



International Strategy for Disaster Reduction



United Nations Documents Related to Disaster Reduction 2003-2005

Volume 3



United Nations

Foreword

In recent years, there has been no shortage of reminders that reducing risk and improving the management of natural hazards must be given the highest priority. The need for a global disaster reduction strategy has been underscored by a string of disasters ranging from the Indian Ocean tsunami, to droughts in Africa; from hurricanes in the United States and Central America to typhoons triggering landslides in South East Asia; from fires, floods and wind storms in Europe to earthquakes in Pakistan and Indonesia.

The UN General Assembly resolution 60/195, endorses the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters as adopted by the second World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held at Kobe, Japan, 18 to 22 January 2005, and recalls the common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster: risk reduction for a safer future. The Conference demonstrated that the world community urgently needs to join forces to break the vicious circle between poverty, environmental degradation and lack of preparation that turns natural hazards into disasters that destroy hard-won development gains.

In its report A/60/180 the Secretary-General recommends that the Assembly endorse the strengthening of the ISDR system, its governance, secretariat and the distribution of roles and responsibilities among agencies in support of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. In this respect, a management oversight board to advise the USG for Humanitarian Affairs and a Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction have been established, the latter as an enhancement of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction that guided the subject from 2000 to 2005. The ISDR secretariat is currently being strengthened to service the system at all levels.

UN General Assembly resolution 60/196 on Natural disasters and vulnerability encourages the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the UNFCCC to continue to address the adverse effects of climate change, especially in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable.

Without effectively tackling disaster risk the Millennium Development Goals can not be achieved. For that reason the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation for sustainable development includes commitments related to disaster and vulnerability reduction and improved early warning.

Preparedness, an important component of disaster risk reduction deals with residual and unmanaged risk and aims at developing or strengthening the necessary measures and capacities so that a timely, coordinated and effective response can be organised when a hazard strikes in order to reduce its negative impact.

This publication, the volume 3, which is part of a series published since the inception of the ISDR, brings together relevant official documents related to ISDR and related subjects, including UN General Assembly resolutions and reports of the UN Secretary-General for the period of 2003-2005.

A CDROM is also available. It contains all documents in the six UN official languages. I trust that this document will serve as a valuable reference to all those interested and involved in disaster risk reduction.



Salvano Briceño
Director, UN/ISDR

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A

General Assembly Resolutions and Decisions

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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/488/Add.3)]

60/195. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, 49/22 B of 20 December 1994, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/219 of 22 December 1999, 56/195 of 21 December 2001, 57/256 of 20 December 2002, 58/214 of 23 December 2003 and 59/231 of 22 December 2004, and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/63 of 30 July 1999 and 2001/35 of 26 July 2001, and taking into due consideration its resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003 on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields,

Expressing its deep concern at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact within recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in developing countries,

Reiterating that, although natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, the long-term consequences of natural disasters are especially severe for developing countries and hamper the achievement of their sustainable development,

Recognizing that disaster risk reduction is a cross-cutting issue in the context of sustainable development,

Recognizing also the clear relationship between development, disaster risk reduction, disaster response and disaster recovery and the need to deploy efforts in all these areas,

Recognizing further the urgent need to further develop and make use of the existing scientific and technical knowledge to build resilience to natural disasters, and emphasizing the need for developing countries to have access to technology so as to tackle natural disasters effectively,

Emphasizing that disaster risk reduction, including reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, is an important element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

Stressing the importance of advancing the implementation of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development¹ and its relevant provisions on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management,

Expressing its profound gratitude to the Government and the people of Japan for the excellent arrangements made for hosting the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held at Kobe, Hyogo, from 18 to 22 January 2005, for the hospitality extended to the participants and for the facilities, staff and services placed at their disposal, as well as for all the voluntary contributions made to facilitate the participation of representatives of developing countries, in particular those from the least developed countries,

Welcoming the Hyogo Declaration,² the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,³ and the common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster: risk reduction for a safer future,⁴ as adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction,

Recognizing that the Hyogo Framework for Action complements the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action,⁵

Taking note that the scope of the Hyogo Framework for Action encompasses disasters caused by hazards of natural origin and related environmental and technological hazards and risks and thus reflects a holistic and multi-hazard approach to disaster risk management and the relationship between them, which can have a significant impact on social, economic, cultural and environmental systems, as stressed in the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,⁶

Recognizing the need to continue to develop an understanding of, and to address, socio-economic activities that exacerbate the vulnerability of societies to natural disasters and to build and further strengthen community capability to cope with disaster risks,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;⁷

2. *Endorses* the Hyogo Declaration² and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters³ as adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held at Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, and recalls the common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster: risk reduction for a safer future;⁴

¹ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

² A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 1.

³ *Ibid.*, resolution 2.

⁴ A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, annex II.

⁵ A/CONF.172/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

⁶ See resolution 60/1.

⁷ A/60/180.

3. *Calls for* a more effective integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies, planning and programming; for the development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards and for a systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes;

4. *Invites* Member States, the United Nations system, including international financial institutions, regional bodies and other international organizations, as well as relevant civil society organizations, to support, implement and follow up the Hyogo Framework for Action;

5. *Calls upon* the United Nations system, including international financial institutions and international organizations, to integrate the goals of and take into full account the Hyogo Framework for Action in their strategies and programmes, making use of existing coordination mechanisms, and to assist developing countries with those mechanisms to design disaster risk reduction measures with a sense of urgency;

6. *Calls upon* the international community to fully implement the commitments of the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action;

7. *Recalls* that the commitments of the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action include the provision of assistance for developing countries that are prone to natural disasters and disaster-stricken States in the transition phase towards sustainable physical, social and economic recovery, for risk-reduction activities in post-disaster recovery and for rehabilitation processes;

8. *Calls upon* the United Nations system, including the international financial institutions as well as regional banks and other regional and international organizations to support, in a timely and sustained manner, the efforts led by disaster-stricken countries for disaster risk reduction, in post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes;

9. *Takes note* of all the regional and subregional initiatives developed in order to achieve disaster risk reduction, reiterates the need to develop regional initiatives and risk reduction capacities of regional mechanisms and to strengthen them, wherever they exist, and encourages the use and sharing of all the existing tools;

10. *Notes* the importance of developing international mechanisms for the implementation of the actions established in the Hyogo Framework for Action, such as, for example, the International Recovery Platform launched to ensure the reduction of vulnerability during the post-disaster recovery phase;

11. *Recognizes* that each State has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and for taking effective measures to reduce disaster risk, including for the protection of people on its territory, infrastructure and other national assets from the impact of disasters, including the implementation of and follow-up to the Hyogo Framework for Action, and stresses the importance of international cooperation and partnerships to support those national efforts;

12. *Also recognizes* the need to strengthen the sharing of good practices, knowledge and technical support among all relevant stakeholders;

13. *Calls upon* the international community to support the development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards;

14. *Stresses* the importance of further strengthening the capacity of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system in order to provide a solid basis for action as mandated by the Hyogo Framework for Action, and requests the Secretary-General to include this issue in his report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session;

15. *Recognizes* the importance of integrating a gender perspective as well as engaging women in the design and implementation of all phases of disaster management, particularly at the disaster risk reduction stage;

16. *Expresses its appreciation* to those countries that have provided financial support for the activities of the Strategy by making voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

17. *Encourages* the international community to provide adequate voluntary financial contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction, in the effort to ensure the adequate support for the follow-up activities to the Hyogo Framework for Action, and to review the current usage and feasibility for the expansion of the Fund, inter alia, to assist disaster-prone developing countries to set up national strategies for disaster risk reduction;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to allocate adequate financial and administrative resources, within existing resources, for the activities and effective functioning of the Inter-Agency Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

19. *Invites* Governments and relevant international organizations to consider disaster risk assessment as an integral component of development plans and poverty eradication programmes;

20. *Stresses* the importance of identifying, assessing and managing risks prior to the occurrence of disasters, for which it is necessary to combine the efforts at all levels from the development, humanitarian, scientific and environmental communities as well as the importance of integrating disaster risk reduction, as appropriate, into development plans and poverty eradication programmes;

21. *Also stresses* the need to foster better understanding and knowledge of the causes of disasters, as well as to build and strengthen coping capacities through, inter alia, the transfer and exchange of experiences and technical knowledge, access to relevant data and information and the strengthening of institutional arrangements, including community-based organizations;

22. *Recognizes* the importance of early warning as an essential element of disaster risk reduction and looks forward to the results of the Third International Conference on Early Warning, to be held from 27 to 29 March 2006, in Bonn, Germany;

23. *Requests*, in this context, the Inter-Agency Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to complete the preparation of the global survey on early warning capacities and gaps, including an account of available technologies for early warning, and invites Member States to provide inputs that may assist the Inter-Agency Secretariat for the Strategy in preparing this survey;

24. *Reiterates its call upon* Governments to establish national platforms or focal points for disaster reduction and to strengthen them, wherever they exist, encourages the platforms to share relevant information on standards and practices, urges the United Nations system, in this regard, to provide appropriate support for

those mechanisms, and invites the Secretary-General to strengthen the regional outreach of the Inter-Agency Secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in order to ensure such support;

25. *Stresses* that continued cooperation and coordination among Governments, the United Nations system, other organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and other partners, as appropriate, are considered essential to address effectively the impact of natural disasters;

26. *Recognizes* the importance of linking disaster risk management to regional frameworks, as appropriate, such as the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Reduction developed within the New Partnership for Africa's Development,⁸ to address issues of poverty eradication and sustainable development;

27. *Emphasizes* the need for the international community to maintain its focus beyond emergency relief and to support medium- and long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and risk reduction, and stresses the importance of implementing programmes related to the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and disaster risk reduction management in the most vulnerable regions, particularly in developing countries prone to natural disasters;

28. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, under the item entitled "Sustainable development".

*68th plenary meeting
22 December 2005*

⁸ A/57/304, annex.



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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/488/Add.3)]

60/196. Natural disasters and vulnerability

The General Assembly,

Recalling its decision 57/547 of 20 December 2002 and its resolutions 58/215 of 23 December 2003 and 59/233 of 22 December 2004,

Reaffirming the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development¹ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,² adopted by the World Summit, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002,

Reaffirming also the Hyogo Declaration³ and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,⁴ as adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held at Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005,

Taking note that the scope of the Hyogo Framework for Action encompasses disasters caused by hazards of natural origin and related environmental and technological hazards and risks and thus reflects a holistic and multi-hazard approach to disaster risk management and the relationship between them, which can have a significant impact on social, economic, cultural and environmental systems, as stressed in the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action,⁵

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,⁶

Recognizing the need to continue to develop an understanding of, and to address, the underlying risk factors, as identified in the Hyogo Framework for Action, including socio-economic factors, that exacerbate the vulnerability of

¹ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

² *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

³ A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, resolution 2.

⁵ A/CONF.172/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

⁶ See resolution 60/1.

societies to natural hazards, to build and further strengthen community capacity to cope with disaster risks and to enhance resilience against hazards associated with disasters, while also recognizing the negative impact of natural disasters on economic growth and sustainable development, in particular in developing countries and disaster-prone countries,

Noting that the global environment continues to suffer degradation, adding to economic and social vulnerabilities, in particular in developing countries,

Taking into account the various ways and forms in which all countries, in particular the more vulnerable countries, are affected by severe natural hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides and volcanic eruptions and extreme weather events such as heat waves, severe droughts, floods and storms, and the El Niño/La Niña events which have global reach,

Expressing deep concern at the recent increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and associated natural disasters in some regions of the world and their substantial economic, social and environmental impacts, in particular upon developing countries in those regions,

Taking into account that geological and hydrometeorological hazards and their associated natural disasters and their reduction must be addressed in a coherent and effective manner,

Noting the need for international and regional cooperation to increase the capacity of countries to respond to the negative impacts of all natural hazards, including earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides and volcanic eruptions and extreme weather events such as heat waves, severe droughts and floods, and associated natural disasters, in particular in developing countries and disaster-prone countries,

Bearing in mind the importance of addressing disaster risks related to changing social, economic, environmental conditions and land use, and the impact of hazards associated with geological events, weather, water, climate variability and climate change, in sector development planning and programmes as well as in post-disaster situations,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,⁷ in particular section II, entitled “Disasters associated with natural hazards and vulnerability: a development challenge”;

2. *Recognizes* that each State has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and for taking effective measures to reduce disaster risk, including for the protection of people on its territory, infrastructure and other national assets from the impact of disasters, including the implementation of and follow-up to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,⁴ and stresses the importance of international cooperation and partnerships to support those national efforts;

3. *Urges* the international community to continue to address ways and means, including through cooperation and technical assistance, to reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters, including those caused by extreme weather events, in particular in vulnerable developing countries, including least developed countries and in Africa, through the implementation of the International Strategy for

⁷ A/60/180.

Disaster Reduction, including the Hyogo Framework for Action, and encourages the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction to continue its work in this regard;

4. *Stresses* the importance of the Hyogo Declaration³ and the Hyogo Framework for Action and the priorities for action that States, regional and international organizations and international financial institutions as well as other concerned actors should take into consideration in their approach to disaster risk reduction and implement, as appropriate, according to their own circumstances and capacities, bearing in mind the vital importance of promoting a culture of prevention in the area of natural disasters, including through the mobilization of adequate resources for disaster risk reduction, and of addressing disaster risk reduction, including disaster preparedness, and the adverse effects of natural disasters in efforts to implement national development plans and poverty reduction strategies with a view to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

5. *Encourages* Governments, through their respective International Strategy for Disaster Reduction national platforms and national focal points for disaster risk reduction, in cooperation with the United Nations system and other stakeholders, to strengthen capacity-building in the most vulnerable regions, to enable them to address the socio-economic factors that increase vulnerability, and to develop measures that will enable them to prepare for and cope with natural disasters, including those associated with earthquakes and extreme weather events, and encourages the international community to provide effective assistance to developing countries in this regard;

6. *Emphasizes*, in order to build resilience, particularly in developing countries, especially those vulnerable among them, the importance of addressing the underlying risk factors identified in the Hyogo Framework for Action and the importance of promoting the integration of risk reduction associated with geological and hydrometeorological hazards in disaster risk reduction programmes;

7. *Encourages* the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction to continue, within its mandate, particularly the Hyogo Framework for Action, to enhance the coordination of activities to promote disaster risk reduction and to make available to the relevant United Nations entities information on options for natural disaster risk reduction, including severe natural hazards and extreme weather-related disasters and vulnerabilities;

8. *Stresses* the importance of close cooperation and coordination among Governments, the United Nations system, other international and regional organizations as well as non-governmental organizations and other partners such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as appropriate, taking into account the need for the development of disaster management strategies, including the effective establishment of early warning systems that are, inter alia, people-centred, while taking advantage of all available resources and expertise for that purpose;

9. *Encourages* the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁸ and the parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁹ to continue to

⁸ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

⁹ FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

address the adverse effects of climate change, especially in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and also encourages the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to continue to assess the adverse effects of climate change on the socio-economic and natural disaster reduction systems of developing countries;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution, and decides to consider the issue of natural disasters and vulnerability at that session, under the sub-item entitled “International Strategy for Disaster Reduction” of the item entitled “Sustainable development”.

*68th plenary meeting
22 December 2005*

United Nations

A/RES/59/231



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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/483/Add.3)]

59/231. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, 49/22 B of 20 December 1994, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/219 of 22 December 1999, 56/195 of 21 December 2001, 57/256 of 20 December 2002 and 58/214 of 23 December 2003 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/63 of 30 July 1999 and 2001/35 of 26 July 2001, and taking into due consideration its resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003 on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields,

Recalling also the inclusion of the item entitled “Disaster management and vulnerability” in the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development,¹

Reiterating that, although natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, the long-term consequences of natural disasters are especially severe for developing countries and hamper the achievement of their sustainable development,

Recognizing the urgent need to further develop and make use of the existing scientific and technical knowledge to build resilience to natural disasters, and emphasizing the need for developing countries to have access to technology so as to tackle natural disasters effectively,

Expressing its deep concern at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact within recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in developing countries,

Recognizing the need to continue to develop an understanding of, and to address, socio-economic activities that exacerbate the vulnerability of societies to natural disasters and to build and further strengthen community capability to cope with disaster risks,

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 9 (E/2003/29)*, chap. I, sect. A.

Emphasizing that disaster reduction, including reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, is an important element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

Stressing the importance of advancing the implementation of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,² and its relevant provisions on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management,

Noting the ongoing work of all the working groups established by the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, namely the Working Group on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, the Working Group on Disaster Reduction in Africa, the Working Group on Risk, Vulnerability and Disaster Impact Assessment and the Working Group on the World Conference on Disaster Reduction,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;³

2. *Invites* Governments and relevant international organizations to consider disaster risk assessment as an integral component of development plans and poverty eradication programmes;

3. *Welcomes* the work of the ongoing preparatory process for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005;

4. *Notes with appreciation* the generous pledge made by the Government of Japan to cover costs of the World Conference, and welcomes the voluntary contributions already made to facilitate the participation of representatives of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, in that event, and invites those States that have not yet done so to make such voluntary contributions;

5. *Reiterates its invitation* to Member States, all United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies and other relevant intergovernmental agencies and organizations, in particular the members of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, to participate actively in the World Conference;

6. *Encourages* major groups, as identified in Agenda 21,⁴ to contribute further to and actively participate in the World Conference, according to the rules of procedure agreed upon by its Preparatory Committee;

7. *Stresses* the importance of close cooperation and coordination between the relevant institutions, in particular within the United Nations system and with other relevant international organizations, in both the preparation of and follow-up to the World Conference, within their mandate and taking into account their comparative advantages and the need to avoid any duplication of work;

8. *Also stresses* that continued cooperation and coordination among Governments, the United Nations system, other organizations, regional organizations,

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

³ A/59/228.

⁴ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

non-governmental organizations and other partners, as appropriate, are considered essential to address effectively the impact of natural disasters;

9. *Recognizes* the importance of linking disaster risk management with regional frameworks, as appropriate, such as with the New Partnership for Africa's Development,⁵ to address issues of poverty eradication and sustainable development;

10. *Also recognizes* the importance of integrating a gender perspective as well as of engaging women in the design and implementation of all phases of disaster management, particularly in the disaster reduction stage;

11. *Stresses* the importance of identifying, assessing and managing risks prior to the occurrence of disasters, for which it is necessary to combine the efforts at all levels of the development, humanitarian, scientific and environmental communities, as well as the importance of integrating disaster reduction, as appropriate, into development plans and poverty eradication programmes;

12. *Also stresses* the need to foster better understanding and knowledge of the causes of disasters, as well as to build and strengthen coping capacities through, inter alia, the transfer and exchange of experiences and technical knowledge, access to relevant data and information and the strengthening of institutional arrangements, including community-based organizations;

13. *Recognizes* the importance of early warning as an essential element of disaster reduction, recommends the implementation of the outcome of the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn, Germany, from 16 to 18 October 2003, and takes note of further work done in this regard, including the establishment of the Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning⁶ in Bonn;

14. *Calls upon* Governments to establish national platforms or focal points for disaster reduction, encourages the platforms to share relevant information on standards and practices, encourages Governments to strengthen platforms where they already exist, urges the United Nations system to provide appropriate support for those mechanisms, and invites the Secretary-General to strengthen the regional outreach of the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in order to ensure such support;

15. *Requests* the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, in his capacity as Chairman of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, to continue reviewing annually the work carried out by its working groups in order to ensure their effective contribution to the attainment of the objectives of the Strategy;

16. *Expresses its appreciation* to those countries that have provided financial support for the activities of the Strategy by making voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

17. *Encourages* the international community to provide the necessary financial resources to the Trust Fund for the Strategy and to provide the necessary scientific, technical, human and other resources to ensure adequate support for the activities of the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy and the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and its working groups;

⁵ A/57/304, annex.

⁶ A/CONF.206/PC(II)/4, para. 14 (ix).

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to allocate adequate financial and administrative resources, within existing resources, for the effective functioning of the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy;

19. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, in particular on the outcome of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, under the item entitled “Sustainable development”.

*75th plenary meeting
22 December 2004*



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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/483/Add.3)]

59/232. International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 52/200 of 18 December 1997, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/220 of 22 December 1999, 55/197 of 20 December 2000, 56/194 of 21 December 2001 and 57/255 of 20 December 2002 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/46 of 28 July 1999, 1999/63 of 30 July 1999 and 2000/33 of 28 July 2000,

Noting that the El Niño phenomenon has a recurring character and that it can lead to extensive natural hazards with the potential to seriously affect humankind,

Reaffirming the importance of developing strategies at the national, subregional, regional and international levels that aim to prevent, mitigate and repair the damage caused by natural disasters that result from the El Niño phenomenon,

Noting that technological developments and international cooperation have enhanced the capabilities for the prediction of the El Niño phenomenon and thereby the potential for the preventive actions that may be taken to reduce its negative impacts,

Taking into account the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development¹ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),² in particular paragraph 37 (i) thereof,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,³ in particular the section entitled "International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon";

2. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Government of Ecuador, the World Meteorological Organization and the inter-agency secretariat for the International

¹ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

² *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

³ A/59/228.

