know, a little bit more difficult factor in life. It actually fits straight into more people being affected when a crisis hits.

And last but not least, we have weak governance exactly in the places that are on the front line of these factors of fragility. Since we are here for the World Bank meetings, I will use the World Bank classification that says 35 countries are fragile states. Of them, 30 are low-income countries, 2 are blend countries, and 3 are middle-income countries: Iraq, Libya, and Syria. And the vast majority of these 35 fragile states are the places where humanitarians work and where the caseload is expanding.

You mentioned we have this four mega emergencies, three of them are conflicts hitting at the same time. And if you look at each one of them, more likely it would be more trouble down the road. In other words, we have not yet seen the worst of it.

Syria, the magnitude of the crisis continues to expand. Inside Syria

close to 10 million people need humanitarian assistance. Of them, 6.5 million are internally displaced. And of those who need assistance, 3-/2 million live in places where it is very difficult to deliver it; 220,000 people in little enclaves, the so-called besieged areas, where neither help can get in nor people can get out. And for the neighborhood, we are I think this week crossing the 2.7 million refugees, which would make Syria the largest refugee crisis. It was Afghanistan -- maybe still is Afghanistan with 2.7 million -- and Syria's going to exceed this number.

In terms of longevity of the Syria crisis I'm going to run a little test. How many of you think that the Syria crisis will end this year, 2014? Raise your hand. 2014. Okay.

How many of you think it will be 2015 when the crisis will end? Thank you.

How many think it will be 2016? Okay.

And how many of you think it will be five, six, seven years, more like the Lebanese crisis? Okay.

That, I think, is a very sober, but very real sentiment that is based on what we see, or rather not see, in terms of progress in peace talks. And also, in terms of the composition of the region, the neighbors, the big powers, and how they relate to ending this conflict.

And the third aspect of the Syria crisis is the impact it has on the region, and it is devastating. Of course, first the refugees, and the refugees are not just a burden per se themselves on the neighboring countries. They are also changing the economics profoundly, the economics of the neighboring countries, because Syrians are willing to work for very little, for almost nothing, and, by doing so, they depress wages. And they are certainly pushing food prices and rent up. So for the Lebanese, for the Jordanians,

even in Turkey, to a lesser degree in Kurdish Iraq, the present of refugees is a major destabilizing factor economically, but also by the virtue of arms moving across borders as well. And it is a risk for us in Europe and it is a risk for the broader world.

When we look at Syria and the neighborhood you would hear from people from the region using one very straightforward definition. They say this is a proxy war. It is a proxy war between Shia and Sunni. And then you go to Iraq, and what you see there is a war between Shia and Sunni. And then you talk to people in Lebanon, they worry tremendously that will turn into a war on their territory, as well. Even Jordan is very worried that the flames of what is going on in Syria would cross borders.

And despite all this, it is so excruciatingly difficult to get the international community to take this crisis seriously and stay focused on it with a power sufficient to actually make those of you who voted for 2015 to be the majority and not only one.

Central African Republic, forgotten crisis. Forgotten. We all have a debt to pay to the Central African Republic because we have allowed it to be off the radar screen for decades. And I put myself in this category because we would take stock of crises and we would talk about Darfur and we would talk about Yemen and we would talk about certainly Syria, and we would have on our list Central African Republic, but by the time we get to the Central African Republic we run out of time.

We were there. Actually, for fairness to my colleagues, we were there when very few were, but we have not paid sufficient attention until -- for me that was until not this December, last December, we had to evacuate our staff and other humanitarians from the Central African Republic. And at the time, I asked for a brief. People brought it to me. And so I'm reading it and it says: population 4.6 million; conflict-effected population 4.6 million. And I said, well, no, but that's wrong, you know. It cannot be. That's a mistake. People said no, no, this is how it is. The country's really impacted by --

the conflict is really now spreading, impacting everybody.

And then I went in July with Valerie Amos and it was horrifying to see how much a country that has no reason to be poor because they enjoy very rich ecology, the environment is able to feed everybody, and yet you get outside of Bangui and there is no state. There is no state. There is no doctors, no police, no mayors, nothing. Nothing.

