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Evaluation Essay: An Assessment of the United Nations in Managing Global Humanitarian Crises

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Evaluation Essay: An Assessment of the United Nations in Managing Global Humanitarian Crises

United Nations (UN) has traditionally been the center of world humanitarian crises coping, a kind of organization that serves as an organizer of humanitarian assistance, and at the same time, as a normative institution to determine humanitarian response. Its efficiency is rather a complicated balancing of significant success and structural constraints, which still persist. The humanitarian system of the UN, headed by the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), and the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has been involved in life-saving aid of millions of people, whether caused by armed conflict, natural disasters, famine, displacement, etc (Citaristi, 2022). The UN has proven to be logistically unmatched and legitimate through massive food distribution, protection of refugees, vaccines, and emergency shelters provision. It is also facilitated in its coordination processes, especially through the cluster system which aids in streamlining and coordinating the work of international NGOs and states to reduce duplication and to make sure that the sector is covered through the department of health, water, sanitation, nutrition, and protection. Furthermore, the UN is significantly involved in the advocacy process, as it advocates the global attention, raises funds by means of consolidated appeals, and sets international humanitarian norms that are based on human rights and international law.

Irrespective of these advantages, the work of the UN during humanitarian crises is often limited due to political issues, finances, and logistics. Top in this list is the fact that it has to rely on member states to provide finances and approvals. Humanitarian responses are largely unfunded and the calls cannot be fully heeded and therefore the agencies have to decide to give priority to one group over the other (Scott, 2025). The interventions of the political dynamics in the Security Council may either slug interventions or prevent intervention especially in the cases

in which the permanent members have strategic interests in the conflict.

Responsiveness is also subject to bureaucratic complexity. UN system consists of many specialized agencies, each mandated with specific administrative procedures and reporting systems. Although there exist coordination structures, interagency This can result in unified action being pressured by inter-agency rivalry and access to funds, and profile. The procurement, manpower and linkages in the field operations may take long to be affected and this slows the pace that is imperative to emergency response (Son et al., 2024). Moreover, there is an issue of accountability in terms of delivery of aid, oversight as well as the thwarting of corruption or misappropriation of aid especially in those areas that have fragile governments or conflict prone areas.

An additional criticism point is on the sustainability of UN humanitarian action. Although emergency relief will save lives, it does not necessarily target underlying causes like prolonged conflict, weather susceptibility or impoverished system. This can be revealed in the case of long-term displacement crises in which refugee camps run over decades long without permanent political fixes: dependency is built without long-term solutions. The UN has been placing more and more stress on the nexus of humanitarian, development and peace, and is aiming to establish a unification of relief with resilience building, reconstruction and prevention of conflicts (Norman & Mikhael, 2023). However, implementation is still disproportionate because of silos in funding and mandates constraints.

UN cannot be left behind in assessing overall performance regardless of its failures. There is no other organization which has its universal legitimacy, convening strength and scale of operation. Reinforcements of early warning mechanism, ensuring the flexibility of funding, bettering partnerships with locals and insulating humanitarian activity against geopolitical competition would make the situation much better. Finally, the management of world humanitarian disasters by the UN cannot be regarded as completely effective or even as a total

failure, but as a constantly changing system, which can be achieved with renowned success under availability of backing, but which becomes handicapped in case global consensus fails.