Strategy for Disaster Reduction which led to the establishment of the International Centre for the Study of the El Niño Phenomenon at Guayaquil, Ecuador, and to its opening in February 2003, and encourages those parties to continue their efforts for the advancement of the Centre;

3. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General and the relevant United Nations organs, funds and programmes, in particular those taking part in the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, encourages the international community to adopt, as appropriate, the necessary measures to support the development of the International Centre for the Study of the El Niño Phenomenon, and invites the international community to provide scientific, technical and financial assistance and cooperation for this purpose, as well as to strengthen, as appropriate, other centres devoted to the study of the El Niño phenomenon;

4. *Encourages* the Centre to strengthen its links, as appropriate, with national meteorological and hydrological services of the Latin American region, the Permanent Commission for the South Pacific, the Inter-American Institute for Global Change Research and the International Research Institute for Climate Prediction, as well as with other relevant regional and global organizations that study climate, such as the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development, the Drought Monitoring Centre and the Asia-Pacific Network for Global Change Research, and other relevant centres, as appropriate, in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of the available resources;

5. *Underscores* the importance of maintaining the El Niño/Southern Oscillation observation system, continuing research into extreme weather events, improving forecasting skills and developing appropriate policies for reducing the impact of the El Niño phenomenon and other extreme weather events and emphasizes the need to further develop and strengthen these institutional capacities in all countries, in particular in developing countries;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution, under the item entitled "Sustainable development".

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Agenda item 85 (c)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/483/Add.3)]

59/233. Natural disasters and vulnerability

The General Assembly,

Recalling its decision 57/547 of 20 December 2002 and its resolution 58/215 of 23 December 2003,

Taking into account the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development¹ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,² adopted by the World Summit, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002,

Recognizing the need to continue to develop an understanding of, and to address, socio-economic activities that exacerbate the vulnerability of societies to natural disasters, to build and further strengthen community capacity to cope with disaster risks and to enhance resilience against hazards associated with disasters,

Noting that the global environment continues to suffer degradation, adding to economic and social vulnerabilities, in particular in developing countries,

Taking into account the various ways and forms in which all countries, in particular the more vulnerable countries, are affected by severe natural hazards such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions and extreme weather events such as heat waves, severe droughts, floods and storms, and the El Niño/La Niña events, which have global reach,

Recognizing that the impact of natural disasters upon vulnerable countries is, among others, a significant obstacle to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,³ in particular those relating to poverty eradication and environmental sustainability,

Expressing deep concern at the recent increases in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and associated natural disasters in some regions of the

¹ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

² *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

³ See resolution 55/2.

world and their substantial economic, social and environmental impacts, in particular upon developing countries in those regions,

Taking into account that extreme weather events and associated natural disasters and their reduction must be dealt with in a coherent and effective manner,

Expressing deep concern at the increasing negative impact of severe natural hazards, including earthquakes, extreme weather events and associated natural disasters, which continues to hinder social and economic progress, in particular in developing countries,

Stressing the need to develop and implement risk-reduction strategies, including disaster preparedness, mitigation and early warning systems at all levels, and to integrate them, where appropriate, into national development plans, in particular through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, so as to enhance the resilience of populations to disasters and reduce the risks to them, their livelihoods, the social and economic infrastructure and environmental resources,

Recognizing that the development of stronger institutions, mechanisms and capacities, including at the community level, that can systematically build resilience to hazards and disasters is essential to reducing the risks and vulnerability of populations to disasters,

Noting the need for international cooperation to increase the capacity of countries to respond to the negative impacts of all natural hazards, including earthquakes, extreme weather events and associated natural disasters, particularly in developing countries,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,⁴ in particular section II, on natural disasters and vulnerability;

2. *Urges* the international community to continue to address ways and means, including through cooperation and technical assistance, to reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters, including those caused by extreme weather events, in particular in vulnerable developing countries, through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and encourages the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction to continue its work in this regard;

3. *Stresses* the importance for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to conclude the review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action,⁵ with a view to updating the guiding framework on disaster reduction for the twenty-first century, and to identify specific activities aimed at ensuring the implementation of relevant provisions of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development² on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management, bearing in mind the vital importance of addressing the adverse effects of natural disasters in efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;³

4. *Emphasizes* that the World Conference on Disaster Reduction should, within its mandate as set out in General Assembly resolution 58/214 of

⁴ A/59/228.

⁵ A/CONF.172/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

23 December 2003, make concrete recommendations to reduce the risks and vulnerabilities of all countries, in particular developing countries, in relation to disasters, including through the provision of technical and financial assistance, as well as through the strengthening of International Strategy for Disaster Reduction national platforms for disaster reduction or the establishment of institutional mechanisms, including at the regional level, where appropriate;

5. *Encourages* Governments, through their respective International Strategy for Disaster Reduction national platforms and national focal points for disaster reduction, in cooperation with the United Nations system and other stakeholders, to strengthen capacity-building in the most vulnerable regions, to enable them to address the socio-economic factors that increase vulnerability, and to develop measures that will enable them to prepare for and cope with natural disasters, including those associated with earthquakes and extreme weather events, and encourages the international community to provide effective assistance to developing countries in this regard;

6. *Also encourages* the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction to continue to enhance the coordination of activities to promote disaster reduction and to make available to the relevant United Nations entities information on options for natural disaster reduction, including severe natural hazards and extreme weather-related disasters and vulnerabilities;

7. *Stresses* the importance of close cooperation and coordination among Governments, the United Nations system, other organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and other partners as appropriate, taking into account the need for the development of disaster management strategies, including the effective establishment of early warning systems, where appropriate, while taking advantage of all available resources and expertise for that purpose;

8. *Encourages* the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁶ and the parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁷ to continue to address the adverse effects of climate change, especially in developing countries that are particularly vulnerable, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and also encourages the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to continue to assess the adverse effects of climate change on the socio-economic and natural disaster reduction systems of developing countries;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution in a separate section of his report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and decides to consider the issue of natural disasters and vulnerability at that session, under the sub-item entitled "International Strategy for Disaster Reduction" of the item entitled "Sustainable development".

*75th plenary meeting
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⁶ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

⁷ FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.



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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/484/Add.5)]

58/214. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 44/236 of 22 December 1989, 49/22 A of 2 December 1994, 49/22 B of 20 December 1994, 53/185 of 15 December 1998, 54/219 of 22 December 1999, 56/195 of 21 December 2001 and 57/256 of 20 December 2002 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1999/63 of 30 July 1999 and 2001/35 of 26 July 2001, and taking into due consideration its resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003 on integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields,

Recalling also of the inclusion of the item “disaster management and vulnerability” in the multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development,¹

Emphasizing that disaster reduction, including reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, is an important element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

Noting the relevant provisions of the Ministerial Declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the Third World Water Forum, held in Kyoto, Japan, on 22 and 23 March 2003, on water-related disasters,²

Reiterating that, although natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, the long-term consequences of natural disasters are especially severe for developing countries and hamper the achievement of their sustainable development,

Recognizing the urgent need to further develop and make use of the existing scientific and technical knowledge to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters, and emphasizing the need for developing countries to have access to technology so as to tackle natural disasters effectively,

¹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 9 (E/2003/29)*, chap. I, sect. A.

² See A/57/785, annex.

Expressing its deep concern at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact within recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in developing countries,

Recognizing the need to continue to develop an understanding of, and to address, socio-economic activities that exacerbate the vulnerability of societies to natural disasters and to build and further strengthen community capability to cope with disaster risks,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;³

2. *Invites* Governments and relevant international organizations to consider disaster risk assessment as an integral component of development plans and poverty eradication programmes;

3. *Stresses* that continued cooperation and coordination among Governments, the United Nations system, other international organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and other partners, as appropriate, are considered essential to address effectively the impact of natural disasters;

4. *Recognizes* the importance of linking disaster risk management to regional frameworks, as appropriate, such as with the New Partnership for Africa's Development,⁴ to address issues of poverty eradication and sustainable development;

5. *Also recognizes* the importance of integrating a gender perspective as well as of engaging women in the design and implementation of all phases of disaster management, particularly in the disaster reduction stage;

6. *Further recognizes* the importance of early warning as an essential element of disaster reduction, and recommends the implementation of the outcome of the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn, Germany, from 16 to 18 October 2003, which highlighted the importance of strengthened coordination and cooperation to integrate activities and expertise of the various sectors involved in the early warning process and has contributed to the review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action;⁵

7. *Decides* to convene a World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005, at the senior-official level, designed to foster specialized discussions and produce concrete changes and results, with the following objectives:

(a) To conclude the review of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action, with a view to updating the guiding framework on disaster reduction for the twenty-first century;

(b) To identify specific activities aimed at ensuring the implementation of relevant provisions of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on

³ A/58/277.

⁴ A/57/304, annex.

⁵ A/CONF.172/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation")⁶ on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management;

(c) To share best practices and lessons learned to further disaster reduction within the context of attaining sustainable development and identify gaps and challenges;

(d) To increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies, thereby facilitating and promoting the implementation of those policies;

(e) To increase the reliability and availability of appropriate disaster-related information to the public and disaster management agencies in all regions, as set out in the relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

8. *Accepts with deep appreciation* the generous offer of the Government of Japan to host the Conference, and decides that the Conference will be held at Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005;

9. *Decides* to establish an open-ended intergovernmental preparatory committee for the Conference to review the organizational and substantive preparations for the Conference, approve the programme of work of the Conference and propose rules of procedure for adoption by the Conference, and also decides that the preparatory committee will meet at Geneva, following the 2004 semi-annual sessions of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, for up to two days each time, and that it will hold a one-day meeting at Kobe within the dates mentioned in paragraph 8 above, as necessary;

10. *Also decides* that the intergovernmental preparatory committee will have a bureau consisting of five representatives of Member States elected on the basis of equitable geographical representation;

11. *Invites* regional groups to nominate their candidates for the bureau of the preparatory committee by the end of January 2004, so that they can be involved in the preparations for the first meeting of the preparatory committee, and to notify the secretariat of the Conference of those nominations;

12. *Requests* the inter-agency secretariat for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to serve as the secretariat of the Conference and to coordinate preparatory activities, the costs of which will be funded extrabudgetarily through the Trust Fund for the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and in close cooperation with the host country and the preparatory committee for the Conference, with the full support of the relevant departments of the Secretariat;

13. *Understands* that the activities set out in paragraph 12 above will not hinder the other existing work and priorities of the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy;

14. *Invites* Member States, all United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and other relevant intergovernmental agencies and organizations, in particular the members of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, to participate actively in the Conference, as well as its preparatory process;

⁶ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

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15. *Welcomes* contributions from all regions that could provide substantive inputs to the preparatory process and the Conference itself;

16. *Encourages* effective contributions from major groups, as identified in Agenda 21,⁷ invites them to seek accreditation to the Conference and its preparatory process, and decides that their accreditation and participation will be in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the rules of procedure of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the established practice of the Commission on the participation and engagement of major groups;

17. *Decides* that the actual additional costs of the preparatory process and the Conference itself should be funded through extrabudgetary resources, without negatively affecting programmed activities, and through specific voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund for the Strategy;

18. *Requests* the Secretariat to provide conference services for the preparatory process and the Conference itself, the costs thereof to be borne by the host country, on the understanding that the Secretariat will ensure that its existing human resources are utilized to the maximum extent possible, without further charge to the host country;

19. *Encourages* the international community to provide the necessary financial resources to the Trust Fund for the Strategy and to provide the necessary scientific, technical, human and other resources to ensure adequate support for the activities of the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy and the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and its working groups, as well as to facilitate the preparations for the Conference;

20. *Expresses its appreciation* to those countries that have provided financial support for the activities of the Strategy by making voluntary contributions to its Trust Fund;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to allocate adequate financial and administrative resources, within existing resources, for the effective functioning of the inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy;

22. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, in particular on the state of preparations for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, under the item entitled "Environment and sustainable development".

*78th plenary meeting
23 December 2003*

⁷ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.



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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/484/Add.5)]

58/215. Natural disasters and vulnerability

The General Assembly,

Recalling its decision 57/547 of 20 December 2002,

Taking into account the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development¹ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”),²

Recognizing the need to continue to develop an understanding of, and to address, socio-economic activities that exacerbate the vulnerability of societies to natural disasters and to build and further strengthen community capacity to cope with disaster risks,

Noting that the global environment continues to suffer degradation, adding to economic and social vulnerabilities, in particular in developing countries,

Taking into account the various ways and forms in which all countries, in particular the more vulnerable developing countries, are affected by severe natural hazards, such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and extreme weather events such as heatwaves, severe droughts, floods and storms, and El Niño/La Niña events, which have global reach,

Expressing its deep concern at the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events and associated natural disasters,

Expressing its deep concern also at the enormous negative impact of severe natural hazards, including extreme weather events and associated natural disasters, which continues to hinder social and economic progress, in particular in developing countries,

Reiterating that, although natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of all countries, the long-term consequences of natural disasters are

¹ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

² *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

especially severe in developing countries and hamper their achievement of sustainable development,

Stressing that national authorities need to undertake disaster preparedness and mitigation efforts, in particular through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, so as to enhance the resilience of populations to disasters and reduce the risks to them, their livelihoods, the social and economic infrastructure and environmental resources,

Recalling that the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction provides a framework for collaboration on the development of methodologies to systematically characterize, measure, assess and respond to natural disasters, including weather-related disasters, hazards and vulnerabilities,

Taking into account the fact that extreme weather events and associated natural disasters and their reduction must be dealt with in a coherent manner,

Noting the need for international cooperation to increase the capacity of countries to respond to the negative impacts of all natural hazards, including extreme weather events and associated natural disasters, particularly in developing countries,

Emphasizing the importance of raising awareness among developing countries of the capacities existing at the national, regional and international levels that could be deployed to assist them,

Taking note of the outcome of the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn, Germany, from 16 to 18 October 2003,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,³ in particular the section on the negative impacts of extreme weather events and associated natural disasters on vulnerable countries, in particular developing countries, as requested by the Assembly in its decision 57/547;

2. *Urges* the international community to continue to address ways and means, including through cooperation and technical assistance, to reduce the adverse effects of natural disasters, including those caused by extreme weather events, in particular in vulnerable developing countries, through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and encourages the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction to continue its work in this regard;

3. *Encourages* Governments to establish effective national platforms or focal points for disaster reduction, and to strengthen them where they already exist;

4. *Also encourages* Governments, in cooperation with the United Nations system and other stakeholders, to strengthen capacity-building in the most vulnerable regions, to enable them to address the socio-economic factors that increase vulnerability, and encourages the international community to provide effective assistance to developing countries in this regard;

5. *Encourages* the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction to enhance the coordination on the promotion of disaster reduction as well as to make available to the relevant United Nations entities information on options for natural

³ A/58/277.

disaster reduction, including severe natural hazards and extreme weather-related disasters and vulnerabilities;

6. *Encourages* the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁴ and the parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁵ to continue to address the adverse effects of climate change, especially in those developing countries that are particularly vulnerable, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, and also encourages the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to continue to assess the adverse effects of climate change on the socio-economic and natural disaster reduction systems of developing countries;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution in a separate section of his report on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and decides to consider the issue of natural disasters and vulnerability at that session, under the sub-item “International Strategy for Disaster Reduction” of the item entitled “Environment and sustainable development”.

*78th plenary meeting
23 December 2003*

⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

⁵ FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

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Sixtieth session

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**Sustainable development: International Strategy for
Disaster Reduction**

**Implementation of the International Strategy for
Disaster Reduction**

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The powerful Indian Ocean earthquake and the tsunami of 26 December 2004 and the outcomes of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction had far-reaching influences on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction during the past 12 months.

The tsunami triggered one of the most devastating disasters in living memory. There is widespread recognition that, if an early warning system for tsunamis had been in place in that region, many thousands of lives could have been saved.

The World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held at Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, adopted the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, which represent a landmark in universal understanding of disasters induced by natural hazards and reflect a solid commitment to implement a disaster reduction agenda. States, international and regional organizations and other stakeholders resolved to pursue a substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of countries and communities over the next 10 years. The Conference demonstrated that the world community urgently needs to join forces to break the vicious circle between poverty, environmental degradation and lack of preparation that turns natural hazards into disasters that destroy hard-won development gains. Numerous organizations of the United Nations system, regional bodies, Governments and civil society participate actively in the Strategy and its mechanisms to coordinate and guide disaster risk reduction and its integration into development planning and action.

* A/60/150.

The present report provides an overview of the implementation of the Strategy and the follow-up to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/231. It summarizes the essential elements of the Hyogo Framework for Action and gives an account of the follow-up actions taken under the Strategy by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, the inter-agency secretariat of the Strategy, national and regional entities and international organizations. The report contains a section on disasters associated with natural hazards and vulnerability, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 59/233, to highlight the role of disaster risk reduction as an essential policy tool to reduce vulnerability and reach the goals set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. It also reports on the advancements of early warning systems following the Indian Ocean tsunami.

Several studies, independent evaluations and consultations on the capacities and functioning of the international mechanisms for disaster reduction have pointed to the need for substantial changes and strengthening of the Strategy system in order to better support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework and meet the needs of its many stakeholders. Proposed changes to achieve such strengthening are outlined in the report.

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I. World Conference on Disaster Reduction Follow-up to the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters

A. Introduction

1. In its resolution 58/214, the General Assembly decided to convene a World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January 2005. That conference was held (a) to conclude a review of the 10-year-old Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and of the Strategy Plan of Action, with a view to updating the guiding framework on disaster reduction for the twenty-first century; (b) to identify specific actions aimed at ensuring the implementation of the relevant provisions of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation) in the areas of vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management; (c) to share best practices and lessons learned to further disaster reduction; (d) to increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies; and (e) to increase the reliability and availability of disaster-related information to the public and disaster management agencies in all regions. The Strategy secretariat was to serve as the secretariat of the Conference and to coordinate preparatory activities.

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 59/231, reiterated its invitation to Member States, all United Nations bodies and specialized agencies and other relevant intergovernmental agencies and organizations, in particular the members of the Task Force, to participate actively in the Conference. It also requested the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, at its sixtieth session, a report on the implementation of the resolution, and in particular on the outcome of that Conference.

3. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction, hosted by the Government of Japan, was held in Kobe, Hyogo, from 18 to 22 January 2005, just three weeks after a powerful earthquake and tsunami had engulfed the Indian Ocean region and had caused one of the most devastating disasters in living memory. According to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters in Brussels, during the period May 2004-April 2005, disasters associated with natural hazards killed nearly 250,000 people worldwide and affected, mainly through injuries and material losses, some 157 million people, causing damage evaluated at some US\$ 102 billion.

4. The Conference attracted worldwide attention and assumed an unprecedented level of significance with regard to disaster risk reduction. It brought together some 4,000 people from interested public and private entities from around the world, with participants from 168 States, 78 observer bodies, 161 non-governmental organizations and 562 journalists representing 152 media organizations. The Public Forum, which offered a platform for information exchange with the public, welcomed some 40,000 participants and hosted 66 workshops.

5. The Conference represented a landmark in worldwide understanding of and commitment to implementing a comprehensive disaster risk reduction agenda. It revealed the wealth of knowledge and practical abilities that exists in the area of

disaster risk reduction but which has not been made available in a consolidated manner or applied as effectively as it could have been. It also revealed the outstanding challenges to ensure that development sectors within the United Nations system, international financial institutions, national and local public administrations and the private sector adopt risk assessments and disaster-resilient development practices. Problematic issues related to the financing of such undertakings are frequently unresolved. Lessons learned from the tsunami-hit countries also revealed other weaknesses pointing to the need for increased educational and awareness programmes, early warning and institutional preparedness capacities.

6. In the course of the preparatory work and debates, the Conference helped shape the emergence of a new political will to translate words into action and to apply available human and technical resources to the search for solutions in disaster-prone countries and regions around the world. The Conference forcefully demonstrated that the tragedy in the Indian Ocean region had strengthened the determination of participants to reach tangible conclusions and to agree on a clearly defined action plan against which commitments and achievements could be measured in the future. That political will was expressed in the Conference outcomes (see A/CONF.206/6), the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, a Common statement of the Special Session on the Indian Ocean Disaster: risk reduction for a safer future and the Review of the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World.

B. Essential elements of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015

7. The Hyogo Framework provides a clear and authoritative framework for pursuing disaster risk reduction and builds on other relevant multilateral frameworks and declarations (see A/CONF.206/6, chap. I, resolution 2). The Framework constitutes an agreement that was developed through exhaustive negotiations between States, experts and collaborating organizations. It reflects their intention to take a holistic approach in identifying and putting into action complex multidisciplinary disaster risk reduction measures over the next 10 years. Most important, it gives new impetus to the strategies outlined in the Yokohama Strategy by setting out the collective and individual roles and responsibilities of groups of stakeholders in its implementation and follow-up.