We went to Kaga Bandoro then, a 26,000 little city -- well, village. And so we went in the local hospital and the hospital was stripped from everything: no medicine, no electricity, not even mattresses on the beds, no food. There was this one woman who gave birth in the hospital, so I'm asking her how she feels. And normally, you just gave birth, people would say I'm tired, I'm happy. She said I'm hungry. And that was so appalling, actually I sent my colleagues to buy food and bring it to the hospital. And the three women that were the midwives, not abandoning their patients -- they haven't seen salaries in more than half a year -- they were hungry.

And that total disintegration of the state, of course, meant two things: one, that local warlords are taking over and, two, trouble, and we have seen the trouble. We were worried at that time, in July, we were worried that there would be religious clashes. Why? Because in a country that is primarily Christian, it was Muslims in the capital, Seleka, Muslims who were running the country. And they were taking over through looting everything they can put their hands on. They don't get Saudis, they (inaudible) the Saudis in kind. They go and rob homes. And that, of course, now exploded in Anti-Balaka, the Christians, killing Muslims and Muslims defending themselves, killing Christians. A country that has never had interreligious violence is now suffering through a slow genocide.

We're 20 years after Rwanda and it is horrible to see not in the numbers in Rwanda, but sure in the way in Rwanda one group killed another. In this case it is

Christians primarily killing Muslims. The Muslims are also no angels. They retaliate.

So that, of course, secondly means that there is a breeding ground for terrorism. It is not there yet. There has been decisive action by the French. There is now 850-strong EU peacekeeping operations and there is a (inaudible) that the EU is funding from African forces. But I can tell you this, not enough. Not enough. To provide security and provide humanitarian aid to everybody who needs it, we need probably twice as many peacekeepers as we have today. And I'll come back to this point.

And let me just say a couple of words about South Sudan. Now, South Sudan, the case of South Sudan is very interesting because you remember when South Sudan was born as a country. What did we do globally? We celebrated. And I was watching this on television and I was saying and what are we celebrating? A failed state is being born. But we closed our eyes and we said, oh, it's going to be just wonderful.

And it isn't. There are massive displacements. There is now risk of famine in South Sudan and South Sudan, like Central African Republic, should not have famine because it has plenty of rich land to work on. But because of insecurity, people are in the bush. Like in the Central African Republic, they're not in the field, and we are scared that six months down the road there may be famine in South Sudan.

The government and the rebels fight each other. In Addis, they pretend to be trying to reach peace, but my impression at least is they're not so much interested in peace as they're interested in power. And they sure are not very interested in their own people and their well-being by the actions that we have seen from both sides.

So when we look at this, just on those three cases -- and, of course, we can go on and on. We can talk about Darfur, which, again, is becoming very problematic. We can talk about Tiemmen deep in the north, big, big trouble for people. We can talk about Mali, where things are not yet quite right. What we see in Mali is very difficult, very

difficult to bring reconciliation between the South and the North. Very difficult. And the North is still having very significant difficulties, but so is the South. So is the South. Mali, in my view, is actually one of the most telling examples of this explosive cocktail of crisis in a crisis in a crisis: a climate crisis, conflict, population growth, all in the same place with not very strong governance.

But whichever way we look, one thing we can say as a humanitarian community is that the job for us has changed, the work has changed. And the question is, are we changing fast enough to match what is required from us?

So how is the world changing for the humanitarian community? Well, for one, it is becoming more dangerous in many places. To be a humanitarian worker is a very dangerous profession, one of the most dangerous in the world. More humanitarians die every year than U.N. peacekeepers. But what makes it even more dangerous is the fact that we have this asymmetry in zones of conflict between state armies and rebels and some of these rebels respect no rules.

So we were talking before, we were walking here and Beth asked me what is your number one problem? One word: access. Access. In Syria, access. In Central African Republic, access. In South Sudan, access.

