

***Remarks for Acting Representative of the United States to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on the Humanitarian landscape and reset by Mr. Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs***

*Thank you, Ms. Vice-President. Thank you for the briefing, Under-Secretary-General Fletcher.*

*As was laid bare in the briefing, the international community has struggled to respond to the scale and complexity of humanitarian needs. We have increasingly relied on humanitarian assistance instead of addressing the root causes of conflict and other sources of instability around the world. Humanitarian funding has been used to plug the gap of government failures, and allowed governments to evade responsibilities to provide food, water, and health care for their citizens.*

*At the same time, there has been an insufficient focus on performance and efficiency.*

*We must recognize that our approach to these issues requires fundamental re-thinking.*

*As the need for basic life-saving aid remains high, and as individual UN agencies continue to streamline operations, the United Nations has an opportunity to re-focus on effective delivery of its core purposes where it matters most: at country level.*

*This means:*

*Refocus on delivering life-saving assistance. Focus staff and resources on cost-effective approaches to addressing the most urgent lifesaving needs.*

*Refocus on essential functions. The UN should return to the role of coordinating and facilitating humanitarian operations. This requires a reduction in posts, and a reduction in the number of high-cost UN contracts. While relocating staff to lower cost duty stations may be appropriate for some functions, shifting international staff alone will not achieve significant savings.*

*Likewise, there are many duplicative mandates and functions throughout the UN system. The UN must review offices and agencies that have similar functions or mandates and make proposals to eliminate, streamline, or merge them.*

*There is an urgent need to lessen the burden on humanitarian resources. Governments must take ownership of responses and execute transition plans to do so. Fostering self-reliance and economic opportunity—in line with local economic conditions and labor needs—can uphold the dignity of those displaced by crises while reducing the humanitarian burden on donor countries.*

*Crucially, we must maintain focus on ending conflicts that create and exacerbate humanitarian needs. The United States will continue its effort to help bring an end to conflicts and persecution that cause humanitarian crises.*

*We reiterate the importance of burden-sharing in humanitarian responses and underscore that the costs of response will not continue to fall inequitably on the American taxpayer.*

*Thank you.*