8. Starting with the premise that the expected outcome should be a substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries, to be achieved over the next 10 years, the Hyogo Framework calls for the pursuit of the following three strategic goals:

(a) More effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction;

(b) Development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular the community level, with a view to contributing systematically to building resilience to hazards;

(c) Systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes for the post-disaster reconstruction of affected communities.

9. In addition, the Conference adopted the following five priorities for future action, with a set of key activities:

(a) Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation;

(b) Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning;

(c) Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels;

(d) Reduce the underlying risk factors;

(e) Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

10. The Hyogo Framework emphasizes that the primary responsibility for implementation and follow-up lies with States, involving national public administration structures, the scientific community and civil society. States are called upon to build a strong sense of ownership in the area of disaster risk reduction within their populations and support of local Governments capacities. Most important, States should also conceive mechanisms that allow bottom-up disaster risk reduction initiatives, originating at the community level and contributing to the shaping of disaster risk reduction policy and programmes at the national level.

11. The roles of regional institutions and organizations include transnational responsibilities, since disasters and risk are not bound by national borders. In that context, the Hyogo Framework specifically notes the need for developing regional initiatives and the risk reduction capacities of regional mechanisms.

12. International organizations, including those of the United Nations system and international financial institutions, are called upon to integrate the goals of the Hyogo Framework into their own strategies, making use of existing coordination mechanisms such as the United Nations Development Group and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, as well as the resident coordinator system and United Nations country teams. They should assist disaster-prone developing countries in their efforts to increase institutional and technical capacities to address the priorities set out in the Hyogo Framework.

13. The Strategy system, through the Task Force, platforms and the secretariat, in collaboration with agencies and experts, is to provide support to this process, specifically to assist in facilitating and coordinating action among stakeholders. The Strategy system also has a decisive role in furthering advocacy and resource mobilization and information-sharing and reporting.

C. Follow-up action by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system

14. Following the Conference, as a first step in the follow-up process, the secretariat conducted a broad-based consultation with the Strategy stakeholders and Task Force members, and presented to the Task Force, at its eleventh session in May 2005, a set of strategic directions to assist in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. The Task Force reworked and adopted those directions and requested that guiding principles be specifically brought to the attention of States, national platforms and the constituencies of the Task Force members to support them in setting their implementation policy parameters as follows:

(a) The Hyogo Framework is the cornerstone of the Strategy. The task of the Strategy system in the coming years will be to implement the Hyogo Framework;

(b) National and local implementation of the Hyogo Framework is the essential goal for the Strategy system. All key actors (national and local Governments, civil society, regional and international organizations) should join forces towards that goal;

(c) Disaster risk reduction is an integral part of sustainable development and one of the essential prerequisites for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

(d) Disaster risk reduction diminishes the need for humanitarian emergency interventions in the aftermath of disasters;

(e) Investment in disaster risk reduction thus enhances sustainable development and enables humanitarian assistance capacity to be applied more effectively;

(f) The Hyogo Framework calls for concerted and well-sequenced actions. Key priorities and actions will therefore have to be selected for local, national, regional and global levels.

15. In the implementation of the Hyogo Framework, a particularly crucial role is assigned to the national-level stakeholders. In countries with established coordination mechanisms or systems assisted by the United Nations system, the support of resident/humanitarian coordinators and United Nations country teams is called for to help design disaster risk reduction measures with a sense of urgency. To ensure the sustained effective implementation of such measures, it is important that disaster risk reduction initiatives build on the development needs and initiatives generated at the local level.

16. With the adoption of the strategic directions, the Strategy system is called upon to focus on the following areas:

(a) Institutional commitments: support for national action plans and priorities, including national platforms for disaster risk reduction; facilitation of a matrix of commitments and initiatives of the Strategy system, outlining responsibilities, resources and action programmes to enable participating organizations to set up collaborative arrangements and multi-stakeholder partnerships; and facilitation of regional initiatives;

(b) Planning and programming: development of planning and programming tools for use as disaster risk reduction instruments, to be included in common country assessments (CCAs), United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and poverty reduction strategy papers; preparation of planning guidance tools for priority action at national and community levels in individual sectors such as public administration, urban management, environment, health, education, water, agriculture and telecommunications;

(c) Awareness and advocacy: formulation of awareness and advocacy strategies for specific general and local uses; preparation of annual awareness campaigns for the International Day for Disaster Reduction; training tools and organization of inter-agency workshops;

(d) Reporting on progress and monitoring: identification of appropriately adapted sets of benchmarks and generic indicators to measure progress in reaching the goals and priorities of the Hyogo Framework at global, national and local levels; incorporation of disaster risk reduction parameters into existing United Nations and intergovernmental reporting requirements related to the Millennium Development Goals, sustainable development and climate change adaptation; and nomination of lead agencies for effective guidance and reporting, as reflected in the matrix-based description of commitments and initiatives.

D. International commitments

17. The Task Force decided at its eleventh session that a matrix should be prepared, showing commitments and initiatives in support of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. That matrix is currently being developed, coordinated by the secretariat, to be circulated later in 2005. It will identify the task managers drawn from specialized agencies, funds and programmes, technical networks and regional organizations, taking responsibility on behalf of their international organizations (governmental and non-governmental) for follow-up and support to the five priority areas of the Hyogo Framework. Detailed information on strategic commitments and distribution of tasks will be compiled by the secretariat, with updates being supplied through the website www.unisdr.org. Specific actions by stakeholders and United Nations agencies will be described in periodic progress reports, consolidated and disseminated by the secretariat, according to the five priority areas. A set of tentative benchmarks, guidelines and generic indicators that can be adapted to national environments is being developed, facilitated by the Strategy secretariat and the involvement of Task Force members and national experts.

18. Many United Nations agencies and programmes, as well as other international and regional organizations and bodies, have initiated national and regional follow-up to the provisions of the Hyogo Framework. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee is reviewing its potential role in the area of preparedness for effective response, while the Strategy secretariat and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have initiated plans with the United Nations Development Group Office with a view to supporting United Nations country teams. Some organizations, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), have reoriented their planning processes by redirecting the allocation of resources to ensure that their activities are

aligned with the parameters set by the Hyogo Framework. Specifically, the 57th WMO Executive Council approved an organization-wide coordination framework and a detailed implementation plan for the multihazard approach of the organization to disaster reduction, led by its Natural Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Programme. WMO has engaged in strategic partnerships with key agencies to ensure that warnings issued by national meteorological and hydrological services be used more effectively for preparedness and emergency response at the international level through to the local level. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Telecommunication Standardization Advisory Group proposed an action plan in March 2005 to develop technical standards in support of telecommunications for disaster preparedness and early warning.

19. Thematic platforms and networks will be engaged or, where necessary, specifically developed to assist in the implementation of distinct components of the Hyogo Framework. These include the Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning, currently operated by the Strategy secretariat, and the International Recovery Platform, recently launched in Kobe by the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre, the Government of Japan, the International Labour Organization, the Strategy secretariat, UNDP and the World Bank. The purpose of the Platform, to be operated by UNDP, is to develop a mechanism to integrate systematically risk reduction into post-disaster recovery efforts and to benefit from lessons learned. The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme have also committed staff time and resources to support the Platform. In a related area, UNDP, together with the German Technical Cooperation, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the ProVention Consortium, UNEP, UNV and the World Bank, is developing a system-wide post-disaster needs assessment methodology to support in-country recovery planning frameworks. UNEP is working on post-disaster assessments of environmental impacts, with a view to incorporating environmental concerns into the design of processes of recovery and restoration. Other platforms essentially focusing on information sharing and knowledge management, the strengthening of institutions, training and environmental risk management are being discussed under the aegis of the Strategy.

E. National and regional developments and initiatives

20. The emphasis of the Hyogo Framework on the national dimension in its implementation and follow-up, with the primary responsibility of States, requires, as a corollary, the development of strong participatory and collaborative ties with civil society and national and local authorities with the national development sectors, the national disaster management systems and scientific and technical support organizations. The Hyogo Framework specifically calls for the establishment or strengthening of national platforms for disaster risk reduction, anchored to existing national systems, to review, coordinate, guide and support the national commitments.

21. The pursuit of that national ownership requirement has already stimulated tangible follow-up. National workshops for disaster risk reduction in countries including China, Costa Rica, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Peru, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam and Yemen have been held or are being planned with a multisectoral approach to determine national priorities in implementing the Hyogo Framework. National

platforms have also facilitated coordination across sectors at national and regional levels to promote disaster risk reduction awareness. Initiatives are under way in Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Chad, China, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Madagascar, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Senegal, Seychelles, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda to review national disaster risk reduction plans and to strengthen or create national platforms in support of broader national policy initiatives and the development of sustainable institutional systems to deal with disaster risk. As an example, Bangladesh published its *Corporate Plan 2005-2009: A Framework for Action*, which lays out a national vision to “reduce the vulnerability of the people, especially the poor, to the effects of natural, environmental and human induced hazards”. The Plan defines goals and key result areas, drawing from global agendas and national inputs, including the Strategy and its Hyogo Framework, the Millennium Development Goals, the World Summit for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, poverty reduction strategy papers and UNDAFs. Following the Conference, the Islamic Republic of Iran established a secretariat within its Natural Disaster Research Institute to help implement the Hyogo Framework. The secretariat is constituted of representatives of relevant ministries and institutions, which are in the process of preparing a 10-year plan of action to achieve disaster risk reduction. India set up its national disaster management authority to strengthen the national and institutional legislative system to deal with disaster risk reduction.

22. Interactions and collaboration among national platforms are increasing through multilateral and bilateral meetings, assisted by the Strategy secretariat and Task Force members. For example, with the regional unit of the Strategy secretariat acting as a facilitator and the African Union Commission as a host, a forum of national platform focal points of African countries was launched within the context of the Africa Regional Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction. The forum agreed to meet regularly at the regional level to share information and experiences with the principal objective of monitoring and influencing national implementation of the Hyogo Framework. Similarly, national platforms in Europe (Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain and Sweden) have developed a self-organized process of networking.

Regional

23. While the impetus may vary from one region to another, as reiterated during the regional sessions held at the Conference, regional and subregional organizations continue to play a crucial role in the implementation of the Strategy. The Task Force requested the secretariat at its eleventh session¹ to prepare a review of regional and subregional strategies for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework and progress in the strengthening of the regional outreach of the Strategy system, as a means to help foster and strengthen cooperation on disaster reduction among existing regional stakeholders, cross-fertilize their activities and promote regional partnerships.

24. The regional nature of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster, both in its impact across the whole Indian Ocean rim and in the response, is a further reminder of the importance of regional approaches in disaster risk reduction. A coordination mechanism² under the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission has been put in place to facilitate regional capacities for the detection of potential tsunamigenic events and to issue warnings. Regional institutions³ are contributing to the establishment of a tsunami early warning system for the region. The common

statement adopted at the Conference requested the Strategy secretariat to report on regional mechanisms for disaster reduction to the General Assembly (see A/CONF.206/6, annex II).

25. In order to better support stakeholders at national and regional levels, the Strategy secretariat is currently strengthening its regional outreach capacities in close collaboration with UNDP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and regional organizations. In addition to the existing outreach units for Africa (Nairobi-based, hosted by UNEP) and Latin America and the Caribbean (San José and Panama, hosted by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)/WHO), Strategy units have been developed for Asia since May 2005 (based in Bangkok, hosted by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), with a staff member in Central Asia since 2004 (based in Dushanbe, hosted by UNDP). Those units work in close coordination with the regional advisers for disaster reduction of the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs regional disaster response advisers. In support of this, UNDP will deploy national disaster risk reduction advisers to assist national efforts in capacity-building for disaster risk reduction in 20 of the most disaster-prone countries of the world.

26. Previous reports of the Secretary-General (A/59/228, A/58/277) have outlined regional political commitments made towards disaster risk reduction. Numerous regional consultations are supporting regional efforts to implement the Hyogo Framework, as detailed below. It is particularly encouraging to see initiatives in regions previously less active in the area of disaster risk reduction.

27. The United Nations is reviewing current progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, in which the issue of disaster risk is recognized as an important area of focus in coming years. Similarly, the follow-up to the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States includes the issues of disaster risk reduction and the Hyogo Framework. A key challenge and a priority of the Strategy secretariat is to facilitate coherence between those processes and ensure that they are mutually reinforcing.

Africa

28. African Governments have been particularly responsive to the Hyogo Framework, building on ongoing commitments to disaster reduction. The African Union (AU) Commission and its New Partnership for Africa's Development secretariat, working under the umbrella of the Africa Working Group of the Task Force and assisted by the Strategy secretariat regional unit, UNDP, the African Development Bank and other partners, facilitated country-level consultations to develop an African regional strategy for disaster risk reduction. That strategy was adopted by the AU and the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment and acknowledged by the Assembly of the African Union in 2004. To strengthen that process following the Conference, an intergovernmental advisory group⁴ was established to help mobilize higher levels of political commitment and link national needs and concerns with United Nations assistance in disaster risk reduction.

29. Levels of commitment and progress at the subregional level require further strengthening. New developments include partnerships in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to promote disaster risk reduction and to design subregional common policies on disaster risk reduction.

Asia and the Pacific

30. In Asia, Governments are building greater commitments to disaster risk reduction through several mechanisms. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Committee on Disaster Management is working with national authorities to facilitate coordination among its Member States in managing regional cooperation in disaster management and emergency response. It proposed a regional agreement on such collaboration to its members for ratification.

31. Pacific countries are developing, with the support of the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, a strategy for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework in their region. The guiding principles of the strategy address specific gaps and challenges identified by Pacific Island communities through the Commission Pacific Islands Regional Progress Report (1994-2004) and the Pacific regional position paper prepared for the Conference.

32. ESCAP contributes, through its 52 members and associate members, to the mainstreaming of disaster reduction into sustainable development, with particular focus on water-related disasters, especially floods and drought. The Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, based in Bangkok, is working through the Consultative Committee on Regional Cooperation in Disaster Management on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into the social and economic development efforts of the Governments of the region. The Committee comprises heads of national disaster management authorities from 24 countries in Asia. The Asian Disaster Reduction Centre is a specialized organization for disaster reduction based in Kobe, Japan. Composed of 23 member countries and four additional advisory countries, the Centre relates to focal points in participating Governments and facilitates the exchange of information and training. Its next annual conference, to be held in Seoul in March 2006, will address issues related to the institutional basis for disaster risk reduction, recovery and risk communication, in response to the Hyogo Framework.

33. To maximize the respective strategic advantages of each organization in planning and implementing concrete initiatives for the benefit of Asian communities and countries, the open-ended International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Asia Partnership for disaster reduction was established jointly by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre, UNDP, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, ESCAP and the Strategy secretariat.

34. In Central Asia, the Strategy secretariat, with several agencies, including UNDP and the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre, facilitated consultative meetings to bring together Government representatives, international organizations and donor agencies to enhance information exchange and cooperation. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan are now in the process of establishing national strategies in the region for the coming 10 years.

35. The Chinese Government will be hosting a high-level Asian conference on disaster reduction in Beijing in September 2005 to take stock of progress and seek to raise the commitment in the region to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. China offered to host an international centre for collaboration on drought-related issues in the region. Similarly, the hosting of a centre for collaboration on seismic risk issues is planned by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

36. Regional networks of NGOs in support of disaster reduction have become more active in the preparation of and follow-up to the Conference. The Asian Disaster Reduction and Response Network (see www.adrrn.net) was formed in 2002 to support NGO activities and promote cooperation. UNV is developing a regional initiative for capacity-building of national and local volunteer resources and NGOs, with a view to increasing community preparedness for disasters in South Asia. UNV is also strengthening the regional South-South cooperation modality for exchanging United Nations Volunteers with disaster risk management expertise for initial response to disasters and recovery.

Latin America and the Caribbean

37. The Organization of American States (OAS) called, at the most recent session of its General Assembly, for a joint consultative body of the Permanent Council on Hemispheric Security and the Inter-American Council for Integral Development/Permanent Executive Committee to work on the immediate implementation of risk management recommendations, review existing OAS structures and propose a single Inter-American committee to address all aspects of disaster management. It will convene a hemispheric meeting on the costs and benefits of investing in disaster risk reduction and will bring forward recommendations to the OAS Permanent Council to urge member States to establish short time frames for the implementation of the recommendations of the Inter-American Strategic Plan for Policy on Vulnerability Reduction, Risk Management and Disaster Response, and to work in close collaboration with the Strategy secretariat, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, IFRC and other relevant partners. Natural hazard risk reduction is one of three agenda items of the upcoming First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers and High-Level Officials on Sustainable Development in 2005.

38. Cuba hosted a meeting organized by the Association of Caribbean States, the United Nations system (UNDP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), IFRC and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Management Agency, in cooperation with the Strategy secretariat.⁵ In support of the Hyogo Framework, it promoted cross-cultural networks for disaster risk reduction to facilitate collaboration and exchange of disaster risk reduction lessons and good practices among English-, Spanish-, Dutch- and French-speaking countries and territories, building on the network developed by UNDP as part of the Caribbean Risk Management Initiative.

39. Other regional activities contribute to the priorities set out in the Hyogo Framework. In response to the December 2004 tsunami, the Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America convened a meeting for representatives from different sectors to discuss a regional strategy for implementing a Central American tsunami early warning system, and to secure resources for updating the Central America regional disaster reduction plan

(2006-2015). PAHO/WHO has been assisting countries in implementing the Hyogo Framework recommendations for ensuring safer hospitals by 2015. Practical guidelines for making hospitals safe will be produced by the end of 2005. Several countries found it practical to use disaster resistant hospitals as an example of a benchmark for reducing overall disaster risk. Andean countries have integrated the Hyogo Framework in the implementation of the Andean strategy approved by Heads of States in July 2004.

Europe

40. Triggered by the December 2004 tsunami, the European Commission issued a communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions,⁶ in which the Commission recognized the broad range of policies and financing instruments at its disposal that can contribute to disaster risk reduction. The Commission is conscious of the need for a more coherent European approach and sees the Hyogo Framework as the appropriate starting point.

41. The European Commission and the Africa-Caribbean-Pacific States (ACP) secretariat established an ACP-European Union (EU) Natural Disaster Facility to support ACP countries in building up resilience to disasters, as called for by the Hyogo Framework. That initiative has recently been endorsed by the EU and is expected to start its activities in the near future in collaboration with the Strategy secretariat and other partners.

II. Disasters associated with natural hazards and vulnerability: a development challenge

42. General Assembly resolution 59/233 calls for assistance to countries to reduce their vulnerability to disasters, which constitutes an essential requirement for their development. The Hyogo Framework acknowledges that "Disaster risk reduction is a cross-cutting issue in the context of sustainable development and therefore an important element for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration" (see A/CONF.206/6, chap. I, resolution 2). Countries from sub-Saharan Africa were identified as those least likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.⁷ Those countries are also some of the most vulnerable to disasters.

43. Much work remains in order to change the development paradigm to seriously assess and reduce disaster risk. The Atlantic hurricane season in 2004 and its early start in 2005 caused significant loss of life and damage to property in the Caribbean, where the most vulnerable were the hardest hit. Severe to moderate droughts in mid-2005 affected Austria, the Balkan countries, France, Hungary, Italy, Portugal and Spain, leading to important agricultural losses. Earlier in 2005, landslides and an earthquake in Indonesia, avalanches in India, floods in Pakistan and Ethiopia, and an earthquake in the Islamic Republic of Iran left devastation in their wake. Currently two thirds of all disasters are climate- or weather-related and the trend of increase in their number outnumber other hazards. According to the World Meteorological Organization, 2004 was the fourth hottest year since 1861, bringing heat waves, drought and an above-average number of hurricanes and deadly typhoons to some regions of the world, while others experienced disastrous floods

and mudslides produced by above-average precipitation. According to a recent study by Columbia University and the World Bank, between 85 and 95 per cent of the population and GDP located in disaster risk hotspots globally are at risk due to climate-related hazards.

44. Some progress is being made towards overcoming vulnerability to natural hazards by integrating disaster reduction measures into development strategies. Those efforts involve linking climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, as well as ensuring that implementation of the Millennium Development Goals supports disaster risk reduction. Global initiatives are supporting the development of tools and guidelines to facilitate the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development planning frameworks. That constitutes an important leap forward in supporting the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. UNDP has initiated a global project in support of those objectives, using as a vehicle country cooperation frameworks, multi-year funding frameworks and country programmes. Guidelines for CCA/UNDAF on disaster risk reduction are being developed by UNDP and the Strategy secretariat with the International Labour Organization, WHO and others within the United Nations Development Group. Several countries, including Bangladesh, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mauritius and Uganda, have incorporated disaster risk reduction measures into their CCAs and UNDAFs, elaborated with the assistance of United Nations country teams. The ProVention Consortium is developing a set of disaster risk reduction mainstreaming tools, addressing the process of poverty reduction strategy papers, budgetary support and country strategy papers.