And this issue of accessibility to people in need takes me to my second point, that in one way our world has not changed, and it is in the importance of respecting the principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence. The criticality of providing humanitarian workers the only protection there is and that is not to make them part of the political equation. And I'm very proud that in Europe we have made a conscious decision to separate humanitarian aid from politics.

My job is independent of our political arm of the -- in European lingo this is the European External Action Service. Cathy Aston, Baroness Ashton, who leads the

External Action Service, and I, of course, we talk, we're on the same planet, but I make decisions based on only two criteria: needs, are they profound; and access, can we actually reach people who need our help? And nothing else. Blind for political affiliation, for color of the skin, for site of the conflict of those we are there to protect.

And the third way in which our world is changing is that the presence of protracted crisis, of crisis with great longevity, is here and expanding. The crisis where -- the refugee, for example, crisis where second and third and in some cases even fourth generation is being born refugee. And that as well as the necessity to manage multiple crises, response to multiple crises, at the same time. That was not the case. In the '90s, yeah, there could be two or three crises, but there would be one mega crisis every so often. And now we have multiple mega crises and sort of (inaudible) emergencies overlapping with each other.

Just think of the crisis that is now absorbing everybody's attention. Which is this crisis? Ukraine. Not a humanitarian crisis for now and, hopefully, it will stay like this. But it certainly throws a long and deep shadow over Syria and the Central African Republic and South Sudan, drawing attention away and we don't know how it is going to influence the international climate in terms of resolving these other crises, especially Syria.

So what do we do? I would say we do three things very well and we do three things not so well, and, you know, they're not easy. What we do well. First, in Europe, at least, I can say despite of all the financial difficulties we have had in Europe and the United States, we are funding humanitarian action, increasing the levels. Certainly money is not following needs. Needs are growing much faster than funding. But we from Europe have provided $3.5 billion to help the Syrians inside Syria, the refugees, the local communities. We have mobilized $250 million for the Central African

Republic since the beginning of this year; $700 million for South Sudan. Overall, despite the fact that our budgets are very tight and actually in many countries declining, humanitarian aid has increased.

Second, what we are doing well is even if it doubles, it's not going to be enough, so we are building more bridges between humanitarian action and development action. And this is quite remarkable because these communities for quite some time didn't much talk to each other, but we are now seeing first investments of the World Bank through UNHCR and the World Food Programme in areas of fragility. And we saw that ICRC has changed its mandate, the International Committee of the Red Cross has changed its mandate to include early recovery. In other words, to go beyond strictly relief operations.

This is positive and we must do more of it. We have taken a very strong commitment on resilience between the humanitarian and the development community. Help people, families, countries to be better prepared to withstand the shocks that are hitting them more often and more severely. That commitment, I mean, this is jargon, "resilience," but this commitment is strong and it is demonstrated in the operations in recent time.

And three, we are more vocal in advocacy for action by others. It was not in the vocabulary of the humanitarian community to call for more security intervention, but in the case of Central African Republic, we called for that. In the case of Mali, we welcomed when the French stepped in. And we did more than that. We engaged with the military to make sure that they understand the importance of protecting civilians, they understand the links between military and civilian operations, and they respect the mandate of humanitarians. They don't step into this mandate.

We were very vocal on U.N. Security Council resolution on humanitarian

action for Syria. And it was important for Syria, but it was even more important for the principle of U.N. Security Council standing to defend civilians and the doctors that are there to help them. And it took two years, which is unbelievable. It took two years, but we didn't give up because it is important for others to do their job.

What is not going so well? What are the problems we certainly face? The first one is a problem of the humanitarian community itself: fragmentation. We have to, for this new world of more fragility, we have to work more closely together. And yet, there is quite a lot of competition, competition for funding.

Central African Republic, we hear the NGOs complaining about the U.N. and the U.N. complaining about the donors and the donors complaining about the U.N. and the NGO -- well, more about the U.N. actually. This is not in anymore. We have to put an end to this. We have to work as -- we have to deliver as on. We have to be able to redeploy across the board. We have to have the agility of the system and the ability of the system to move to where the most important crisis is very fast. It shouldn't take seven months for the U.N. to mobilize in the Central African Republic. Seven months. It should not take that long. And it certainly should not be a problem of putting our best people where the most dangerous conditions are.

