

## BRIEF VII. ECOSOC Addressing Emergency Issues

*This brief is part of a series aimed to provide background information on ECOSOC strengthening. Briefs include (i) ECOSOC mandates and evolution of functions; (ii) policy dialogue and guidance; (iii) guiding and promoting a coherent and coordinated UN system; (iv) subsidiary bodies; (v) relationship with the General Assembly, Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council; (vi) countries in special situations; and (vii) addressing emergency issues.*

ECOSOC has been mandated by the Charter to discuss economic, social and environmental issues. Its mandate thus also relates to the impact of emergencies of a developmental nature. The Council was specifically requested in 32/197 to convene special sessions to deal with emerging problems meriting special or urgent international attention. This was reiterated in resolution 50/227. Resolution 61/16 also mandated ECOSOC to convene ad hoc meetings on specific humanitarian emergencies on the request of the affected Member State(s) and following a recommendation of the Bureau, to raise awareness and promote the engagement of all stakeholders in support of international relief efforts aimed at addressing those emergencies. During a developmental or humanitarian crisis, ECOSOC's political legitimacy, convening power, substantive expertise, coordination role and stakeholder networks provide it with the potential to provide direction and recommendations on ways to respond. ECOSOC

can also serve as a platform for the coordination of interventions by relevant actors.

Through [special meetings](#) convened by the ECOSOC President, the Council promotes awareness of global emergencies, including public health, natural disasters and other crises. The Council promoted a coordinated response by the UN system with the engagement of all stakeholders following:

- the Tsunami in Indonesia in 1994,
- Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003,
- Avian Flu in 2005,
- the global food crises in 2008/9,
- the earthquake in Haiti in 2010,
- Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013,
- Ebola in 2014,
- the Zika Virus in 2016,
- the aftermath of hurricanes in 2017,
- climate-affected SIDS in 2018, and
- Cyclone Idai in Southern Africa in 2019.

These special meetings have been considered to form a useful and timely opportunity to update Member States on humanitarian needs and funding requirements in the affected countries and mobilize Member States in support of disaster response and recovery efforts on the ground. However, the Council does not receive the same level of dedicated conference services and budgetary support similar to what is received by other Charter Bodies, such as the General Assembly and the Security Council to deliver on this mandate.