45. In the ongoing effort to develop generic indicators for the implementation of the Hyogo Framework, a parallel discussion is being promoted by the Strategy secretariat on revised indicators for the Millennium Development Goals to measure disaster resilience in progress towards reducing poverty and hunger, the provision of water, sanitation, security for slum dwellers and environmental sustainability. For instance, it is critical to measure whether the reduction of poverty, hunger and insecurity of tenure for slum-dwellers through Millennium Development Goal efforts is lost in years of drought, floods or earthquakes; i.e., it must be ensured that development gains are not undone by disaster losses. Interventions to increase agricultural productivity to reduce poverty and hunger through greater extraction of water must be balanced with water conservation measures.

Integrating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction

46. The technical and institutional links between adaptation to climate change and disaster risk reduction are under increasing discussion. The eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Buenos Aires in December 2004, recognized the issue. Some countries advocate for the involvement of the disaster reduction community in the Convention Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice. Similarly, the inclusion of climate change as an underlying risk factor for disasters was greatly debated at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. The Hyogo Framework includes the following priority action: "Promote the integration of risk reduction associated with existing climate variability and future climate change into strategies for the reduction of disaster risk and adaptation to climate change, which would include the clear identification of climate-related disaster risks, the design of specific risk reduction measures and an improved and routine use of climate risk

information by planners, engineers and other decision-makers” (see A/CONF.206/6, chap. I, resolution 2). In addition, with regard to resource mobilization, States agreed to “mainstream disaster risk reduction measures appropriately into multilateral and bilateral development assistance programmes, including those related to poverty reduction, natural resource management, urban development and adaptation to climate change” (see A/CONF.206/6, chap. I, resolution 2).

47. The Task Force created the Working Group on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, co-chaired by UNDP and WMO, to focus on the promotion of an integrated approach to climate risk. The Working Group assisted the Vulnerability and Adaptation Resource Group, an informal group of resource stakeholders, in the development of a discussion paper entitled “Disaster risk management in a changing climate”, presented at the Conference, for use in promoting climate risk management issues in development agencies. Other Working Group activities include collaboration with the Least Developed Countries Expert Group of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to assist the poorest developing countries in accessing disaster reduction best practices for adaptation to climate change. In the context of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP has initiated a programme for integrated risk management and climate change adaptation for a growing portfolio of projects. WMO has strengthened its capacity to assist countries in managing climate-related risks, improving historical climate records, capacity-building and training. Several WMO departments also contribute to the enhancement of regional climate outlook forum networks that strengthen capacity to anticipate and manage climate variability and change in sensitive regions and sectors. The Red Cross/Red Crescent Climate Centre second International Work Conference on Climate Change and Disaster Reduction brought together country practitioners and experts from the two fields to advance collaboration.

III. Global development of early warning systems following the 26 December 2004 tsunami

48. Good progress is being made in developing an early warning system for tsunamis in the Indian Ocean region. This follows widespread recognition that, if such a system had been in place prior to the tragedy of December 2004, many thousands of lives could have been saved. The countries of the region are working to establish national tsunami warning centres and have agreed on the principles of a multilateral mechanism for strengthening regional ocean observing systems and exchanging data and warning information under the leadership of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. An interim tsunami advisory system has been put in place and WMO is taking steps to upgrade the necessary telecommunications capabilities. Multi-agency assessment missions led by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission are under way to identify country needs for technical assistance. Three familiarization study tours on tsunamis have been organized by the Strategy, the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre for national high-level administrators of the region, and joint training for technical personnel and television broadcasters has been undertaken. Further activities are planned, including technical training and public awareness activities, to help develop the capacities of communities to understand their tsunami risks and to effectively respond to warnings, and the development of lessons learned and good practice information.

49. Those activities have been supported by a multipartner project coordinated by the Strategy secretariat through its platform for the promotion of early warning and funded through the United Nations flash appeal for the affected countries. The project provides an integrated framework for strengthening early warning systems in the region, recognizing the need to develop the tsunami early warning system within the context of multiple hazards, disaster management capacities and risk reduction. The project donors include the European Commission, Finland, Germany, Japan, Norway and Sweden. While efforts to date are putting the essential groundwork in place, it should be recognized that substantial additional effort and resources are still required to establish a fully fledged early warning system, with a sound technical footing, to be integrated, with effective public engagement, into disaster management and response systems for all hazards. It is important to note that several other ocean basins, such as the Caribbean basin and the Mediterranean basin, are also at high risk to tsunamis and need improved early warning capacities.

50. The Hyogo Framework sets out specific priorities for action on early warning for all hazards and on associated risk assessment and preparedness. In the report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005), the Secretary-General proposed that the United Nations system should take a leadership role in developing comprehensive global capacities for systematic, people-centred early warning systems covering all hazards and all countries and communities. To that end, he requested the Strategy secretariat to coordinate a global survey of early warning system capacities and gaps, in cooperation with other relevant organizations, with a view to identifying priority steps needed to achieve such a comprehensive capacity. The survey is expected to be available in early 2006.

51. A number of important related initiatives have been pursued, including the launching of the International Early Warning Programme by United Nations partners at the Conference as a vehicle to stimulate cooperation and advances in early warning systems, the establishment of the multilateral Global Earth Observation System of Systems initiative, hosted by WMO, whose data underpin early warning and disaster reduction, and the statement of strong support that the G-8 leaders voiced this year at Gleneagles, Scotland, with regard to disaster risk reduction, the Strategy and the development of early warning as a means to reduce disaster risks. Under the auspices of the United Nations, Germany is organizing, to hold in March 2006, a timely third International Conference on Early Warning. The conference will, among other things, seek to stimulate and showcase concrete projects to build early warning systems for vulnerable countries.

IV. Enabling the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system to effectively support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework

52. The successful and coherent implementation of the Hyogo Framework requires the strengthening of the capacity of the Strategy system to provide a solid basis for action, and clear roles and responsibilities among the various stakeholders. Increased commitment and engagement by Governments, United Nations agencies, regional entities and civil society organizations, and systematic tracking of disaster reduction investments are required. The consequences of the recent tsunami tragedy also demonstrated that such strengthening has become an urgent issue.

53. A number of studies, evaluations and consultations⁸ on the functioning of the Strategy mechanisms, its current capacities and potentials and the capacities and value-added of the United Nations system to deal with disaster risk issues provided the basis for the formulation of new proposals for future functions and the development of the Strategy. They have built on the reports of the Secretary-General (A/54/497; A/54/136-E/1999/89) and General Assembly resolution 54/219 and Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/63.

54. The main elements of the proposed strengthened system are:

(a) Overall responsibility for the Strategy within the United Nations would remain with the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, with a permanent vice-chair representing the United Nations Development Group, supported by a management oversight board;

(b) An expanded and reformed Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction (for current membership, see www.unisdr.org) that would serve as a global forum on disaster risk reduction and advise on and commit to supporting the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. Its membership would include Governments and United Nations agencies, regional organizations and civil society, and it would be renamed the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. A subsidiary programme advisory committee would review and coordinate the work programmes of the global platform and its associated entities;

(c) A strengthened Strategy secretariat would have the following core functions:

- Tracking the overall implementation of the Hyogo Framework, facilitating reviews of experience and preparing progress reports
- Promoting a worldwide culture of risk reduction, acting as a “clearing house” for information and communication materials, advocated with broad inter-agency collaboration and networks of expertise
- Facilitating and servicing the successor to the Task Force, the management oversight board and regional and thematic platforms and networks, encouraging policy development and reviews, and supporting cooperation among members
- Supporting national platforms for disaster risk reduction with information and policy advice, acting as a broker for the provision of technical expertise and resources to national and thematic programmes
- Serving as the focal point within the United Nations system for the coordination and harmonization of policies and strategies for disaster risk reduction, encouraging synergy between the humanitarian and socio-economic development policies and strategies of the United Nations system
- Advocating resource mobilization, establishing tracking and reporting systems, administering the Strategy Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction

(d) The secretariat would remain a distinct entity within the Secretariat, with accountability to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs;

(e) Active regional networks to strengthen advocacy for disaster risk reduction and cooperation at regional and subregional levels in support to national initiatives and platforms;

(f) Thematic platforms or networks of expertise in support of specific topics identified in the Hyogo Framework based on needs and time-limited tasks;

(g) National platforms for disaster risk reduction, as designated by States, would have responsibility, as national forums, for coordination of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework, supported by regional and subregional platforms and networks for disaster reduction and United Nations country teams, where present.

55. The intention of Governments to maintain the informal Strategy Support Group is welcomed. It is a vehicle for strengthening the financing of and support to disaster risk reduction globally.

56. The objective of the proposed arrangements is strengthened management and accountability. The management oversight board, to be chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and the programme advisory committee would provide a stronger strategic and programmatic leadership for the Strategy system, especially through its focus on supporting Member States. The resulting framework of policy and direction would provide a clearer basis for the secretariat and the Strategy stakeholders to implement the Hyogo Framework.

57. The proposed modification of the organizational and management structure of the Strategy system is to be discussed at a Strategy stakeholder workshop in early October 2005 and submitted to the Task Force at its twelfth session in November 2005 with a view to beginning operation in January 2006.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

58. **The Secretary-General calls upon the Assembly to endorse the Hyogo Declaration and Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, and to invite States, civil society organizations, regional bodies and international organizations, including the United Nations system and international financing institutions, to comply with the request for implementation, follow-up and support, as set out in section IV of the Hyogo Framework.**

59. **In order to ensure international coordination, coherence and monitoring of progress in implementing disaster risk reduction at all levels, the Secretary-General recommends that the Assembly endorse the proposed strengthening of the Strategy system, its governance, secretariat and the distribution of roles and responsibilities among agencies in support of the implementation of the Hyogo Framework. That would include the establishment of a management oversight board to advise and support the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, a modified task force reformed into a global platform for disaster reduction, with a subsidiary programme advisory committee, and a strengthened Strategy secretariat to service the system at all levels, according to the proposal described in paragraph 54.**

60. Recent experiences in sudden-onset and other disasters, including the Indian Ocean tsunami, have underscored the critical importance of disaster risk reduction. The Hyogo Framework has clearly highlighted the critical role of the United Nations in providing leadership and support in implementing an effective disaster reduction strategy. The Strategy Secretariat must therefore be strengthened and provided with secure and predictable funding. In this connection, it is recalled that the General Assembly, in its resolution 54/219, stated that the Strategy should be funded exclusively from extrabudgetary resources. In the absence of regular budget funding to ensure a sound financial base, the Secretary-General would therefore urge Member States to demonstrate their commitment to fully supporting the work of the Strategy secretariat by contributing to the Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction.

61. Based on recommendations of the Task Force, the common statement issued at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, the evaluation and experience gained by the Strategy secretariat, and the sixth High-Level Meeting with Regional and Other Organizations, the Secretary-General recommends the strengthening of regional mechanisms for collaboration and networking in support of national and local efforts to reduce disaster risk.

62. The Secretary-General reiterates the need to develop global capacities for systematic people-centred early warning systems, covering all hazards and all countries and communities at risk. They should make use of existing capabilities and be well integrated into disaster reduction and disaster management policies and plans. The Strategy system and its international early warning programme provide a means to stimulate the necessary integration of early warning endeavours across multiple hazards and across the many stakeholders involved. The Secretary-General encourages Governments and organizations to maintain their support for the development of the tsunami early warning system and other necessary early warning systems, such as those for tropical cyclones and adverse weather in the Indian Ocean and other risk-prone regions.

63. Sustainable disaster risk reduction needs to become an integral component of environmental, economic and social development. The Strategy system therefore needs to attach high priority to the strengthening of partnerships with intergovernmental organizations and international financial institutions. The Strategy system should develop collaboration with entities responsible for disaster preparedness and response, including military forces and national rescue services.

64. As the United Nations reform moves forward to bring closer together, and provide coherence to, all United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, there is need for greater political commitment for the systematic integration of risk reduction into development plans and increased provision of resources and application of knowledge of disaster reduction by Member States, their communities and the wider international community. We must be able to report by 2015 a substantial decrease in the number of victims and affected communities due to their ability to manage and reduce risk to natural hazards. It is as much an economic imperative as it is a moral one.

Notes

- ¹ Eleventh session of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, 24-26 May 2005, Geneva.
- ² The IOC Assembly, during its twenty-third session, adopted resolution XXIII-12 establishing an Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System.
- ³ Including ESCAP, ASEAN, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center and the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre.
- ⁴ Africa Advisory Group, with Government representatives from Kenya, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda, as well as an AU representative.
- ⁵ Seminar workshop for national authorities on the theme "Risk management policies, systems and experiences in the Caribbean", Havana, 1-3 June 2005.
- ⁶ "Reinforcing EU disaster and crisis response in third countries", Brussels, 20 April 2005.
- ⁷ See *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals* (1995).
- ⁸ Randolph Kent, "Looking to the future: practical steps to strengthen the United Nations relevance and value added in disaster risk management"; Ian Christoplos, with Alexandra Galperin and Yasemin Aysan, "External evaluation of the Inter-Agency Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction", report of the eleventh session of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, Geneva, 24-26 May 2005; and Mukesh Kapila, "Note on future organizational arrangements for the ISDR System".

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Sustainable development: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction is the centrepiece of United Nations efforts to reduce the serious, and growing, impact of natural hazards on communities and countries. It is being used increasingly by the United Nations and other organizations to coordinate and guide disaster risk reduction and its integration into development planning and action. The need for a strategy is underscored by the many disasters making international headlines. Although precise and systematic statistics are often not available, current global estimates for 2003 recorded 700 disasters associated with natural hazards, with 75,000 people killed, 250 million people affected and economic losses of more than \$65 billion. In Bam, Iran, 26,000 deaths were reported in the earthquake of December 2003, while in China, 46 million people have been affected by floods since the start of 2004. In May 2004, thousands of vulnerable people were seriously affected by flashfloods in the Dominican Republic and Haiti. Poverty, environmental degradation and lack of preparation play major roles in turning natural hazards into painful disasters.

The present report provides an updated overview of the implementation of the Strategy as requested in General Assembly resolution 58/214. An important focus for the year has been the preparations for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held at Kobe, Hyogo, Japan (18-22 January 2005) and the ongoing review of the 1994 *Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action*. The report also summarizes the activities of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, the

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inter-agency secretariat for the Strategy, its regional outreach and other partner activities. It includes a section on natural disasters and vulnerability, as requested in General Assembly resolution 58/215, to highlight the role of disaster reduction as an essential policy tool to support adaptation to climate change. It also responds to General Assembly resolution 57/255 on international cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon.

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I. Activities carried out in support of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

1. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction has sparked the production of a number of substantive reports and the development of programmes and strategic visions on how to reduce risk and vulnerability to natural hazards as a prerequisite to sustainable development. Building disaster-resilient communities has gained importance as an international commitment. During the past year, motivated by the review of the implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action¹ and the preparations for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction and the Strategy secretariat have increasingly served as a reference centre and information clearing house on disaster risk reduction issues, involving Governments and expert organizations. The task of reducing disaster risks, however, remains enormous and urgent. Two key aims of the Strategy are to increase community and national coping mechanisms to reduce the impact of natural hazards, and to secure development that lowers rather than increases disaster risk. This report discusses the range of initiatives and the progress made in this area by the main partners involved.

A. Preparations for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction

2. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly decided to convene a World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005. General Assembly resolution 58/214 specifies that the Conference should foster specialized discussions and produce concrete changes and results, with the following objectives: (a) to conclude the review of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action, with a view to updating the guiding framework on disaster reduction for the twenty-first century; (b) to identify specific activities aimed at ensuring implementation of relevant provisions of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”)² on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management; (c) to share best practices and lessons learned to further disaster reduction within the context of attaining sustainable development and identify gaps and challenges; (d) to increase awareness of the importance of disaster reduction policies, thereby facilitating and promoting implementation of those policies; and (e) to increase the reliability and availability of appropriate disaster-related information to the public and disaster management agencies in all regions.

3. The Conference is expected to be a milestone event in disaster risk reduction. Organized in three parts — an intergovernmental segment, a thematic segment for knowledge exchange and a public forum — it will provide a unique opportunity to promote a strategic approach at all levels to reduce risk and vulnerabilities to natural hazards. It is expected to guide and motivate Governments and policy makers to focus more on the fact that disasters continue to increase and remain a major obstacle to sustainable development and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It should also provide incentives to identify practical ways to incorporate risk-reduction measures into action to reduce poverty.

4. The anticipated benefits of the Conference will be in the following areas:

(a) Increased awareness, recognition and political endorsement for implementing disaster risk reduction and mobilizing local, national and international resources;

(b) Assessment of good practices, achievements and constraints;

(c) Clearer directions and objectives at national, local, regional and international levels;

(d) Adoption of a set of overall goals, specific priorities for action and follow-up mechanisms to guide and stimulate implementation of disaster risk reduction;

(e) Encouragement to identify and implement national targets in order to address the agreed priorities for action;

(f) Launching of specific partnerships to support implementation of the Conference outcomes, linked to the partnership mechanism of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

5. Critical to the success of the Conference is agreement on the elements of a programme of action for disaster risk reduction for the period 2005-2015 (draft title: "Building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters, in support of sustainable development"). The draft programme builds on the preliminary conclusions and updated framework resulting from the review of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action. The end of the period 2005-2015 will coincide with the review to be conducted by the Commission on Sustainable Development on disaster management and vulnerability in its fifth cycle (2014-2015), as part of the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

6. An intergovernmental preparatory committee was established to review and guide preparations for the Conference, and a bureau, with equitable geographical representation, was elected.³ At its first session, held in Geneva on 6 and 7 May 2004, the Committee reviewed the procedural and organizational aspects of the Conference preparations, and discussed substantive issues. Subsequently, the Strategy secretariat prepared a draft programme document for review by Member States, in preparation for the second session of the Preparatory Committee, to be held in Geneva on 10 and 11 October 2004.

7. Additional support for the process was drawn from the ninth meeting of the Strategy Task Force, held in May 2004. The Task Force established a working group to provide specific guidance on the substantive work of the Conference. With the endorsement of the Preparatory Committee and the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the Strategy secretariat held an online dialogue from 15 June to 21 July 2004. Sixty countries submitted structured national information to the Strategy secretariat on current activities, progress, challenges and examples of good practices concerning disaster reduction. UNDP provided support to selected countries for the preparation of these national inputs.

8. The thematic sessions of the Conference will be clustered around five themes,⁴ which correspond to the major findings of the review of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action, the resulting updated framework for disaster risk reduction and the main elements of the draft programme of action. The thematic segment will

focus on good practices and implementation and will include a regional session for the exchange of experience and lessons learned in different regions. In addition, three high-level round tables will focus on issues critical to achieving disaster risk reduction: (a) “Disaster risk: the next development challenge”, on the need for a substantive policy shift and funding mechanisms to address risk as part of development; (b) “Learning to live with risk”, on the need to focus on education and awareness, linked with the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014); and (c) “Emerging risks: what will tomorrow hold?”, to address emerging issues related to environmental, urban and climate-change risk scenarios. In addition, there will be a public forum at which Governments, civil society organizations, technical and academic institutions and the private sector will disseminate information and present exhibits.

9. A conference unit has been established within the Strategy secretariat to coordinate the Conference preparations. Close cooperation has been developed with the Government of Japan and the Hyogo Prefecture. The Government of Japan has pledged \$2.5 million to cover Conference costs. Additional funds are being sought to cover the travel costs of delegations from developing countries attending the Conference and the second session of the Preparatory Committee. Information on preparatory activities for the Conference can be accessed at: www.unisdr.org/wcdr.

B. Review of the Yokohama Strategy: regional and thematic consultations

10. The process conducted in response to the request of the General Assembly in its resolution 57/256, to review progress in implementing the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action, has resulted in a number of activities (described above in section A) and in a substantive basis for the deliberations and commitments of the Conference. Preliminary findings show that the Yokohama Strategy remains a powerful guide for disaster risk reduction, and that significant progress has been made in some areas, especially in integrating disaster risk management into development sectors. Many examples of good practices are available and lessons have been learned or confirmed. However, the review shows that progress is still seriously handicapped by a lack of systematic implementation and by the progressive increase in risk factors. It is evident that to build national and community resilience to natural hazards, and to protect lives and livelihoods, more systematic approaches and greater commitment by Governments are required. Regional and thematic meetings held throughout 2003 and 2004 have provided inputs relevant to both the review and the Conference programme outcome.

