**Conference:** TISMUNKL

**Forum:** The General Assembly

**Issue:** Question of improving the coordination of humanitarian aid and emergency assistance

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**Position:** Chair of the General Assembly

Student Officer Profile

**My name is Ziyoda Rakhimova and I’ll be the Chair of the General Assembly throughout TISMUNKL. I’m 17 years old and am currently completing my A-levels at Prince of Wales Island International School. This will be third time as Chair and my third conference in Malaysia as all my other previous conferences were in the Netherlands, where I moved from in September. MUN has really become my passion together with debate and discussions on world issues and the conferences I’ve attended have allowed me to meet so many great people who share my interests. Although never having chaired the GA before, I’m truly looking forward to the debate and hope to pass on my enthusiasm to you as the delegates and see you all involved in the successful debate which I am sure we will have.**

Statement of the Problem

Humanitarian aid and emergency assistance aims to save lives and lessen the suffering of people in times of crisis such as natural disasters, civilian war and evacuation. This is mainly done through the short-term provision and supply of food, water, shelter and emergency services to affected areas. Yet these motives do not protect the business of aid delivery during crises from corrupt abuse. Humanitarian aid and emergency assistance is delivered in challenging environments, in the midst of conflict and where natural disasters have stretched or overwhelmed national capacities. There is often pressure to disburse aid rapidly and immense organizational challenges in suddenly expanding the scope and scale of aid delivery. A characteristic of many of the situations in which the humanitarian aid community involved is the almost total loss of central authority. In these circumstances, humanitarian aid workers witness a number of dynamics that can impact on the coordination of the humanitarian aid and emergency assistance.

One of the major and worst problems that are faced when it comes to delivering, assisting and coordinating humanitarian aid is corruption in countries. The effects of corruption include the diversion of emergency supplies away from the affected people and the unequal and unfair distribution of aid. Due to corruption, food, water and medical supplies can be stolen and sold on the black market. There have been many reported cases where food and supplies intended for aid to those in need being sold in small shops to the locals instead of being delivered as aid. The corruption robs people of essential resources, destroying dignity and causing desperation. Companies can bribe procurement officials to win contracts. This can mean people receive inadequate housing or poor-quality food. Too often, powerful local groups and existing corrupt networks benefit and those most needing help miss out. Tackling the corruption that exists is therefore essential in ensuring effective and equal distribution of humanitarian aid and assistance.

Another problem occurring during the coordination of humanitarian aid and emergency assistance is limited or no access to areas where aid is needed. In numerous countries around the world, humanitarian aiders are present but unable to reach large portions of affected populations needing their assistance. Access is one of the key challenges facing the coordination of humanitarian operations, particularly in complex emergencies. Frequently access is limited by the prevailing security situation but sometimes the obstacle is also a question of policy on the part of the authorities controlling a given region or country. For example, from time to time, the Government of Israel has imposed external and internal closures on the occupied Palestinian territory, obstructing free movement of humanitarian goods and personnel. In the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, access to the population has become considerably easier since 1995, although some tight controls on the work of humanitarian agencies still remain, particularly with regard to freedom of movement, monitoring and evaluation.

One of the important challenges in providing humanitarian aid is safety and security of aid providers. In this regard it is necessary to enhance the safety and security of aid workers, stop the threats against them, improve the existing security management structures and proposals in order for them to work without fear and carry out their jobs efficiently and effectively. The strengthening of security and adequate support for the UN aid workers will dramatically improve the effectiveness and coordination of humanitarian aid and emergency assistance in many countries around the world. However, attacks on humanitarian workers still continue today in many aid needing countries, disrupting the delivery of humanitarian aid and emergency assistance.