Now, for fairness to the humanitarian community, it is a very good community. These are great people. But I think as leadership, we have an obligation to do more to bring the community together. My own team should be deployable to help managing dramatic emergencies. They're not called to do it. We actually put some people on this so-called roster for moving to emergencies; the system is not agile enough to do that.

Secondly, the whole world, it's not just the humanitarian world, has to be able to operate in multiple emergencies at once. We are now, eight years old, playing

soccer. How many of you have played soccer? This is not in America, sorry. It's not an American tradition. But one thing about good soccer, and we in Europe love good soccer, is that you have to have your 11 people spread on the whole field. But eight-year-olds, what do they do? They go where the ball is and they leave the rest of the field wide open. And that's what we do now: we go to the crisis where the cameras are and we leave -- we fall behind in those areas where the cameras are not there.

But to me, the biggest problem we face is wishful thinking. South Sudan, it's a crisis of wishful thinking. We can see it coming. And we actually had -- for fairness to the humanitarian community, these were voices coming from there saying ethnic cleansing is a risk in South Sudan. The tribes are going to shoot at each other. Are we prepared for that? And then we will stay here in the cloud of wishful thinking and saying, oh, no, no, no, it's going to be just fine. Salva Kir just made the statement and his deputy just said this. And wishful thinking is a terrible, terrible error.

Take Libya. Where are we now in Libya? In the cloud of wishful thinking. We really wish this thing is going to somehow resolve itself. And we know very well that Libya has become a source of trouble everywhere. You know, part of the trouble in Mali came all the way from Libya.

Iraq, I was in Iraq -- I shared this with Beth. I was in Iraq two weeks ago and it's really terrible. In Iraq, in Anbar Province, I actually went there for the Syrian refugees in the Kurdish part of Iraq because it was the third anniversary of the Syria crisis, and Iraqi Kurdistan doesn't get enough coverage for hosting 230,000 people.

And I went to Baghdad and it was horrible. It is militarized totally. And what is even worse is that you see some of the military posts, it is not the Iraqi flag flying. These are the Shia flags flying. And in Anbar Province, 370,000 people run because of sectarian fighting under the world's radar screen.

The humanitarian community has mobilized. Again, I must give credit to our people, but if we don't find a way to honesty in assessing -- pragmatically, realistically assessing -- risks, it will be very hard to cope with the crises of today and tomorrow.

And finally, as a humanitarian community we are very keen to see a more decisive approach to political paralysis in crises. Right now, when there is paralysis, what do people do? They drop the crisis in the laps of the humanitarians, on their shoulders for humanitarians to do the best they can. But we cannot resolve political problems with humanitarian means. We can only resolve humanitarian problems with humanitarian means. And I think that we have to be more determined. We as the humanitarian community, turning to those of you who are from the community, to raise our voices and demand people to do their job: the politicians, the political side to their job; the military to provide security; the development to bring development forward.

There is a very, and I'll finish with this, there is a very good saying. It's kind of an old anecdote that says there are two ways to resolve the problems of the world. Let's say the problem of crises. Do you know it? Do you guys know it? Two ways to resolve the problems of the world. One is realistic, the other one is fantastic. The realistic is extraterrestrials will come from space, take over, resolve it. And the fantastic is we people will do it ourselves. (Laughter)

But because we are in Brookings, I strongly believe in your transformative power. You're going to get it done for all of us. Thank you. (Applause)

MS. FERRIS: Okay. We're going to open it up for questions from all of you, but maybe I'll take the prerogative of the moderator and ask the first couple of questions. I was struck, Commissioner, when you said we haven't seen the worst yet in Syria or some of the other crises. And do you think humanitarian financing can continue to increase to cover the needs or at least part of the needs of a growing number of

people in need?