11. In Asia, regional meetings have been held in Cambodia, Bangladesh, the Philippines and China, sponsored by Governments, the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre, the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre and the United Nations. Building on the findings of these meetings, the Beijing Declaration on the 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction, adopted in May 2004 by the representatives of 18 countries and six international organizations, outlined the Asian perspective on regional cooperation and collaboration and on the integration of disaster reduction into development planning, policies and implementation. The Declaration appeals for further political commitment and increased financial investment in disaster reduction and for a programme of action composed of concrete objectives that contribute to building disaster-resilient communities.

12. An African regional consultation, with over 30 countries represented, convened by the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) secretariat in Johannesburg, South Africa, in June 2004, and sponsored by UNDP, the World Bank and the Strategy secretariat, provided strategic directions and specific recommendations for integrating disaster risk reduction into sustainable development activities at all levels. It formulated the African Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was adopted in July 2004 by the African Ministers of the Environment and later supported by the African Heads of State and Government at the third ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, in July 2004. In its decision AU/Dec.38(III), the Assembly mandated the AU Commission and the NEPAD secretariat to work closely with Strategy partners to develop a programme of work that will enable Member States to integrate disaster reduction into national development processes. The regional consultation emphasized that investment in disaster risk reduction serves as an insurance policy for investment and development gains in Africa.

13. South Pacific countries collectively developed a regional position paper for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction and a draft Pacific regional strategic action plan for disaster risk reduction at a regional stakeholder consultation workshop, in Fiji in June 2004, organized by the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission and supported by Australia and New Zealand. The plan provides an easily adaptable framework for the accelerated implementation of the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, as well as policy guidance for current and emerging regional challenges for the coming decade. It also will help streamline donor assistance and thus encourage a systematic approach to tackling disaster reduction. In addition, it provides the basis for further implementation of the Pacific World Summit on Sustainable Development partnership initiative on vulnerability and disaster risk management.

14. Several consultations have been or will be held in Latin America and the Caribbean. In December 2003, the Central American Centre for Coordination of Disaster Prevention, in collaboration with UNDP, the Strategy secretariat, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the Central American Bank for Economic Integration and others, organized Forum Mitch + 5 in order to review progress on disaster risk management since Hurricane Mitch, which devastated the region in 1998, and to contribute to the Conference preparatory process. The Forum was preceded by national multisectoral workshops in five countries and resulted in several concrete recommendations. Representatives and experts at the Latin American meeting on the theme "Vulnerability reduction in health: hospitals and drinking water systems", held in Managua in April 2004, and at the Caribbean meeting on mitigation in health facilities, held in Port of Spain in May 2004, made recommendations for disaster reduction in health facilities and water systems for each region.

15. The European Commission is actively involved in the preparatory phase of the Conference through internal consultations. The Council of Europe Major Risks Agreement also discussed the Conference in Rabat, Morocco, in December 2003, and in Paris in June 2004.

16. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement discussed disaster risk reduction at its twenty-eighth International Conference in Geneva in December 2003. Participants adopted the Agenda for Humanitarian Action, which is relevant

to both the review of the Yokohama Strategy and the programme of the World Conference. It includes a commitment to minimize the impact of disasters on vulnerable populations through the implementation of measures to reduce disaster risks and improve preparedness and response mechanisms.

17. The Second International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn in October 2003, and previous regional consultations, provided important conclusions and recommendations, which have been translated into a new programme for early warning and inputs for the World Conference (see www.ewc2.org).

C. Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction

18. The Task Force⁵ has continued to evolve, adapting its programme to current policy requirements and moving to new areas of work addressing emerging issues, following the recommendations contained in the last report on the implementation of the Strategy (A/58/277). The aim is to strengthen the Task Force as a global mechanism for devising strategies and policies and enhancing coordination. The Task Force will provide a forum for debate and will coordinate and stimulate activity through collaboration, working groups and agenda development. The priority areas of the 2004 work programme include:

(a) Guidance and assistance on current major policy processes, particularly as they relate to the Conference preparations, including inputs to the substantive content of the programme outcome and assistance in coordinating the thematic sessions; the global review of progress in implementing the disaster reduction measures in the Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action; and integration of disaster reduction into sustainable development, including follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

(b) Strengthening disaster risk reduction in Africa, including through network development, the identification of needs and capacities, and strategy development. A new working group was established under the leadership of the African Union and NEPAD secretariats;

(c) Adaptation to climate change and extreme weather events. A new working group, led by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and UNDP, aims at promoting disaster risk reduction for climate change adaptation;

(d) Data on impacts, risk and vulnerability. Chaired by UNDP, the working group on risk, vulnerability and impact assessment, has developed indexes and indicators, enhanced global data sets with standardized national level data and developed a system to issue unique numbers to identify specific disasters (see www.glidenumbers.net);

(e) Urban risk and vulnerability. Led by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and UNDP, the work in this area includes an interactive web-based inventory of risk analysis and vulnerability assessment tools, including a system to assist users with the identification of suitable tools (see <http://hq.unhabitat.org/rdmu/isdr/default.asp>) and support to a preparatory meeting on urban risk and vulnerability in Madrid and, to a session on that subject at the World Urban Forum to be held in Barcelona, in September 2004.

19. The Task Force also continues to monitor the new initiatives, networks and programmes arising from its previous work on El Niño, early warning and wildfires.

D. Major partner activities and relationships

20. The specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, regional bodies and civil society organizations make substantial contributions to the implementation of the Strategy, particularly through collaborative partnerships and the support of national and local implementation. The highlights of these partnerships are described below.

Governance

21. Disaster reduction can only succeed to the extent that national authorities and international development interests recognize the importance of identifying, assessing and managing risks prior to the occurrence of disasters. This requires combining the efforts of the development, humanitarian and environmental constituencies, which remains a challenge, and integration of disaster risk reduction into national planning, including poverty reduction. Steps include the formulation of appropriate legislation, appropriate budgetary allocations and the designation of authorities, especially decentralized responsibilities to empower subnational and local communities to participate in the decision-making.

22. UNDP, with input from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Strategy secretariat among others, launched an important report in early 2004, entitled “Reducing disaster risk: a challenge for development”. Based on statistical data analysis, this publication aims to improve global understanding of the relationship between development and disaster risk. It introduced a global disaster risk index, which measures the relative vulnerability of countries to earthquakes, tropical cyclones and floods, and identified development factors, including good governance, that contribute to increased risk levels, as well as policy options to address these risks. UNDP also plays an important role in fostering the development of appropriate tools for the integration of disaster reduction into development, and the design and implementation of disaster reduction strategies and capacity-building programmes.

Inter-agency initiatives — knowledge management

23. Educating and enhancing human capital is a priority for ensuring the sustainability of disaster reduction. This need is addressed through several United Nations initiatives. The Strategy campaign slogan for 2004, “Learning from today’s disasters for tomorrow’s hazards”, reflects the need to raise public awareness of options for reducing risk.

24. The inter-agency United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme, administrated by UNDP with support from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, is undertaking a review in 2004 to assess the strategic focus, purpose and added value of the programme. It will assess the programme premise and objectives in the light of current trends and future challenges and demands on United Nations country teams, with regard to their functions, roles, competencies and performance expectations in addressing disaster events and disaster risks and their reduction.

25. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee for humanitarian coordination initiated a task force on natural disasters led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). The Strategy secretariat contributed inputs concerning linkages between response capacities and disaster risk reduction, and identification of vulnerable countries. The task force aims to improve coordination of disaster preparedness and is organizing pilot projects in selected vulnerable countries.

Community-based risk reduction and preparedness

26. Community empowerment and ownership of building disaster resilience and coping capacities is essential to effective risk reduction.

27. Many local Governments, grass-roots organizations, and non-governmental organizations, including the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, are promoting community-based approaches. In addition, UNDP has developed a local-level risk management programme. The United Nations Centre for Regional Development project, "Sustainability in community-based disaster management (2002-2005)", is developing best practices for community-based disaster management, recommendations and a strategic framework through policy interventions at the local level to sustain community initiatives, partnership-building and the dissemination of guidelines and tools.

28. IFRC hosts a number of inter-agency projects, such as the Sphere Project and the ProVention Consortium, which strengthen broad-based approaches to disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response. The Federation is active in building partnerships, reflected in agreements signed with the ProVention Consortium, the Organization of American States (OAS), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Food Programme (WFP), which emphasize risk reduction strategies and advocate a culture of prevention. The 2003 issue of the IFRC *World Disasters Report* focused on ethics in aid, while the 2004 issue will focus on building disaster-resilient communities.

Science, risk assessment, monitoring and early warning

29. Risk assessment and monitoring remain a crucial starting point for disaster reduction and for the development of crucial information management systems. Emerging and slow-onset risks such as drought, climate change, economic and urban growth and change are of growing importance. Integrated, people-centred early warning strategies are needed to issue timely warnings and develop the response capabilities of those at risk.

30. The World Meteorological Organization has adopted a comprehensive plan to implement its cross-cutting programme on natural disaster prevention and mitigation. WMO is also coordinating a 10-year international research programme to improve forecasts of high-impact weather events and their use in decision-making, and is developing a climate alert system to help apply seasonal forecasts in disaster management. WMO is carrying out several initiatives to improve flood forecasting and associated practices to mitigate social, economic and environmental losses and, together with the Strategy secretariat, is coordinating the risk management chapter of the second edition of the *World Water Development Report*.

31. At its thirty-second session, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) approved a new main line of action on disaster prevention and preparedness in its 2004-2005 programme and budget. It is designed to encourage Member States to address the issue of natural hazards within and across sectors and through the effective use of scientific knowledge and expertise, particularly in vulnerable zones in the least developed countries, mega-cities, small islands and coastal zones. Efforts focus on capacity-building mechanisms and supporting the development, testing and dissemination of information and training materials and tools.

32. Space and telecommunications-based applications for disaster prevention, especially low-cost, high-impact solutions relevant to vulnerable communities in developing countries are being pursued by the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the Committee on the Peaceful Use of Outer Space and its Action Team on Disaster Management, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the European Space Agency and its Global Monitoring for Environment and Security Initiative, other space agencies and the ad hoc Group on Earth Observation. Among others, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and the European Centre for Nuclear Research, through UNOSAT, are working on maps and products for disaster management and risk reduction. A number of countries at the second Earth Observation Summit, held in Tokyo in April 2004, adopted a framework for a 10-year implementation plan (2005-2015) to achieve comprehensive, coordinated and sustained Earth observations. They launched a global Earth observation system of systems towards this end, a primary objective being to reduce the loss of life and property resulting from natural and human-induced disasters and to improve the understanding, assessment and prediction of weather events and climate variability and change. The World Summit on the Information Society, held in Geneva in December 2003, recognized the potential of information and communication technologies for preventing disasters and supporting development goals.

Reduction of underlying risk factors

33. Environmental and natural resource management techniques for reducing disaster risks are greatly underutilized. Financial and socio-economic instruments, effective land-use planning and planning and implementation in the agriculture, health and infrastructure sectors are also necessary to avoid the generation of additional risks and vulnerabilities. Post-disaster transition and recovery provide an important opportunity for introducing such disaster reduction measures.

34. UNEP implements activities to raise awareness about the importance of the links between environmental degradation, disaster risk and vulnerability through dialogue among experts on disaster reduction and environmental emergency management in Africa, national workshops and newsletters and publications for targeted audiences. The UNEP programme on awareness and preparedness for emergencies on a local level recently shifted its sector-based approach to an integrated territorial-based approach to manage risks and disasters resulting from technological accidents and environmental emergencies.

35. The current medium-term plan (2002-2007) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has established a "priority area of interdepartmental action" group to work on disaster prevention, mitigation and

preparedness and post-emergency relief and rehabilitation. FAO is actively involved in reducing disaster risks — for example, by promoting the development, management and use of food insecurity and vulnerability information systems and by supporting the efforts of local-level institutions to reduce vulnerability to natural disasters. About 40 countries worldwide have established national and regional early warning systems for food security with FAO assistance, and FAO and WFP work closely on related food security programmes.

36. The World Health Organization (WHO) has made progress in mainstreaming disaster management, moving from mainly emergency preparedness and response systems towards ensuring safer health facilities and drinking water systems in various countries such as Nepal and in Latin America and the Caribbean. Many Eastern European countries have been rebuilding national emergency preparedness and early warning and response systems. In keeping with the global WHO country-focus initiative, country-level processes continue to integrate humanitarian and development activities.

37. More information on other partner activities is available at www.unisdr.org.

E. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat

38. The Strategy secretariat work-programme is organized around four focus areas: policy and strategy development; advocacy and public awareness; information management and dissemination; and the promotion of networks and partnerships for the application of measures to reduce disaster risks. Regional outreach programmes are active in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa and, more recently, in Asia and the Pacific. In pursuing its activities, the secretariat works closely with many other organizations, in special partnerships with UNDP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and with other Strategy Task Force members. The priorities for 2004-2005 are:

(a) Review of the Yokohama Strategy, preparation for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, and support for the inclusion of disaster risk reduction in key international agendas;

(b) Development of a coherent policy framework for guiding and monitoring disaster risk reduction and the associated draft Conference outcome document;

(c) Increased regional outreach and partnerships, especially in Africa, Asia and Central Asia, including an emphasis on promoting national platforms for disaster reduction;

(d) Consolidation of a Bonn-based programme to promote early warning;

(e) Improved information systems and clearing house for disaster risk reduction, including an upgraded web site (www.unisdr.org), and the use of more languages for public information products;

(f) Organizational development of the Strategy mechanism and of a sound institutional basis for disaster risk reduction within the United Nations.

Policy and strategy development

39. The Strategy secretariat, advised by the Strategy Task Force, has contributed to the current two-year review cycle on water, sanitation and human settlements by the Commission on Sustainable Development. As a result, disaster risk reduction is recognized as a cross-cutting issue in these areas. The secretariat is also engaged in the processes for reviewing the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and in preparations for the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States to be held in Mauritius. The Strategy secretariat, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, compiled recommendations on disaster risk reduction emanating from the three regional preparatory meetings for the International Meeting. Inputs by the secretariat to climate change policy agendas are described in section II below.

Framework for guiding and monitoring disaster risk reduction

40. In cooperation with UNDP, the Strategy secretariat developed a framework that sets out the key elements for systematic disaster risk reduction. While principally aimed at guiding and monitoring national policy and activities, the framework can be used or adapted for other diverse purposes, such as research planning, training curricula or community-based activities. The framework is available on the Strategy web site.

National platforms for disaster reduction

41. The Strategy secretariat, in close collaboration with UNDP and regional organizations, is promoting the use of national platforms for advancing the implementation of disaster risk reduction. This includes encouraging national networks and institutions, strengthening contacts with and among national counterparts and promoting dialogue to improve the framework for cooperation between the secretariat and national platforms. Since November 2003, national platforms for disaster reduction have been established by the Comoros, Costa Rica, Ecuador and the Russian Federation, and significant steps have been made in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ghana, Kenya and Rwanda. The list of national Strategy focal points available on the Strategy web site is expanding and will soon be supplemented with country profiles.

Regional outreach

42. The ninth session of the Inter-Agency Task Force and the first session of the Conference Preparatory Committee emphasized the importance of regional mechanisms to support and motivate effective disaster risk reduction policies and practices.

Africa

43. The Strategy African outreach programme, established in 2002 and hosted by UNEP, was strengthened in 2004 through additional support from Norway and Germany. The programme seeks to advance disaster risk reduction and its integration into sustainable development in Africa, and to enhance regional leadership and ownership of disaster reduction initiatives, for example, through

participatory processes involving the African Union Commission, the NEPAD secretariat, the African Development Bank, other regional institutions and national government officials and experts. This has led to the development of an African regional strategy for disaster risk reduction (see paragraph 12).

44. Partly linked to these advances, a major shift in focus is taking place, as disasters are being viewed as a risk management and development issue. There is growing interest among regional entities and United Nations agencies and increased interest in establishing national platforms. The Strategy African outreach programme has supported the development of activities and educational material concerning linkages of disaster reduction with governance, water and the environment. Activities to increase the interest and involvement of women will result in specific policy recommendations on the gender perspective in disaster reduction. Increased use of the regional web site (www.unisdrafrica.org), distribution of the biannual magazine *Disaster Reduction in Africa — ISDR Informs* in several languages and celebration of the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction are signs of the growing interest in the subject in the region.

Latin America and the Caribbean

45. One of the significant impacts of the regional outreach programme hosted by PAHO and sponsored mainly by Sweden is that many new development actors, such as planning ministries, are more actively involved in developing and implementing disaster reduction strategies. For example, the General Secretariat of the Andean Community, with the support of UNDP and the Andean Development Corporation, has formulated an Andean strategy for disaster prevention and response. The strategy includes sectoral working agendas on agriculture, energy, water, health and sanitation, land use planning and so forth. The process stresses synergies among national, regional and international actors and the coordination of priorities and horizontal cooperation among countries of the region. The strategy was approved at the fourth meeting of the Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Assistance (CAPRADE) and adopted by the Andean Presidential Council in July 2004. The Strategy regional outreach programme has engaged with the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) to enhance the implementation of the Strategy in ACS member countries (the wider Caribbean), and has intensified collaboration in the field of education for disaster reduction with UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and OAS. A Latin American meeting has been organized to review the area of education for disaster risk reduction. Collaboration has also increased with IFRC in the areas of public information, communications and community-based education programmes.

46. Partnerships with PAHO, UNDP and the Central American Centre for Coordination of Disaster Prevention have resulted in increased public awareness outreach. An educational radio programme (radio soap opera) that addresses earthquakes and volcanic eruptions is being widely broadcast throughout Latin America, and a new radio programme on floods and hurricanes is being produced for the English-speaking population of the Caribbean, in collaboration with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, ACS, IFRC and PAHO. The regional tripartite collaboration between the Strategy secretariat, UNDP and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has been strengthened over the past months, with a focus on building an inventory of El Niño-related initiatives in Peru and Ecuador and on developing a related inter-agency programme to be carried

out in close collaboration with existing initiatives such as the International Research Centre on the El Niño Phenomenon and the Andean Disaster Prevention Programme.

Asia

47. The launch of the Strategy Asia partnership at the third Asian Conference on Disaster Reduction in Cambodia in 2004 reflects a desire to extend collaboration among the many strong programmes in the region and to work towards a regional Strategy outreach programme. Partners include the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNDP and the Strategy secretariat. The secretariat has increased its presence in the region through a shared staff resource with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Kobe, Japan, and an associate expert from Norway in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, for Central Asia, who works in close collaboration with UNDP and the Office. Sweden and Norway have provided new funding for the Strategy Asia partnership.

48. In addition, 2004 has witnessed important initiatives by national Governments in Asia in advancing integrated multisectoral initiatives and policy frameworks for disaster risk reduction. Particularly noteworthy are the national programme on vulnerability reduction and sustainable development in India, the comprehensive disaster management programme in Bangladesh, the opening of the national disaster reduction centre in China and the launch of a multi-agency natural disaster mitigation partnership in Viet Nam. Subregional initiatives include the launch of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional programme on disaster management (2004-2010) by the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, and the launch of a four-year (2004-2007) flood management and mitigation programme by the Mekong River Commission. The Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre launched new initiatives on climate forecast applications and urban disaster mitigation in South and South-East Asia and a new programme on capacity-building for flood-preparedness planning in the Mekong Delta. The Asian Disaster Reduction Centre and other partners promote a comprehensive disaster risk management approach and provide practical tools, such as the hazard-mapping methodology, to assist country capacity for assessing risk and vulnerability to disasters. The Preparedness Centre, with the support of Sweden, developed a study on environmental degradation and disaster risk in Asia. The United Nations University has begun a programme for catastrophic flood risk reduction in Asia and the Pacific using a comprehensive approach of hazard and vulnerability reduction.

Pacific

49. Implementation of the Strategy is being promoted actively in the South Pacific through a partnership with the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, supported by Australia and New Zealand. High-level advocacy activities have contributed to a wider understanding by Pacific island Governments, at political and senior official levels, of the value of the full spectrum of disaster risk management and risk reduction activities. Linkages with the 2004 review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the International Meeting to be held in Mauritius are widely understood. Increased awareness has been noted among target audiences such as schoolchildren, the general public and decision makers, along with an increased involvement at community and village levels through community-based disaster risk management

and the development of a disaster management planning framework for national application. The Pacific Emergency Management Training Advisory Group Committee has been established and is providing scholarship support for an accredited disaster risk management university course. The Comprehensive Hazard and Risk Management regional guidelines promoted by the Geoscience Commission are now being used as a national risk-reduction tool in a number of Pacific island countries and through World Bank disaster risk management capacity-building projects in Samoa and Tonga and in a climate change adaptation project in Kiribati. The environmental vulnerability index, developed by the Geoscience Commission in collaboration with UNEP, is expected to be operational by the end of 2004. It will be a useful tool to assist policy makers and decision makers. The Geoscience Commission is actively coordinating regional input to the Conference and the International Meeting in Mauritius.