Definition of Key Terms

Humanitarian aid

material or logistical assistance provided for humanitarian purposes, typically in response to humanitarian crises including natural disaster and man-made disaster. The primary objective of humanitarian aid is to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity

Corruption

dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power for personal gain, e.g. by extortion, soliciting or offering bribes

Timeline of Events

Date Description of event

19 December, 1991 The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) formed

June, 1992 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) founded

May, 1993 Transparency International founded

December 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami

11 December, 2008 UN General Assembly declare 19 August as World Humanitarian Day

Relevant International Actions/Past UN Efforts

Transparency International (TI) is a non-governmental organization that monitors and publicises corporate and political corruption in international development, founded in May 1993. There were numerous examples of corruption during the massive Asian tsunami humanitarian response, and examples of substantial diversion of aid resources have been reported recently in Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia and Somalia.

The massive aid response which followed the Indian Ocean Tsunami of December 2004 generated huge public interest and highlighted the issue of corruption in the humanitarian community.

In response to this concern, TI launched a programme in 2005 to diagnose corruption risks specific to humanitarian operations and to develop a set of good practices aimed at mitigating those risks. In 2006, TI published a report on mapping the Risks of Corruption in Humanitarian Action, which offers guidance and support to the many people in the humanitarian sector who devote their lives to alleviating the suffering of the most vulnerable people

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), formed in December 1991 by the General Assembly Resolution 46/182, aims to strengthen the UN’s response to emergencies and natural disaster and the coordination of humanitarian response, policy development and humanitarian advocacy.

* [Resolution 46/182, ‘Strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations’, December 1991](http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/46/a46r182.htm)

A key player in coordinating all the emergency and humanitarian assistance is the Inter-Agency Standing Committee ([IASC](http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/)), which brings together all major humanitarian agencies, both within and outside the UN system.  It develops policies, agrees on the division of responsibilities among humanitarian agencies, and works to make the process as efficient as possible.  Its “cluster approach” to the division of responsibilities in the face of disaster has revolutionized the provision of humanitarian aid.

By the UN General Assembly resolution 63/139 of 11 December 2008, World Humanitarian Day is observed annually on 19 August, in order to increase public awareness about humanitarian assistance activities worldwide and the importance of international cooperation in this regard, as well as to honour all humanitarian and United Nations and associated personnel who have worked in the promotion of the humanitarian cause and those who have lost their lives in the cause of duty.

The UN Aid workers at the field level deal with the dilemmas of corruption on a daily basis, from whether to pay bribes at checkpoints or ports to speed aid delivery, to what to do about local relief committees who may be abusing their power in the targeting process. The issue is not new. Aid agencies have invested considerably in strengthening their systems of finance, logistics, procurement and human resources over the last two decades, adopted various codes of conduct in attempts to improve standards and have begun to invest in measures to improve accountability to the recipients of relief assistance as well as to those who provide the funding. However, corruption still exists today and more needs to be done in order to eradicate the problem and supply the aid to those in need.

Possible Solutions

The involvement of corruption in humanitarian aid should of course be tackled. However, the question of how to rid of corruption while still providing humanitarian aid has long been the fundamental dilemmas faced by experts. Local people should be educated and informed on what and how much aid they are entitled to so that aid can be monitored and they do not miss out on what is theirs. They should be encouraged to report any complaints and corruption freely and share these experiences with each other. Aid agencies can also do a lot to eradicate the corruption that exists by introducing strict controls and analysing risks and local power structures as part of preparation.

Access to remote areas should be looked into and improved as the neediest tend to be in remote places where it is difficult to reach. Quick and effective solutions to get full access to areas with large portions of affected populations requiring help and assistance need to be created ensuring that they receive what they are entitled to. Dropping off supplies from the air, for example, is not always effective as you are not able to tell whether it was received by those in need.

In addition, solutions should include the intensifying of efforts, building upon the existing capacities of relevant organizations and entities of the United Nations, in order to improve coordination and distribution of humanitarian aid and assistance.

It is also very important to create effective solutions which provide and enhance the safety and security of aid workers. The United Nations has undertaken numerous efforts to strengthen aid workers security management yet t is still necessary strengthening the aid providers’ security by calling upon all parties to ensure the safety of international and national humanitarian personnel.

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