MS. GEORGIEVA: What we have seen is over the last decade an increase in humanitarian funding. And in fragile environments it has reached a higher share of total funding. So if globally humanitarian aid is about 10 percent and development 90 percent, in fragile states it would be 20, 25, 30 in humanitarian aid. So what that means that there would be less development. So there is an increase -- I mean, actually during the Horn of Africa famine it was 50-50. But then you think of the opportunity costs of money going into humanitarian aid and not in development, and that means we are maybe creating more problems for the future.

But even with this shift, of course, we are not at the levels we need to effectively address increasing demand for humanitarian aid. So what can we do? Obviously, one is to drum up more donors. The Gulf states, China, Russia, with more wealth comes more responsibility.

The only country so far that I have seen to increase development aid at par with the increase of their income per capita is Turkey. In Turkey, there is 1-to-1 correlation. They get more money, they do more in humanitarian aid and development. But in Turkey, although they subscribe to the principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence, not entirely clear whether there is a true separation between the humanitarian objective and what is the overall political agenda. So that is an issue that we need to work out with Turkey more. They have been very open to join the various fora in the humanitarian community and I hope that that would bring them in a position of leadership in the Muslim world.

In the Gulf, the country that really impressed me is the Emirates. They have decided to join OECD DAC. And they already report on their humanitarian and development assistance transparently, under the same protocols we do it in Europe or

here in the United States.

Has anybody met the minister for development cooperation of the Emirates, Sheikha Lubna? Well, if any of you has a chance, she's fantastic. She's fabulous. And it is important for us to -- I went to the humanitarian conference in Dubai that the Emirates are hosting every year, DIHAD. And my conclusion was that we have to be present there. We have to reach out. And also, we have to, of course, include the Gulf more.

We need more contributions in a more predictable manner from these countries. And that can only happen if there is mutual respect. One of the problems I see is that in the so-called Western world sometimes we are perceived as sitting on a very tall, very high moral horse, and we talk about people, down. And that we cannot do if we want to expand the community of donors.

But the other aspect of funding that is under-tapped is private sector and private donations. We need to be more mindful that there is this reservoir of good will. It pours into every crisis. In some crises more and in some crises less. And beyond the money, the private sector can offer many new solutions to the humanitarian community. And I didn't talk about it, but also need innovation to do more good with the money we have.

And that is the second aspect. We just need to do more. We have to stretch every dollar, every euro to the fullest. Stretch it more. And for that we have to be open-minded and open to learn.

MS. FERRIS: Why don't we open it up for questions. We have people with microphones and if you could identify yourself. I'll take this gentleman here and this woman here.

MR. PROCTOR: Well, thank you very much for being here. I certainly

enjoyed your remarks and I'd like to mention the Sahel, which is perennially becoming a place of routine drought and starvation. And many of the countries there are among the biggest recipients every year of food aid and yet every year they're more vulnerable, not less. And so my question goes to resilience. How do we move resilience past just a piece of development jargon?

It seems to me that there are two problems. One is a paucity of evidence. We don't know what the metrics are or what contributes to building resilience. But then, two, it also seems that there is an institutional problem. And how do we build it into humanitarian aid and development agencies so it actually becomes a part of our program?

And I didn't introduce myself. I'm Keith Proctor with Mercy Corps. Thank you.

MS. FERRIS: And for those of you who maybe didn't hear, a question on resilience and how to translate the jargon into reality, what metrics we have. Maybe we'll take several questions?

MS. GEORGIEVA: Let's take a couple of questions, yes.

MS. FERRIS: Yes, please.

MS. STENOVA: Okay, hi. Ms. Georgieva, thank you so much, first of all. My name is Sylvia Stenova and I'm actually a Bulgarian student here in D.C., right across the street at SAIS. So thank you so much for giving this lecture, first of all.

Second of all, on the topic of Bulgaria, since you already mentioned the instability of refugees and particularly the need to have more coherent humanitarian response, uniting those two with the topic of Bulgaria, I was wondering what your position was on the way that we're treating humanitarian crises that are a lot closer to our homes. And what I mean is the Syrian refugees in Bulgaria. So I would be interested to hear

what you think about that.