Europe

50. Strategy activities as subregional and thematic efforts by European partners and countries continue to evolve. The second meeting of European national platforms, organized by the German Committee for Disaster Reduction in April 2004, discussed Conference priorities and collaboration between the Strategy and national platforms. The Central European Disaster Prevention Forum, comprising the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, held a meeting organized by the Czech National Committee for Disaster Reduction, which also involved the World Meteorological Organization, to further develop these and other proposals. The European Commission and the Council of Europe are engaged in improving their disaster risk reduction policies and in preparing for the Conference. The Strategy secretariat has an agreement with the European Commission Joint Research Centre, and it has made progress in studying the interlinkages between natural and technological hazards. Several steps have been taken in the region in response to the summer floods of 2002, including a European flood alert system, improved operational links among service providers and recipients and development of a European flood information system.

Early warning promotion

51. The summary report of the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn in October 2003, and a CD-ROM compilation of the Conference documents were finalized in partnership with the German Committee for Disaster Reduction (see www.ewc2.org). With the support of the Government of Germany, considerable progress was made by the Strategy secretariat in developing the early warning platform recommended by the Conference. An ad hoc expert meeting was convened to provide guidance on the platform activities and a work programme for 2004 was developed. The platform aims to sustain dialogue on early warning and related risk reduction, and to encourage the development of more systematic approaches to early warning. Specific tasks planned include establishing platform operational capacities and initial products, promoting early warning and its integration into key international policy processes, particularly those associated with the Conference, and generally stimulating dialogue on and innovation in early warning through networking, information generation and partnerships.

52. The platform increases the resources and efforts of the Strategy secretariat in the areas of early warning and risk reduction and strengthens the interaction with

several key Bonn-based United Nations institutions, notably the secretariats of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the United Nations Volunteers programme, and the United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security.

Information dissemination

53. Highlights of the year include the extensive redevelopment of the Strategy web site (www.unisdr.org). Improvements in content and presentation are reflected in the subsequent increase in the number of visitors to the web site. With the support of Switzerland, work has begun on developing web-accessible relational databases of disaster reduction information. The revised version of the Strategy secretariat flagship publication, *Living with Risk: A Global Review of Disaster Reduction Initiatives*, was also launched in July 2004, extracts of which have been available on the web site since 2003. This significantly upgraded publication describes trends, initiatives and outstanding challenges in implementing disaster risk reduction at the local, national, regional and international scales and provides numerous supporting practical examples.

F. Institutional development of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

54. To better support the Task Force, national Governments and the wider global disaster risk reduction community, the Strategy secretariat initiated a results-based planning system during 2004 to enhance its capacities. In addition, an institutional internal review of the tripartite arrangement between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNDP and the Strategy secretariat is being conducted. It will also address the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The object of the review is to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations Secretariat in addressing all aspects of disaster and risk management, including response coordination, preparedness, mitigation and recovery, with a view to reducing risk and vulnerability to future natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters.

55. The support group of Member States for the Strategy secretariat, chaired by the Government of Switzerland, with the full support and participation of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, meets on a regular basis to provide advice on the Strategy work programme and to advocate for support for and contributions to the Strategy and the Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction.

56. The Strategy secretariat launched a fund-raising document in December 2003 for the 2004-2005 biennium, entitled "An open opportunity to reduce disaster impacts: request for funding to support the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and its secretariat". By mid-year the Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction had received approximately 70 per cent of the estimated requirements to cover the basic annual work programme of the Strategy Task Force and the secretariat. The Governments of Canada, Cyprus, Germany, Japan, Norway, the Philippines, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States have contributed thus far in 2004. The Governments of Sweden and the United Kingdom have provided multi-year funding, the latter being the main donor. The number of donors increased in 2004, partly as a result of interest associated with the

Conference preparations. Almost all the funding comes from humanitarian departments. It can also be noted with satisfaction that this year small-project funding was secured from development agencies — a desired trend and requisite for the future.

57. Additionally, in kind contributions have been received, such as support to translate the 2004 version of *Living with Risk: A Global Review of Disaster Reduction Initiatives* into Spanish (Canadian project: Geosciences for Andean Communities) and Chinese (China Earthquake Administration). Associate experts have been provided by Japan (for Geneva in 2003) and by Norway (for Africa and Asia, 2004). The International Organization of la Francophonie has also provided interns to the secretariat. The Government of Switzerland has provided consultant support to the Strategy secretariat for organizational development. UNDP is funding, with the Strategy secretariat, several initiatives at the regional level in Africa and Asia, and it provides human resources contributions to the Strategy secretariat and to national preparations for the Conference preparatory process. UNEP and PAHO/WHO provide in kind contributions to the regional programmes in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, and WMO assists with office space in Geneva.

58. Despite all the valuable contributions, Strategy funding remains unpredictable, insecure, short-term and insufficient in the face of the growing demands from Governments and agencies for services and assistance. The number of donors is still small and the development agencies are conspicuously absent. The core mandate — to promote and support mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into development and humanitarian efforts within the United Nations and in international policy decisions — requires a commensurately broad, long-term and stable funding base, including United Nations regular budget allocations. This will be even more important beginning in 2005, in order to support the anticipated demands for systematic disaster risk reduction stemming from the Conference.

II. Natural disasters and vulnerability

59. About 80 per cent of disaster impacts arise from weather-related hazards, and there is concern that the world will face even greater weather extremes in the future. The capacities of countries and communities to manage existing weather and climatic conditions, including those related to El Niño, will stand them in good stead for handling future conditions. For these reasons, Strategy partners are working to forge synergies between agendas for disaster risk reduction, climate hazard management and adaptation to climate change.

A. Climate change and disaster risk reduction

60. Raising the profile of disaster risk reduction as a means of achieving climate change adaptation policy objectives has been an aim of recent cooperation between the Strategy secretariat and a number of organizations, including UNDP, the International Red Cross, Red Crescent Centre on Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness and the German Corporation for Technical Cooperation. In keeping with General Assembly resolution 58/215, statements were made at meetings of the Framework Convention on Climate Change Subsidiary Body for Scientific and

Technical Advice in 2003 and 2004 to promote the issue in the formal agenda of the Convention, and contributions were also made at side events.

61. Additionally, the secretariat has promoted the development of a consultative multi-party policy paper that is intended to set out the interacting policy concerns of the main policy groups concerned with disasters, climate change and development, and to provide concrete directions and examples of integrating disaster risk reduction into adaptation initiatives, for use by both policy analysts and practitioners. With the support of the United Kingdom, a preparatory scoping project was completed in 2004, and the concept has since been endorsed and adopted by the Vulnerability and Adaptation Resource Group, an ad hoc grouping of major donors, development banks and United Nations agencies. A draft report is expected for consideration at the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and at the Conference.

62. Related activities include the promotion of disaster risk concerns in the preparatory activities for the climate change assessment reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the compilation of an electronic newsletter, *DR+CC infolink*, to stimulate linkages and information exchange between the disaster-reduction and climate-change communities (available on the Strategy web site). These activities were undertaken in partnership with UNDP and the International Red Cross Red Crescent Centre on Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness.

B. International cooperation to reduce the impact of the El Niño phenomenon

63. The El Niño events that have followed the major 1997/98 El Niño phenomenon, which had significant global impacts, including floods and droughts in many parts of the world, have been relatively weak, and current forecasts show that near-neutral conditions will prevail through the rest of 2004. However, in response to General Assembly resolution 52/200, efforts by the international community have continued to improve capacities to predict and respond to future El Niño and La Niña events. Capacities are now available to use seasonal forecasts of climatic anomalies for disaster management, even when no El Niño or La Niña event is present (for more information, see www.wmo.int and iri.columbia.edu).

64. The International Research Centre on the El Niño phenomenon, in Guayaquil, Ecuador, set up in 2003 by the Government of Ecuador and WMO, in collaboration with the Strategy secretariat in response to requests by Member States (see General Assembly resolution 56/194), has made progress through the development of an international board, a fund-raising strategy and specific projects. In support of the initiative, the Andean Disaster Prevention Programme of the Andean Development Bank is currently undertaking an organizational study to help the International Research Centre structure its organizational basis and links with other initiatives and organizations working in the field of El Niño, in particular in the Andean countries. Updated information on the International Research Centre is available from www.ciifen-int.org.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

65. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction will provide Member States and international organizations with a unique opportunity to significantly advance their interest in disaster and vulnerability reduction, particularly to incorporate practical disaster reduction steps into sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies, as well as in the humanitarian agenda. Preparations for the Conference have progressed steadily during 2004. All parties are encouraged to contribute actively to the Conference and to its development of a substantive international programme that will guide action and investments and are urged to ensure that development gains are not wiped out, especially in the least developed countries and small island developing States.

66. The review of the 1994 Yokohama Strategy and its Plan of Action provides concrete recommendations for Governments and international organizations to pursue a common path for the next 10 years in order to reduce risk and vulnerability to natural hazards. In particular, the strengthening of institutional mechanisms (national platforms) for disaster reduction has been identified as an essential task for Governments in disaster-prone areas. Inexpensive and simple measures are available to address the failures of human and environmental security represented by disasters. However, political commitment, appropriate resource allocation and strong institutional structures are necessary to implement measures and achieve results and to build local coping capacities in all phases of disaster risk management.

67. The International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States will convene just one week before the Conference. Disaster reduction is high on its agenda. It is expected that the recommendations on reducing the vulnerability of small island developing States to natural hazards will be further supported at the Conference.

68. Member States and regional organizations are urged to follow the example of the Assembly of the African Union and the Pacific Forum to develop disaster reduction strategies and programmes that will enable all countries to integrate disaster reduction into national development processes.

69. In follow-up to the request made last year by the General Assembly, valuable progress has been made in developing linkages between the issues of disaster reduction and adaptation to climate change. The initiatives undertaken under the Strategy demonstrate the capacity of the Strategy and its secretariat to deal effectively and quickly with emerging and cross-cutting issues. These efforts must be pursued, particularly within the processes of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

70. If the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals are to be achieved, along with other related United Nations development objectives in the fields of small island developing States, climate change, water and human settlements, and if the directives of the Conference are to be met, then disaster reduction will need to become fully incorporated into the humanitarian and development agendas and be firmly adopted as a core function of the United Nations. It is clear that the time has come to do that, and to provide the necessary stable financial base to enable the United Nations to properly meet the growing needs of Member States. Given the importance of disaster reduction in achieving

sustainable development, Member States are encouraged to actively support consolidation of the Strategy as an essential instrument for sustainable development. The Secretary-General is reviewing the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/214 to allocate adequate financial and administrative resources, within existing resources, for the effective functioning of the inter-agency secretariat of the Strategy. In the interim, the international community is encouraged to provide the necessary financial support to the Trust Fund for the Strategy in order to ensure adequate support for the activities of the secretariat.

Notes

- ¹ A/CONF.172/9, chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.
- ² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.
- ³ The Bureau is composed of the representatives of Ecuador (Chairperson); the Islamic Republic of Iran (Rapporteur); Germany, Morocco and the Russian Federation (members); and Japan (ex-officio member).
- ⁴ The themes are: (a) "Governance: institutional and policy frameworks for risk reduction"; (b) "Risk identification, assessment, monitoring and early warning"; (c) "Knowledge management and education: building a culture of resilient communities"; (d) "Reducing the underlying risk factors"; and (e) "Preparedness for effective response".
- ⁵ For the membership, see www.unisdr.org.

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Environment and sustainable development: International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction is the centrepiece of the United Nations efforts to address the causes of the disasters, which continue to devastate and impede the development of many countries. The Strategy's approaches are increasingly utilized to guide commitments and action by United Nations agencies and Governments, in pursuance of General Assembly resolutions 56/195 and 57/256. The present report provides an overview and updated information since last year's report (A/57/190) on the implementation of the Strategy, which is carried out by numerous international actors guided by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction and the inter-agency secretariat of the Strategy. Highlights this year include follow-up to the decisions of the World Summit on Sustainable Development concerning risk assessment and disaster reduction, fostering partnerships to improve synergies and clarify roles between agencies, and addressing the issue of the impact of extreme weather events and the synergies between the adaptation to climate change and disaster reduction.

However, progress in implementing the Strategy is set against the backdrop of increased losses from natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters. Over the first half of 2003, thousands of human lives were lost and great economic damage resulted from disasters such as earthquakes, floods and heat

* A/58/150.

** The present report was submitted on 12 August 2003, after extensive consultations with the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and other organizations involved in its finalization.

waves. Data on disasters are often ill-defined and incomplete, which hinders accurate analysis. Nevertheless, global summaries for 2002 report the occurrence of more than 500 disasters, with more than 10,000 people killed, 600 million people affected, \$55 billion in total damages and \$13 billion in insured losses.

The World Summit on Sustainable Development reinforced awareness of the need for risk and vulnerability reduction in order to secure sustainable development, and the imperative for development sectors to channel investment into disaster reduction activities. This is a major new challenge, since most resources for disaster reduction at present are drawn from the humanitarian sector; thus, the effect on development decisions and poverty reduction strategies is very limited.

The underlying problems of growing vulnerability to hazards are largely an outcome of development activities. Through myriad decisions being made every day at the local and international levels, the risk burdens of countries are being modified and inadvertently compounded. More work is needed to improve social protection targeting vulnerable communities in pursuance of the Millennium Development Goals.

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I. Activities carried out in support of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

1. The vision of the key partners is that the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction should continue to become a more visible, recognized and flexible instrument for reducing the risk of and vulnerability to natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters. In a relatively short period, the Strategy has made major contributions to raising awareness of the issues and developing accessible information and tools. It has attracted increasing attention and support from Governments and key expert institutions. The outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development has provided the Strategy with a concrete set of objectives within the sustainable development agenda to which both the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and the inter-agency secretariat of the Strategy, along with partners, will increasingly turn their attention and capacities in order to integrate and mainstream risk reduction into development policies and processes. The dual aims will be to reduce disasters and to secure development that lowers rather than increases disaster risk. The task is enormous and urgent. Much still needs to be done to increase the awareness and commitment of Governments, business leaders, communities and financial institutions in relation to the specific social and economic advantages of investing in reducing risk and vulnerability.

2. The Task Force and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction secretariat act as the main institutional mechanisms of the Strategy, and have continued to consolidate their roles. Through these platforms, relevant international, regional and civil society organizations are interacting and building processes to develop common understanding and approaches, to work on shared activities and projects, to guide and monitor progress and to periodically report on achievements and gaps to be addressed. Substantive advice and support are being provided to Governments and other institutions concerned with disasters. Specific technical documents and awareness and educational materials have been developed and are reaching further into communities living in disaster-prone areas. Although the Strategy is still in its early stages, it has demonstrated very great potential for progress, and Governments and institutions can use it as a platform to increase investment.

3. An initiative is currently under way to expand, revitalize and strengthen national platforms for disaster reduction, in particular with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and United Nations country teams.

4. In order to help raise resources and provide support to the Strategy secretariat, an informal support group of donors was created under the leadership of the Swiss Government, with the full support of the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. Under their co-chairmanship, the support group, consisting of the most interested Member States, met three times. That initiative led to increased ownership of the cause and a subsequent increase in the number of countries providing contributions to the Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction. New contributions were made by the Governments of Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Iceland, Italy and Norway as well as by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). In addition, support continued from the Governments of Germany, Japan, the Philippines, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Financial support was also

provided by the World Bank through the United Nations Office for Project Services and the Agence de la Francophonie. Although the number of contributors has increased, it must be noted that financial constraints still exist. Greater financial stability is imperative in order for the Task Force and the Strategy secretariat to cover their core requirements and carry out their mandates.

A. Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development

5. The World Summit on Sustainable Development provided a timely reminder to the international community that faulty development and inappropriate use of resources are factors that contribute to natural disasters. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation includes commitments relating to disaster and vulnerability reduction and improved early warning in the sections on protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, Africa, small island developing States and means of implementation.

6. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/256 of 20 December 2002, Member States should provide support for the activities of the Commission on Sustainable Development in its efforts to review advances in reducing the negative impacts of natural hazards on communities and development processes. At its eleventh session the Commission adopted the themes of disaster management and vulnerability as those to be reviewed in its fifth cycle (2014-2015). In the light of the cross-cutting nature of the issues, risk management and vulnerability will also be examined in the context of other thematic clusters of the Commission, such as water, sanitation and human settlements (2004-2005) and drought and desertification (2006-2007). In support of this work, the Task Force identified development planning and allocation of adequate resources to reduce vulnerability as one of its main areas of concern in coming years. The Strategy secretariat will continue to collaborate closely with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs to support the Commission's work on this subject. An increased formal collaboration between the Strategy secretariat and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is foreseen in the coming year.

7. Other organizations have also significantly expanded the breadth and scope of their activities in the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and in support of efforts by Member States to implement the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Some of the partnerships launched at the Summit in the area of early warning and disaster preparedness, involving the Strategy, have reported on progress as set out below.

8. The partnership for integrating early warning and disaster risk management into the sustainable development agenda and practice builds on continuing work within the Strategy framework on early warning, and particularly within the Task Force working group on early warning, led by UNEP. The Second International Conference on Early Warning (Bonn, October 2003) is expected to formulate recommendations on how to consolidate a global programme to integrate early warning into public policies. These recommendations are expected to be a major contribution to the action programme to be adopted by Member States at the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

9. The partnership for integrating prevention of, preparedness for and response to environmental emergencies in support of sustainable development, led by the Office

for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UNEP, makes use of existing resources and distributes responsibilities and efforts among partners and key stakeholders. The practical implementation aspects of this partnership are being explored. The partnership benefited from the support of the Advisory Group on Environmental Emergencies and the Senior-level Expert Advisory Group Meeting on the UNEP Awareness and Preparedness for Emergencies at the Local Level programme.

10. The partnership for establishing resilient communities, led by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, aims to operationalize the concept of resilience for local Agenda 21 programmes, particularly to scale up responses to natural, industrial, social and economic disasters; introduce policies, tools and methods developed in the disaster risk management community; and apply the knowledge from disaster management know-how to a broad spectrum of vulnerabilities, including environmental change, economic losses, industrial accidents and social violence. Work is under way to identify cities and resources to engage in the implementation.

11. The Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has endorsed a main line of action devoted to enhancing disaster prevention and preparedness as a follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Activities aim to capitalize on previous achievements in disaster mitigation and to promote an interdisciplinary approach to natural hazards, the application of science and technology to reduce the impact of natural hazards, multidisciplinary education and training, and disaster awareness of policy makers, community leaders and the public.

12. At its Fourteenth World Meteorological Congress, WMO established a new cross-cutting programme on natural disaster prevention and mitigation, which aims to ensure coordination within WMO programmes and activities on the subject, as well as to provide increased WMO support to the implementation of the Strategy. At the same Congress a new project on natural disaster reduction in coastal lowlands was approved in response to requests made at the Summit. New initiatives from the various programmes of WMO have been included in the Sixth WMO Long-Term Plan (2004-2011). WMO is also involved in regular El Niño monitoring and in the strengthening of the International Research Centre for El Niño, in collaboration with the Government of Ecuador and the Strategy secretariat, in addition to chairing the Task Force working group on climate and disasters. Projects on establishing a climate alert system and on linking climate and disaster databases on floods are being prepared.

13. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) has been especially active in supporting Member States in the follow-up to the World Summit in the area of flood management and within the ESCAP/WMO Typhoon Committee and Panel on Tropical Cyclones, to strengthen regional cooperation.

14. UNEP has further developed its strategic policy on emergency prevention, preparedness, assessment, mitigation and response. An analysis of causes and long-term environmental impacts of emergencies and the possible implications for Governments and the international community led to strengthened mandates at the last session of the Governing Council.

B. Review of the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction

15. The review of the activities of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction,¹ as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 56/195 of 21 December 2001, was carried out through consultations with participating organizations. The Task Force has met seven times since 2000. The first two meetings identified priority areas and clarified the roles of participating members.² Working groups were established on climate and disasters, chaired by WMO; early warning, chaired by UNEP; risk, vulnerability and impact assessment, chaired by UNDP; and wildland fires, chaired by the Global Fire Monitoring Centre. An ad hoc discussion group on drought was also established. Additional technical and expert bodies are associated with the work of the Task Force through their participation in the working groups. Furthermore, at its third meeting the Task Force adopted a framework for the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction as a “living document”, which helped to clarify the role of the Task Force vis-à-vis the Strategy secretariat and other partners.

16. The review concluded that the Task Force represents an essential process to enable the international community to develop a better understanding of and strategic direction on disaster reduction as a long-term undertaking. This has been facilitated by the varied composition of the Task Force membership, which includes representatives of United Nations, regional and civil society organizations. The open and inclusive nature of Task Force meetings has enabled a number of Member States and interested organizations to participate in the work of the body. The Task Force appears to be evolving into the hub of a larger network of organizations and entities, from within and outside the United Nations system, having a stake in disaster reduction.

17. The Task Force’s various expert consultations, meetings and activities have brought concrete results and even new offshoots to the international disaster reduction community (details of which are contained in the reports of the Task Force meetings, available at www.unisdr.org). At its 7th meeting, in April 2003, the Task Force discussed the nature and prospective role of its working groups, as well as the appropriate balance between the role of the Task Force as an international forum for discussion and the need to produce tangible guidelines and results-oriented products for the benefit of the disaster reduction and development community. The result of the review of the Yokohama Strategy will provide future direction for this work. In the meantime, a transitional programme of work for 2004 includes support for the development of a framework for guidance and monitoring of disaster risk reduction; urban risk and vulnerability; integration of disaster reduction in sustainable development; linking climate change adaptation and disaster reduction; and special attention to Africa.

18. Through the review, Task Force members also identified a number of weaknesses and shortcomings to be addressed, including the need to:

- Adopt a more strategic role and focus on devising strategies and policies and identifying gaps in disaster reduction policies and programmes
- Raise the profile of disaster reduction within the United Nations and obtain support from the regular budget, and to ensure the transition and connection

between the relief and humanitarian system and the development sectors under a sustainable development approach

- Ensure that the work carried out by the working groups provides specific advice on the integration of their various subjects and products into policy development and integration processes, with a client-oriented approach to help decision-making and to guide disaster reduction, while keeping in sight other less urgent but equally important areas of work. These can be addressed through ad hoc mechanisms involving a few interested Task Force members
- Include organizations representing local authorities and those whose core work relates to sustainable development. The Task Force also needs to enhance its political profile and visibility.

The review concluded that the Task Force has made a positive and substantive contribution, despite the limited funds available to support its activities.

C. Global review of disaster reduction initiatives and achievements since the adoption of the Yokohama Strategy

19. In pursuance of General Assembly resolution 57/256, the Task Force and the Strategy secretariat initiated the review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action³ to examine achievements in the implementation of disaster reduction, identify gaps and prepare recommendations for future priorities to guide action by Member States. The review takes into account several relevant processes, such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the 10-year review and preparation of follow-up actions to the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and the launching of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014).

20. An important development for the review is the proposed framework for guidance and monitoring of disaster risk reduction. The goal of this new framework is to increase the understanding and effectiveness of disaster risk reduction practices through a participatory process and building on existing praxis. It aims to specify the main elements and principles of disaster reduction, in order to guide action and to define benchmarks and other indicators that can be used to monitor efforts and assess progress. The Strategy secretariat, with UNDP, has convened a broad-based Internet consultation with experts worldwide. The Task Force will assist and advise on the process, with several individual Task Force members being directly involved in the process, in addition to the ProVention Consortium.

21. The Strategy secretariat will soon be requesting national and regional reports on progress, achievements and shortcomings in the realization of disaster reduction. A series of regional and thematic consultations are already being held in association with conferences organized by partner organizations. The first regional consultation was held in Asia, hosted by the Government of Japan, at Hyogo Prefecture, in January 2003. The South Pacific island States discussed achievements, shortcomings and requirements for the future in a meeting hosted by the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) in Fiji in May 2003, and the Euro-Mediterranean Forum on Disaster Reduction will do likewise in Madrid in October 2003. Several other thematic and regional consultations will be taking place in 2003 and 2004.

Available results will be presented in the 2003 edition of the Strategy's flagship publication, *Living with Risk: A Global Review of Disaster Reduction Initiatives*, and will be updated in the 2004 edition.

22. The review of the Yokohama Strategy and the outcome of the Second International Conference on Early Warning are expected to provide substantive justification for renewing and elevating political commitment towards disaster reduction and to motivate further actions of Governments and communities through an expanded programme for the period 2005-2015, to coincide with the targets of the Millennium Development Goals and the Commission on Sustainable Development. This programme should be discussed and adopted at the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction, which will bring together technical experts and delegates from Member States, tentatively to be held in Japan in January 2005.

D. Additional partnerships

23. Pursuant to requests from the General Assembly, progress has been made in engaging additional partner organizations to improve the implementation of the Strategy. Partnerships are crucial to the Strategy secretariat. Several agreements were reached, covering issues such as urban risk (with the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)); study of the interface between natural and technological disasters (with the European Commission Joint Research Centre); the impacts of climate variability and change (with the International Research Institute for Climate Prediction); and support for public awareness, education and policy integration for disaster risk reduction at the national level through consolidation of multisectoral platforms for disaster reduction at national and regional levels (with the Central American Centre for Coordination of Natural Disaster Prevention (CEPREDENAC)). A number of other agreements are being prepared with several other regional organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and the Pacific.

24. The International Consortium on Landslides and the International Programme on Landslides were established in November 2002 to promote international coordination on landslide issues. The Strategy secretariat participated in the preparation and steering committee of the Consortium, along with UNESCO, WMO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Governments of Canada, Italy, Japan, Norway and the United States of America. Twenty-five projects relating to fundamental research on landslides; a global database on landslide hazard assessment; landslide risk mitigation; cultural and societal aspects; and capacity-building, communication and information were selected for implementation.

25. The Strategy secretariat continued to collaborate closely with the ProVention Consortium, a project-oriented global coalition and flexible network of Governments, international organizations, academic institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations. The physical proximity of the ProVention secretariat, which was recently transferred to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in Geneva, will further enhance the working relationship between the Strategy secretariat, UNDP, OCHA and IFRC.

26. Moreover, in line with efforts to enhance coordination within the United Nations system, UNDP, OCHA and the Strategy secretariat undertook a preliminary self-assessment of their natural disaster-related activities. In addition to identifying specific areas of synergy and enhancement of practical work among the three entities, in particular to support regional and national capacities, this exercise led to greater collaboration and understanding of their principal roles and functions, namely:

- OCHA as the coordinating body for international humanitarian assistance
- the Strategy secretariat as the coordinating body for the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and of disaster reduction policy and advocacy at the international level
- UNDP as the organization for national capacity-building in disaster reduction and support for humanitarian coordination at the national level through the Resident Coordinator system.

It is expected that this tripartite arrangement will evolve further to encompass other key partners, such as IFRC and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee members, through the creation of a task force on natural disasters within the framework of the Standing Committee.

E. Regional outreach

27. Regional outreach is central to the implementation of the Strategy because it is a means to introduce best practices through policy integration, advocacy and information-sharing, to help foster and strengthen cooperation on disaster reduction among existing regional stakeholders, to federate and cross-fertilize them and to lead to the enhancement of regional partnerships. Progress has been most notable in Africa.

Africa

28. Africa is subjected to a variety of natural disasters, especially large-scale floods, drought and associated food insecurity, tropical storms and volcanic eruptions, which not only cause considerable losses but also exacerbate other chronic problems of the region, such as poverty, conflicts and HIV/AIDS. The Strategy secretariat launched an African outreach programme in October 2002, with a staff member hosted by UNEP in Nairobi. In collaboration with the UNDP disaster reduction regional adviser and other regional experts, the African programme is working closely with a range of entities and is actively contributing to events relating to disaster reduction, providing multilevel advocacy on the linkages among disaster reduction, environmental protection, climate change, poverty alleviation and sustainable development. This has been targeted at policy makers and managers at the regional, subregional and national levels. Work in disaster reduction is picking up momentum and more effort is being made to link disaster risk management to important regional frameworks such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

29. The African outreach programme also provides opportunities for consultation and exchange of knowledge and information — for example through the web site www.unisdrafrica.org and a biannual publication on disaster reduction in Africa, and

in response to direct requests from many subregional actors. An educational series for public awareness, produced jointly with the Drought Monitoring Centre in Nairobi, has elicited positive feedback from teachers and requests for more information.

30. The African programme has promoted cooperation and collaboration in mainstreaming gender concerns in disaster reduction in Africa. At a recent meeting of European and African women professionals and business executives, the programme presented a well-received proposal to work with women in Africa to carry out a joint study on early warning practices from a gender perspective and co-organized a regional conference on the gender perspective in disaster reduction and sustainable development.

31. A strategy to support the development of national capacities and platforms for disaster reduction is being prepared with UNDP. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction national platform workshops were held in Djibouti, Uganda and Madagascar. Initial consultations were carried out with the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community on cooperation in areas of advocacy, information management and policy development for disaster reduction.

Latin America and the Caribbean

32. The outreach programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, based in Costa Rica in joint offices with the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), was consolidated in the course of 2003. Strengthening capacity for the more effective regional implementation of the Strategy at various levels has been at the core of collaborative efforts with UNDP, OCHA and subregional partners such as CEPREDENAC, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), the Association of Caribbean States, the Community of Andean Nations, the Andean Development Bank and the newly established Andean Committee for Disaster Prevention and Response.

33. Addressing the needs of local communities at high risk, outreach in Latin America and the Caribbean has continued to focus on developing innovative awareness and educational tools and partnerships. Support for regional policies and institutional strengthening has also been provided to the International El Niño Research Centre launched in January 2003 with the Government of Ecuador and WMO.

34. The Regional Disaster Information Centre, an initiative sponsored by PAHO/World Health Organization (WHO), the Strategy secretariat, the Government of Costa Rica, IFRC, CEPREDENAC and Doctors without Borders, has scaled up its activities in the course of the past year, and now maintains a collection of more than 14,000 documents, including many in full-text electronic format.

35. UNDP, PAHO/WHO and other partners have supported CDERA in the development and implementation of a Comprehensive Disaster Management Project, which has been endorsed and adopted by its 16 participating States. UNDP is currently supporting the development of subregional knowledge networking initiatives in the Caribbean, such as the Caribbean Risk Management Initiative, which is focused on linking climate-change adaptation and disaster reduction.

Asia

36. A number of substantive programmes in Asia are being enhanced through efforts by the relevant regional actors and the Strategy secretariat in order to improve collaboration and the harmonization of institutional development and policy support activities. Partners include the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre in Bangkok, the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre in Kobe, ESCAP and UNDP, among others.

37. ESCAP, supported by China, India and the European Space Agency, launched a project on capacity-building for disaster management in Asia and the Pacific, which focuses on enabling participating countries to enhance their capacity and organize their internal resources to integrate space technology for natural disaster reduction, particularly in terms of floods and droughts, and also to ensure that they can receive efficient support from international space-based initiatives. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has developed a comprehensive Regional Programme on Disaster Management, which consolidates the disaster management activities of individual ASEAN member countries and promotes greater cooperation among them. The Mekong River Commission has developed a long-term Flood Management Programme, based on the priorities identified by its member countries for 2002-2008.

The Pacific

38. Efforts are currently focused on supporting the activities of key regional organizations, in particular SOPAC, in collaboration with other partners, such as Australia and New Zealand, that have a long history of regional cooperation with Pacific Member States on disaster reduction. SOPAC has contributed to enhancing the capacities of Member States in the region to assess disaster risk management and to implement the Strategy, and has launched a three-year Community Risk Programme to improve hazard assessment and risk management practices in order to build safer communities. SOPAC, the Strategy secretariat and other partners are developing a proposal for a regional cooperation project and are working towards establishing an International Strategy for Disaster Reduction outpost in the region to strengthen disaster reduction efforts.

Europe

39. The Strategy secretariat is engaged with European partners in a regional outreach initiative building upon existing capacities and networks across both the European and the Mediterranean regions. It includes national platforms, Governments, academia and other relevant sectors in a broad-based dialogue involving the principal international networks present in the region. Following an invitation made by the German Government, a first meeting of European national platforms took place in Bonn in January 2003. Consultations have been held with both the European Commission and the Council of Europe, which, together with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, are at the core of a future regional partnership in Europe. One key milestone is the Euro-Mediterranean Forum on Disaster Reduction, which is expected to enhance collaboration across the region.

F. Other activities

40. United Nations agencies and partners have implemented a broad range of activities that have made a substantial contribution to the implementation of the Strategy. Outlined below are some of the activities conducted during the reporting period.

Capacity-building

41. UNDP has increased its capacity to deliver disaster reduction assistance to countries worldwide through four disaster reduction regional advisers supported by five programme specialists, supporting more than 40 countries during the past year. National capacity-building and institutional strengthening to develop risk reduction strategies and national platforms have been developed in Albania, Haiti and Madagascar, among other countries. The inter-agency Disaster Management Training Programme strengthened the capacities of 17 United Nations country teams in the past year. UNDP has supported local risk reduction planning; in Central America and the Caribbean 150 local risk reduction committees in hurricane-affected countries have received support. In addition, more than 100 local committees have benefited, in countries such as Albania, Madagascar, Malawi and Viet Nam. These efforts represent a major contribution to the objectives of the Strategy by enabling communities to become resilient to the effects of disasters.

42. IFRC developed a self-assessment process with its 179 National Societies to provide a global overview of capacity and resources in the field of disaster risk reduction and preparedness worldwide and to assist the National Societies in planning and benchmarking their work more effectively. More than 60 National Societies received support for developing their capacities in disaster management, including proactive measures to reduce risk. IFRC has also developed risk, vulnerability and capacity assessments to identify and analyse risk related to natural disasters in communities and at the national level. One important finding is that these assessments need to be carried out in partnership with Government authorities and actors such as the United Nations and non-governmental organizations if they are to lead to effective programmes.

43. The office of the United Nations Centre for Regional Development in Hyogo, Japan, launched a training programme in Afghanistan to increase the capacities of the national and local governments by offering technical support to achieve safer construction practices. The Centre's three-year project on sustainability in community-based disaster management, aimed at achieving safety and sustainability of livelihoods through effective disaster mitigation at the community level, is being formulated, based on the analysis of successful practices and experiences of several pilot projects in Asia.

Public awareness, advocacy and guidelines

44. In line with the International Year of Freshwater, the 2003 World Disaster Reduction Campaign focuses on the significance of water in the field of disaster reduction and aims at changing people's perceptions and attitudes towards hydrometeorological disasters. In addition to the International Day for Disaster Reduction, 8 October, the campaign is extended to the World Day for Water

celebrations to be held in March 2004, jointly coordinated by WMO and the Strategy secretariat. The theme will be “water and disasters”.

45. The 2002 edition of the IFRC *World Disasters Report* focused on reducing risk and identifying challenges and opportunities. The report is now guiding action for many national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The UNDP *World Vulnerability Report*, which will be available at the end of 2003, will highlight contemporary trends in the evolution of natural disaster risk and vulnerability patterns and will advocate relevant policies and strategies for reducing disaster risk. The report is complementary to the Strategy’s publication *Living with Risk*, and next year these two reports will be integrated. The first edition of the United Nations *World Water Development Report* is the fruit of collaboration among 23 United Nations agencies and convention secretariats. It lays the foundation for regular, system-wide monitoring and reporting by the United Nations and the development of standardized methodologies and data.

46. A number of technical guidelines and handbooks were prepared, including, by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, a handbook for estimating the socio-economic and environmental effects of disasters; by ESCAP, guidelines on participatory planning and management for flood mitigation and preparedness; and, jointly prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United States/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, WMO, ESCAP and the Strategy secretariat, guidelines for reducing flood loss.

Urban risk

47. Several initiatives were undertaken to address urban risk. UN-Habitat consulted with local authorities, disaster management sectors and housing ministries in the Caribbean and Central American region in 2002, and a programme involving communities in support of a city network to improve capacities to deal with disaster risks is under development. A pilot project with UNESCO was initiated in February 2003 to further develop and apply a local and urban risk assessment methodology in four cities in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is based on the experience of the Risk Assessment Tools for Diagnosis of Urban Areas against Seismic Disaster and is limited to other initiatives of UN-Habitat and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives. The Asian Urban Disaster Mitigation Programme of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, an eight-year programme funded by the United States Agency for International Development and the United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, is engaged in implementing risk mitigation programmes in 14 cities in Asia. It also offers training courses on urban disaster mitigation and earthquake vulnerability reduction in cities for regional, national and local groups, with the objective of promoting the replication and adaptation of successful mitigation measures. In January 2003 UNDP hosted a regional workshop in Nairobi to discuss the risk accumulation trends in urbanized areas and to develop a plan of action for awareness-raising among local and national governments, non-governmental organizations and international agencies in Africa.

The water agenda and drought

48. The Third World Water Forum, held in Kyoto in March 2003, constituted an opportunity for progress in integrating risk management as a component of integrated water management. Water-related disasters and solutions were discussed

in technical and ministerial policy round tables. The Strategy secretariat, in collaboration with the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre, convened a meeting during the Forum on living with risk and steps for effective disaster reduction, and ESCAP conducted a discussion on regional cooperation in flood preparedness and reduction. A report was prepared on the role that insurance and other financial services can play in risk management in connection with water and climate. A joint project of WMO and the Global Water Partnership was launched on flood management in the context of integrated water resource management.

49. The Task Force ad hoc discussion group on drought prepared an outline for a global drought risk reduction network to support regional networks. This initiative will facilitate the exchange of experiences and lessons learned and promote improved relationships among existing drought early warning systems. ESCAP and UNDP projects on regional drought preparedness networks are ongoing.

50. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, with 188 ratifications to date, facilitates the assistance to countries in the collection, analysis and exchange of relevant data and information, which are essential for systematic observation of the desertification process and for assessing the impact of drought. The secretariats of the Convention and of the Strategy have discussed how this activity could contribute to the implementation of the Strategy and the networks on drought. A drought preparedness and mitigation programme to promote the use of climate information in decision-making by farmers is being implemented by WMO in collaboration with the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and national and regional partners.

Space applications and telecommunications

51. The United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs pursued its activities in the field of space applications for disaster reduction. In 2003, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space recognized the contributions of the Strategy secretariat in the development of space programmes in relation to natural disaster reduction, in particular in the conduct of two regional workshops on the use of space for natural disaster management held during the reporting period. The workshop for Asia, organized by ESCAP, in cooperation with the Office for Outer Space Affairs, recommended follow-up activities on floods and droughts and identified possible pilot projects for implementation. Another was held in Romania for Europe.

52. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) World Telecommunication Development Conference, held in Istanbul in 2002, issued a number of recommendations to promote the use of telecommunication resources for disaster mitigation and relief operations and for early warning services. ITU recently entered into a co-financing arrangement in which a private sector entity provided financing for the procurement of satellite terminals and ITU provided financing for airtime. The equipment will be used in disaster mitigation and relief. The World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva, December 2003, and Tunis, November 2005) is expected to provide an opportunity to enhance disaster reduction through information technology.

II. Negative impacts of extreme weather events and associated natural disasters on vulnerable countries

53. This section responds to the special request of the General Assembly in its decision 57/547 of 20 December 2002 for a report to the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the negative impacts of extreme weather events and associated natural disasters on vulnerable countries, in particular developing countries. The impact of extreme weather events around the globe is enormous, and continues to handicap the advancement of the struggling developing economies. In June 2003 alone, a summary by the International Research Institute for Climate Prediction of Columbia University⁴ noted flooding in south-western Sri Lanka with approximately 300 deaths, 200,000 persons displaced and heavy economic damage; a pre-monsoon heat wave in India with more than 1,000 deaths; flooding in Ethiopia and western Kenya with more than 160,000 people displaced; and increases in cases of hepatitis and leptospirosis in Argentina associated with flood conditions. The catastrophic floods of August in Europe caused losses of nearly \$20 billion. The impact of the severe winter for Mongolia was equal to 15 per cent of the country's gross national income, while fatalities from tropical storms in the Federated States of Micronesia reached the exceptionally high rate of 40 per 100,000 people.

54. A very serious concern is the substantial increase in the impacts of weather-related disasters over the past three decades. Average economic losses from extreme weather events in the 1990s were six times as great as in the 1960s. Of equal concern is the conclusion of a UNDP meeting of experts⁵ that developing countries are disproportionately affected, with their losses rising to about five times as high per unit of gross domestic product as those of rich countries, sometimes exceeding a year's worth or more of hard-won and desperately needed economic development.

55. Disasters associated with weather — such as droughts, floods, landslides, storms, fires, and sometimes epidemics and pest outbreaks — far outstrip other types of disasters. The broad regional patterns of risk are well known — for example, the tropical hurricane zones, the drought-prone semi-arid regions and the regions affected by El Niño events — but the details of timing, location and intensity of particular extreme events are largely random and unpredictable, except for forecasts of El Niño a season or two ahead and warnings of tropical cyclones and other severe weather a few days ahead. Extreme weather and climate events are a natural feature of the climate system that human society must continue to adapt to. It is reasonable to ask whether the increase in disaster impacts is due to changes in the climate. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that the Earth's climate is very likely to change over the decades to come, owing to increases in concentrations of atmospheric greenhouse gases caused by human activity, with likely increases in temperatures, sea levels and extreme weather events (heavy rainfalls and droughts). IPCC assessments of historical climate data have shown a rise in global average temperatures and sea levels over the course of the twentieth century. However, these same assessments have pointed to only small or inconclusive changes to date in the weather factors that are dominant in disasters, such as heavy rainfall, drought or storminess. Some of the observed changes are linked to the tendency for El Niño events to be somewhat stronger over the last 30 years, but it should be noted that IPCC projections indicate only relatively small changes in El Niño amplitudes over the next 100 years. While climate change is a serious threat in the long term and may already be affecting disaster risks, the

changes observed to date in the characteristics of weather and climate hazards are insufficient to explain the rapid increase in disasters.