MS. FERRIS: Okay, good. Another question perhaps? We'll take the one here.

MS. TECHMAN: Hi. My name's Arianna Techman. I'm a Georgetown graduate student in the Global Human Development Program.

And so you mentioned kind of how we've, over the past, you know, generations of genocides or other mass atrocities, how we've kind of responded a little too late or a lot too late and not always in the best way. But afterwards, we kind of apologize and, you know, feel kind of badly about it. So I just read this morning that a U.N. cable was leaked and the Burundian army is providing weapons to Hutu militia there. I was wondering if you could comment on what steps the EU is taking or just the international community in general on kind of prevention before it becomes something that we feel bad about not having responded to. Thank you.

MS. FERRIS: Want to take another one? Okay. We'll take this gentleman right here.

SPEAKER: Hello. My name is Matthew with Syria Relief and Development.

You mentioned you U.N. Resolution 2139. The report that came out a month after that was not encouraging and it stated that there were still obstacles to access in Syria. And I wanted to ask outside of military intervention what are the enforcement mechanisms that the international community can use to successfully implement that type of resolution?

MS. GEORGIEVA: Why don't I take those and then if there are still questions we can do another round?

Resilience, we can spend the rest of the evening talking about that. It is

my absolutely favorite topic because I see no way -- no way -- of closing the gap between needs going up and resources being here unless we help to turn around the fate of communities. And it is going beyond the concepts now. It is going beyond the concepts in three ways.

First, the countries themselves, they recognize they're facing a major problem. And some are already quite actively engaged domestically and internationally in bringing best practice and resilience to bear.

Niger. Niger has this fabulous program called *Les Trois N, Les Nigériens Nourissent les Nigériens*. And it is de facto a resilience program: how to make Niger self-sufficient in food by developing use of water resources for agriculture, by getting people to diversify what they grow, by creating better storage capacity for food so it doesn't rot -- I mean, in many countries it just rots -- by having transportation to markets, by having markets more active, but also by having the safety nets for the most vulnerable people so they're priority to get assistance. And I have really enjoyed working with Niger in the last years because I see a major shift in a country that is very vulnerable and also vulnerable to travel. I mean, they are on the receiving end of bad people with big arms.

Senegal is another, Ethiopia is another example. So you go country by country and, yes, some countries are doing better than others. I mean, Chad is doing something, but Chad says, oh, we are a nomadic people and, you know, leave us alone. There are differences in receptivity in vulnerable places.

Actually my most favorite example of all is Bangladesh because what Bangladesh has done to reduce loss of life during floods is remarkable. They built schools on higher ground or actually lifted them up. And people know that when there is -- and they have a very simple alert system that floods are coming. People know, they run in the schools, the loss of life has dramatically dropped. But they also have taken

some very simple adjustment measures in agriculture, in actually lifestyle. They shifted from chicken to ducks. Flood comes, chicken dies. Ducks swim. (Laughter)

Or we are a party of it in the Horn of Africa, in Kenya, Northern Kenya. We work with a region called Moyale. We have been there for now 10 years, almost 10 years. And we work with the local communities to take very simple measures to improve resilience to droughts and they are when the drought is coming, you have an alert system, you know it's coming, you shrink the livestock. You kill the animals to a point that those that are remaining can be sustained on the grassland -- on the grass that is remaining. Very hard decision for people who think of animals as wealth, but we have gotten to that point. And we would buy the meat from the humanitarian side at fair price and then distribute it during the drought to families as humanitarian assistance.

We would get trucks to go around with a very simple thing: a nurse, a measurement for malnutrition, and some basic miracle food to fight malnutrition. These trucks would drive around when the signs are there to identify kids at risk of malnutrition early so we prevent severe, acute malnutrition before it happens.

We changed the roofs. The roofs were flat, water comes, water goes. Now we made them like this so water comes and then you have simple containers, you catch the water, water harvesting happens, families have more water. And this is something that we are now doing much more broadly.

So the second thing that is changing is our behavior to the so-called donors, you know, the partners in development. And it changed in two ways.

First, we are programming humanitarian aid and development in vulnerable countries together. So we look at the opportunities for supporting resilience from both sides.

And second, we have made some very big commitments. In the EU for

Sahel, we made 1.5 billion euros commitment to support measures of resilience. Program bottom up. And when we were programming I was very worried because you make this big announcement, 1.5 billion, then you program and it is nothing. But guess what. We got 1.8 billion programmed in resilience investments.

The big task for us is to sustain that. One big problem we have in development, in humanitarian aid less but in development definitely, is fashion. Fashion comes, fashion goes. And resilience cannot be fashion. It has to stay for decades if we are to see the result of it.

And so I am very, very, very, very happy that there are people like you to ask because the third very important thing is to make everybody a champion of resilience. Everybody that is in this room when you go and do your work in a fragile environment, think that this is the best service you can do to people.

Bulgaria. Aside of being our native land, this, of course, is the most country on this planet. (Laughter) And actually I see somebody who knows Bulgaria for the old days, we worked together. The Syria crisis, of course, is a threat to Europe. And Bulgaria, we have seen the symptom of this threat.

I was actually very surprised by the anxiety in Bulgarian society and the first reaction that was very negative towards the refugees because I think of my country as being not just hospitable, but being protection-minded. For those who may not know, Bulgaria was the only country that was on the side of Germany during the Second World War, but saved our Jewish people. None of our Jewish people were sent to camp. We accepted the Armenians when they ran from massacre. And I thought that, of course, we are going to open our hearts for the Syrians. But what happened in Bulgaria is a very difficult political situation, very anxious society, and a lot of terrible propaganda against the Syrians in the first weeks, amplified by media.

This has now changed. Now we have much more objective coverage of the Syria crisis in the media and conditions for Syrian refugees in Bulgaria have improved. But it is still a very sour issue and I think it is very much connected to other factors in Bulgaria. I mean, the population -- the parliament standing in public opinion is under 10 percent. Institutions are way under 50 percent. I mean, 10 is a good standing for some. And that, I think, is a very important question for all of us Bulgarians to think why is our society so divided and what can we do to improve the situation?

My personal read, for those who may want to know something about Bulgaria, my personal read is that the very best thing that has happened to us was to join the European Union in 2007. But the very worst thing that has happened was the timing of joining because we entered the EU and the EU entered into a crisis, which is not yet quite over. And that overshadowed the opportunities for Bulgaria to benefit from EU accession and has led to Bulgaria being on the margins of attention because, of course, the main focus was, and still is to a certain degree, the euro zone where the economic vulnerabilities were.

On the question of prevention, in the EU, as I said in the beginning, in the EU we draw a very strict separation between political, military, and humanitarian aid. Human rights, this is the job of Baroness Ashton and she's the one that would supply a judgment when there is a case like this. If this is confirmed, if the Burundian army is indeed stepping up to fuel more trouble, that is going to be, of course, taken very seriously and condemned by the EU. That I can tell you.

But this is where we have a really hard time. For the humanitarian community it is very difficult to get into resilience on the site of conflicts because we immediately step where? Into political territory. Conflict prevention, conflict resolution, it is much harder. Although the same concept of resilience applies, it is much more difficult

for the humanitarians to be a part of it.

On the United Nations Security Council resolution, the only way aside from military intervention, which, of course, is a very difficult matter and it gets into yet another United Nations Security Council resolution discussion, is for the members of the Security Council, especially for the permanent members, and for the neighbors to very strongly push for respect for this resolution, which they're not quite yet doing. There isn't -- and, of course, with the Ukrainian crisis we need to see how this is going to affect the relations between the permanent members of the Security Council. The Russian deputy minister of foreign affairs said officially that whatever is happening around Ukraine is not going to impact Russia's commitment to the implementation of this resolution and overall to resolving the Syria conflict, but let's see how things will go.

The U.N. came with the report. It's a very detailed report on implementation and lack of it. If you sum it up in one sentence it would read: We are not bailing the ocean with a slightly bigger spoon. But it is an ocean of suffering. And the fact that we got to this point, shame on us. Shame on us.

If we do not implement the Security Council resolution this is going to be an enormous tragedy for Syrians and a huge problem for the neighborhood. And by the way, when you look inside Syria, no more it is just a matter of fighting. The fighting is horrible, but the economy collapsed, the health system collapsed. I saw statistics, very horrifying statistics: almost twice more people have died in Syria from treatable diseases because of lack of health care than those who died from bullets. And that is a middle-income country brought down on its -- not even on its knees, basically in a horrible situation. So this resolution is actually very, very important.

And I tell my friends in the humanitarian community, we have to pressure implementation, pressure the members of the Security Council. I'm going to be in New

York next week. This is the main reason I'm going there, pressure for implementation.

MS. FERRIS: Okay. So maybe we have time for one or two quick questions if they're short. Yes, over here. Would you wait for the microphone, if you could?

SPEAKER: Thank you. The Security Council today voted to send a peacekeeping mission to Central African Republic. That's good news. And yesterday, MSF criticized peacekeeping mission in South Sudan. I know it may be a difficult question, do you think -- what is your opinion on peacekeeping missions? How could they be improved? Because we need them. We need them to have access, as you said, but, at the same time, it seems that they are sometimes criticized in a number of cases they could have been more efficient.

MS. GEORGIEVA: First, on the Central African Republic, very, very, very welcoming news. It was expected and I'm really grateful that a decision is taken. I'm worried that currently the decision is for the troops to be deployed by September and that is too long a time. Too long a time. In the Central African Republic, if you look back, so far we do the right thing, but late. And by the time we do it, we need to do more.

So far the most determined have been the French. And like in the case of Mali -- actually even more difficult than Mali because Mali was more popular with the French public opinion than the Central African Republic is. The French, *bravo*, they are stepping up to the plate to protect innocent people. But they cannot be left alone and it was very important that we in the EU have added to the peacekeeping force. And I really hope that the deployment of U.N. peacekeepers will be accelerated.

How can peacekeepers be made more up to the task of protecting civilians? Well, it is a matter of training. We now in the EU, every time when there is an EU mission, we do specialized training for those who participate in protection of civilians

in understanding their mandate. But we have some of the troops that are being deployed as peacekeepers with less of that productive training. And unfortunately, sometimes we allow impunity of very bad behavior.

So if you ask me how this can improve, investment more. Investment more in the training, in the preparation of these troops. Hold them accountable, no impunity for peacekeepers. And recognize that this is now, unfortunately, a growing area, so put the money there.

We are struggling in the EU, we are putting more money into peacekeeping operations and there are people who say, oh, no, no, that takes away from development. What development in a zone of conflict? None. None. And actually, there is a chance for development if you stabilize countries and turn their fate around.

And for the criticism of MSF for South Sudan, I need to read the details. Actually thank you for mentioning it. I haven't read it. We obviously have to call it as it is. You know, if there is trouble, we have to call it. Sometimes less is more and sometimes a form of engagement may be more effective.

I actually worry, and I'll finish on this, I worry that there is so much noise in the international arena. You know, the U.N. and the African Union don't see quite eye to eye. South Sudan has gone all out against the U.N. at one point and the African Union didn't condemn it, although the African Union is part of the world, therefore, of the United Nations. We need more unity and we need more discipline if we want messages to be heard and sometimes we don't quite have it. I'm not saying that is the case in MSF. You know, don't get me wrong. I haven't read it, have no idea.

But in principle, there is sometimes multiplicity of messages when what people need is the world to be united and help rather than, you know, being smarty-pants and outtalking each other. Nothing to do with MSF. Again, I want to repeat myself. It's

just the overall situation of a lot of energy going in the whistle.

MS. FERRIS: I'm afraid our time is drawing to an end. I want to thank you for your stimulating remarks and for the hard work that you do every day on behalf of the world's needy people. Thanks. (Applause)

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