56. Meanwhile, the consensus view of disaster risk reduction professionals indicates that the vulnerability of societies to the existing level of hazards is increasing. It is widely recognized that many countries are rapidly accumulating large latent risk burdens through the concentration of growing populations in hazardous situations, the stripping of environmental capacities to withstand hazards, and the creation of new social and economic vulnerabilities because of migration, urban development and economic growth. The reinsurance industry also points to increasing densities of exposed and insured assets. Increasingly, when a hazard event occurs, it exposes a large accumulation of risk, unleashing unexpected levels of impacts. Disasters are thus a manifestation of unsustainability.

57. At the same time, climate change remains highly relevant to disasters and their reduction for several important reasons. Firstly, the existing trends evident in weather parameters, though quite small, may already be exacerbating the impacts of some hazard events, especially where social and environmental stresses are already high. Secondly, IPCC has consistently projected the likelihood of increased frequency and intensity of hazards in the future. When and where these changes will become manifest is very uncertain, so precautionary preparations are essential. Steps that enhance our ability to cope with the existing climate will be especially desirable and cost-effective. Thirdly, the experience of countries in managing current climate fluctuations and extremes — for example, multi-year droughts — can provide valuable lessons for dealing with projected longer-term changes. Fourthly, disaster reduction provides a solid, meaningful, no-regrets set of activities in support of climate change adaptation plans. Finally, mitigation policies and initiatives to reduce emissions are likely to change the nature of climate-related risks — for example, through land-use changes.

58. To address these issues, the Strategy secretariat and partners are working to promote the use of disaster reduction as a primary and readily implemented component of climate change adaptation strategies. This complements efforts to mainstream disaster reduction into development strategies. An initiative is under way to prepare an authoritative, multi-stakeholder report on the topic; this was launched at a side event to the June 2003 meeting of the subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Bonn, with the co-sponsorship of the German Technical Cooperation and the Centre for Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness, established by the Netherlands Red Cross in 2002 in cooperation with IFRC. Work on technical matters, such as the development of better databases on disasters, risks, vulnerabilities and hazards, is continuing, and the active involvement of disaster reduction experts in the next IPCC assessment, due in 2007, is being promoted.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

59. Although global warming is not the primary cause of present disaster trends, the two issues are intimately linked and must be dealt with in an integrated manner. It is clear that the management and reduction of climate-related risk has become a central issue of our time. Disaster risk reduction is a potent no-regrets solution for adapting nationally to climate change.

Interaction and coordination among the development, disaster risk management and climate communities are essential in order to identify and reduce current and future climatic risks. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction provides the framework for collaboration on the development of methodologies to systematically characterize, measure, assess and respond to weather-related disasters, hazards and vulnerabilities, and trends therein, at the local, national, regional and international levels. This would include coordination and the promotion of disaster reduction as a climate change adaptation strategy and advising the secretariat of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, IPCC and other relevant United Nations entities on risk reduction options.

60. Member States and international organizations need to ensure that development plans and poverty reduction strategies include disaster risk assessment as an integral component and increase their investments to reduce risk and vulnerability if development gains are not to be wiped out, in particular in the least developed countries and small island developing States. Natural and technological hazards, along with the increasing threat of HIV/AIDS, other epidemics and complex emergencies, need to be tackled through common approaches and team efforts by the international community if development goals are to be achieved.

61. The review of the 1994 Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action is expected to show a need to increase the commitment to disaster reduction. A broad consensus is emerging on the need to move towards a more specific action programme in the coming years to guide and monitor disaster reduction worldwide. The Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction will provide an opportunity for Member States and expert institutions to discuss and adopt a set of principles and substantive activities for 2005-2015, thus contributing to the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and other United Nations development objectives. At its seventh meeting in April 2003, the Task Force welcomed and endorsed the offer made by Japan to host such a conference in Kobe. Member States are encouraged to endorse the convening of the Conference with the principal objectives of identifying achievements and gaps to be addressed and of setting the vision and recommendations for the future work of the Strategy and for the implementation of disaster reduction at all levels.

62. This year, the Second International Conference on Early Warning is expected to launch a substantive programme to facilitate dialogue and cooperation on early warning issues at the global and regional levels as an integral element of disaster reduction policy. The Conference will include practical steps to improve the integration of warnings into policy and management and the facilitation of relevant activities, interests and expertise. The results of the Conference are expected to be an important component of the action programme to be launched by the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction. Member States are encouraged to provide substantive support for this initiative.

63. The work of the Task Force should receive more sustained political and financial support in line with the recently conducted review of activities. The political profile and visibility of disaster reduction per se, and of the Strategy,

should continue to be enhanced. To that end, the profile of Task Force meetings must be further raised, including through the organization of sessions at which member organizations and entities should be represented at the highest level. At the same time, the chair of the Task Force should continue to ensure that its working groups constitute ad hoc arrangements with clearly defined objectives and schedules, and that their activities are in line with the overall mandate and objectives of the Task Force.

64. The Strategy secretariat should continue to be strengthened, in keeping with General Assembly resolutions 54/219 of 22 December 1999, 56/195 and 57/256. Disaster reduction is relevant to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It is both a humanitarian and a development responsibility and must be considered as a part of the core functions of the United Nations. A more stable and predictable base of financial resources is required if the Strategy secretariat is to effectively meet the growing needs of Member States. Member States are encouraged to support the process of consolidation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction as an essential instrument for sustainable development and to provide adequate resources to the Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction.

Notes

¹ The Task Force was established to: (a) serve as the main forum within the United Nations system for formulating strategies and policies for disaster reduction; (b) identify gaps in disaster reduction policies and programmes and recommend remedial action; (c) provide policy guidance to the Strategy secretariat; and (d) convene ad hoc meetings of experts on issues related to disaster reduction. It is chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, and the Director of the Strategy secretariat acts as Secretary.

² Current members include: African Union, Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, Asian Disaster Reduction Centre, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Council of Europe, Drought Monitoring Centre, FAO, Global Fire Monitoring Centre, Ibero-American Association of Civil Defence and Civil Protection, Organization of American States, International Council of Science, International CIS Council, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Telecommunication Union, Munich Reinsurance, South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission, UNDP, UNESCO, UNEP, UN-Habitat, United Nations University, World Bank, WFP, WHO and WMO.

³ Adopted at the first World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, Yokohama, 1994. It has since then served as the international blueprint for disaster reduction and the basis for the adoption of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

⁴ See <http://iri.columbia.edu/climate/cid/Jun2003/>.

⁵ See www.undp.org/erd/disred/docs/Riskadaptationintegrated.doc.

Section II

Other UN Resolutions and Reports related to natural disasters and relevant issues

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A

Chernobyl disaster

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General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 February 2006

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 73 (c)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/60/L.19 and Add.1)]

60/14. Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 45/190 of 21 December 1990, 46/150 of 18 December 1991, 47/165 of 18 December 1992, 48/206 of 21 December 1993, 50/134 of 20 December 1995, 52/172 of 16 December 1997, 54/97 of 8 December 1999, 56/109 of 14 December 2001 and 58/119 of 17 December 2003, as well as its resolution 55/171 of 14 December 2000 on closure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, and taking note of the decisions adopted by the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system in the implementation of those resolutions,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolutions 1990/50 of 13 July 1990, 1991/51 of 26 July 1991 and 1992/38 of 30 July 1992 and Council decision 1993/232 of 22 July 1993,

Conscious of the long-term nature of the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which was a major technological catastrophe in terms of its scope and complexity and created humanitarian, environmental, social, economic and health consequences and problems of common concern, requiring for their solution wide and active international cooperation and coordination of efforts in this field at the international and national levels,

Expressing profound concern at the ongoing effects of the consequences of the accident on the lives and health of people, in particular children, in the affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as well as in other affected countries,

Noting the consensus reached among members of the Chernobyl Forum¹ on the findings of the reports entitled “Environmental Consequences of the Chernobyl

¹ The members of the Chernobyl Forum are drawn from the following organizations and bodies within the United Nations system: International Atomic Energy Agency, United Nations Development Programme, World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Environment Programme, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, and World Bank, as well as representatives of the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

Accident and their Remediation: Twenty Years of Experience” and “Health Effects of the Chernobyl Accident and Special Health Care Programmes”, and recognizing the important contribution made by the Forum to the overall assessment of the environmental, health and socio-economic effects of the Chernobyl disaster,

Acknowledging the importance of the national efforts being undertaken by the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster,

Recognizing the contribution of civil society organizations, including the national Red Cross Societies of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in response to the Chernobyl disaster and in support of the efforts of the affected countries,

Emphasizing the importance of the new developmental approach to tackling the problems caused by the Chernobyl accident aimed at normalizing the situation of the individuals and communities concerned in the medium and long term,²

Stressing the exceptional Chernobyl-related needs, in particular in the areas of health, ecology and research, in the context of the transition from the emergency to the recovery phase of mitigation of the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster,

Noting the transfer of the functions of the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl from the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator to the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and Chairperson of the United Nations Development Group,

Stressing the need for further coordination by the United Nations Development Programme and improved resource mobilization by the United Nations system to support the activities of the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network as well as the efforts to disseminate the findings of the Chernobyl Forum,

Noting the completion of information needs assessments of the affected populations in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine under the aegis of the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network,

Stressing the significance of the upcoming twentieth anniversary of the accident for the further strengthening of international cooperation to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the implementation of resolution 58/119,³ as well as relevant parts of the reports of the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system,

1. *Welcomes* the contribution made by States and by organizations of the United Nations system to the development of cooperation to mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, the activities of regional and other organizations and those of non-governmental organizations, as well as bilateral activities;

2. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts undertaken by the agencies of the United Nations system and other international organizations members of the Inter-

² See the United Nations report entitled “The Human Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident: A Strategy for Recovery”.

³ A/60/443.

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Agency Task Force on Chernobyl to implement a new developmental approach to studying, mitigating and minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, in particular through the development of specific projects, and stresses the need for the Inter-Agency Task Force to continue its activities to that end, including through coordinating efforts in the field of resource mobilization;

3. *Acknowledges* the difficulties faced by the most affected countries in minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and invites States, in particular donor States and all relevant agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations, to continue to provide support to the ongoing efforts of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, including through the allocation of adequate funds to support medical, social, economic and ecological programmes related to the disaster;

4. *Reaffirms* that the United Nations should continue to play an important catalytic and coordinating role in the strengthening of international cooperation to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General and the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl, in his capacity as Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and as Chairperson of the United Nations Development Group, to take further appropriate practical measures to strengthen coordination of the international efforts in that area;

6. *Notes with satisfaction* the realization of the Cooperation for Rehabilitation Programme in Belarus and the Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme in Ukraine, aimed at promoting better living conditions in and the sustainable development of the affected territories;

7. *Also notes with satisfaction* assistance rendered by the International Atomic Energy Agency to Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine on remediation of agricultural and urban environments, cost-effective agricultural countermeasures and the monitoring of human exposure in areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster;

8. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the progress made by the Governments of the affected countries in implementing national strategies to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident, and calls upon United Nations agencies and multilateral and bilateral donors to continue to align their assistance with the priorities of the national strategies of the affected States, and stresses the importance of working together on their implementation in a common effort in the spirit of cooperation;

9. *Welcomes* the efforts of the Government of Ukraine and the international donor community to bring to completion the building of the shelter⁴ as well as those efforts to provide for the environmentally sound collection and storage of nuclear waste, and encourages further efforts in this regard;

10. *Notes* the necessity of further measures to ensure the integration of the assessment by the Chernobyl Forum of the environmental, health and socio-economic consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident into the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network process through dissemination of the

⁴ Ibid., paras. 49 and 50.

findings of the Forum, including in the form of practical messages on healthy and productive lifestyles, to the populations affected by the accident in order to empower them to maximize social and economic recovery and sustainable development in all its aspects;

11. *Recognizes* the role that the Commonwealth of Independent States plays in the process of preparing events in observance of the twentieth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident to be held in States participating in the Commonwealth;

12. *Welcomes*, in this context, the activities in observance of the International Day Commemorating Victims of Radiation Accidents and Catastrophes, 26 April, undertaken by the States participating in the Commonwealth of Independent States;

13. *Invites* Member States to observe this Day and to conduct appropriate activities to commemorate victims of radiation accidents and catastrophes and to enhance public awareness of their consequences for human health and the environment throughout the world;

14. *Welcomes* the initiatives of the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to host international events on lessons learned and on future actions in response to the Chernobyl disaster to observe the twentieth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident, and invites organizations of the United Nations system, donor countries and other development agencies to contribute to their effective realization;

15. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to convene, in April 2006, a special commemorative meeting of the Assembly in observance of the twentieth anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in the implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions and, through existing coordination mechanisms, in particular the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl, to continue to maintain close cooperation with the agencies of the United Nations system, as well as with regional and other relevant organizations, while implementing specific Chernobyl-related programmes and projects;

17. *Requests* the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl to organize, in collaboration with the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, a further study of the health, environmental and socio-economic consequences of the Chernobyl accident, consistent with the recommendations of the Chernobyl Forum;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, under a separate sub-item, a report containing a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of all aspects of the present resolution.

*52nd plenary meeting
14 November 2005*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
10 February 2004

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 40 (c)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/58/L.44 and Add.1)]

58/119. Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 45/190 of 21 December 1990, 46/150 of 18 December 1991, 47/165 of 18 December 1992, 48/206 of 21 December 1993, 50/134 of 20 December 1995, 52/172 of 16 December 1997, 54/97 of 8 December 1999 and 56/109 of 14 December 2001, as well as its resolution 55/171 of 14 December 2000 on closure of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, and taking note of the decisions adopted by the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system in the implementation of those resolutions,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolutions 1990/50 of 13 July 1990, 1991/51 of 26 July 1991 and 1992/38 of 30 July 1992 and Council decision 1993/232 of 22 July 1993,

Conscious of the long-term nature of the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which was a major technological catastrophe in terms of its scope and complexity and created humanitarian, environmental, social, economic and health consequences and problems of common concern, requiring for their solution wide and active international cooperation and coordination of efforts in this field at the international and national levels,

Expressing profound concern at the ongoing effects of the consequences of the accident on the lives and health of people, in particular children, in the affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as well as in other affected countries,

Acknowledging the importance of the national efforts being undertaken by the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster,

Noting with appreciation the contribution made by States and by organizations of the United Nations system to the development of cooperation to mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, the activities of regional and other organizations and those of non-governmental organizations, as well as bilateral activities,

Recognizing the importance of continuing international support to the national efforts of the Governments and civil societies of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as the most affected countries, to mitigate and minimize the persisting negative effects of the Chernobyl disaster on the sustainable development of the affected areas as a result of the radiological, health, socio-economic, psychological and environmental consequences of the disaster,

Welcoming the increased role played by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations resident coordinators and the United Nations country teams in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine in helping to address both the developmental and the humanitarian consequences of the catastrophe,

Taking note of the United Nations report entitled “The Human Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident: A Strategy for Recovery”, prepared on the basis of an international needs assessment undertaken in mid-2001 in the affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine,

Emphasizing the importance of the new developmental approach to tackling the problems caused by the Chernobyl accident, aimed at normalizing the situation of the individuals and communities concerned in the medium and long term,

Stressing the continued need for a response to the exceptional Chernobyl-related needs, in particular in the areas of health, ecology and research, as the transition is made from the emergency to the recovery phase of mitigation of the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, as mentioned in the United Nations report entitled “The Human Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident: A Strategy for Recovery”,

Welcoming the launch of the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network, with the aim of supporting the ongoing international, national and civil society efforts towards the sustainable development of the affected territories by compiling, consolidating and coordinating relevant scientific research, commissioning further research where required, and making available and ensuring the effective dissemination of its findings, which should allow informed decision-making on the phases of long-term recovery and management with a view to improving the complex and diverse humanitarian, ecological, economic, social and medical situations in those territories,

Welcoming also the establishment of the Chernobyl Forum by the International Atomic Energy Agency, with the participation of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, the World Health Organization, the World Bank and representatives of the three most affected States,

Welcoming further the coordination of the activities of the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network and the Chernobyl Forum, and efforts to ensure the substantial integration of the Forum’s assessment of environmental and health consequences into the Network process,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the implementation of resolution 56/109,¹

¹ A/58/332.

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1. *Reaffirms* that the United Nations plays an important catalytic and coordinating role in the strengthening of international cooperation to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and commends the contribution made by all other relevant multilateral mechanisms to this end;

2. *Welcomes* the further practical measures that have been taken by the Secretary-General and the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl to strengthen coordination of the international efforts in that area, especially the launch of the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network;

3. *Also welcomes* the efforts undertaken by the agencies of the United Nations system and other international organizations members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl to implement a new developmental approach to studying, mitigating and minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, in particular through the development of specific projects, and requests the Inter-Agency Task Force to continue its activities to that end, including through coordinating efforts in the field of resource mobilization;

4. *Acknowledges* the difficulties faced by the most affected countries in minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and invites States, in particular donor States and all relevant agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations, to continue to provide support to the ongoing efforts of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, including through the allocation of adequate funds to support medical, social, economic and ecological programmes related to the disaster;

5. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the recent development of the Cooperation for Rehabilitation Programme, aimed at promoting better living conditions in and the sustainable development of the affected territories;

6. *Emphasizes* the important role of the authorities of the affected countries in mitigating the humanitarian and other consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe, and welcomes the continued efforts of the affected countries in this regard, including the measures taken with a view to facilitating the work of humanitarian organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to mitigate the humanitarian and other consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe;

7. *Stresses* the need for coordinated international cooperation in studying the consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe, in particular through effective work of the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network, the Chernobyl Forum, the International Chernobyl Centre for nuclear safety, radioactive waste and radioecology, and other research centres from the most affected countries, and invites Member States and all interested parties to take part in their activities;

8. *Welcomes* the decision of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States to proclaim 26 April the International Day Commemorating Victims of Radiation Accidents and Catastrophes in the States members of the Commonwealth;

9. *Invites* Member States to observe this Day and to conduct appropriate activities to commemorate victims of radiation accidents and catastrophes and to enhance public awareness of their consequences for human health and the environment throughout the world;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in the implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions and, through existing

coordination mechanisms, in particular the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl, to continue to maintain close cooperation with the agencies of the United Nations system, as well as with regional and other relevant organizations, while implementing specific Chernobyl-related programmes and projects;

11. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to consider possible ways to strengthen further the coordination, analytical, advocacy and technical capacities of the United Nations in the field, as well as at Headquarters, as described in the report of the Secretary-General,¹ with due regard to the existing administrative and budgetary capacity of the Organization;

12. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, under a separate sub-item, a report containing a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of all aspects of the present resolution and proposals for innovative measures for optimizing the effectiveness of the response of the international community, including the United Nations, to the Chernobyl disaster, as well as to consider how better to focus international cooperation to achieve a long-term developmental approach for the affected areas, bearing in mind the exceptional Chernobyl-related needs.

*75th plenary meeting
17 December 2003*

B

Climate

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General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 March 2006

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 52 (d)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/488/Add.4)]

60/197. Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 54/222 of 22 December 1999, its decision 55/443 of 20 December 2000 and its resolutions 56/199 of 21 December 2001, 57/257 of 20 December 2002, 58/243 of 23 December 2003 and 59/234 of 22 December 2004 and other resolutions relating to the protection of the global climate for present and future generations of mankind,

Recalling also the provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,¹ including the acknowledgement that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions,

Recalling further the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development,² the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),³ the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its eighth session, held in New Delhi from 23 October to 1 November 2002,⁴ the outcome of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties held in Milan, Italy, from 1 to 12 December 2003,⁵ and the outcome of the tenth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Buenos Aires from 6 to 18 December 2004,⁶

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

³ *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

⁴ FCCC/CP/2002/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.8.

⁵ FCCC/CP/2003/6/Add.1 and 2.

⁶ FCCC/CP/2004/10/Add.1 and 2.

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,⁷

Reaffirming the Mauritius Declaration⁸ and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,⁹

Remaining deeply concerned that all countries, in particular developing countries, including the least developed countries and small island developing States, face increased risks from the negative effects of climate change, and stressing the need to address adaptation needs relating to such effects,

Noting that one hundred and eighty-nine States and one regional economic integration organization have ratified the Convention,

Noting also that, to date, the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change¹⁰ has attracted one hundred and fifty-six ratifications, including from parties mentioned in annex I to the Convention, which account for 61.6 per cent of emissions,

Noting further the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the need to build and enhance scientific and technological capabilities, inter alia, through continuing support to the Panel for the exchange of scientific data and information, especially in developing countries,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration,¹¹ in which Heads of State and Government resolved to make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol and to embark on the required reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases,¹²

Reaffirming its commitment to the ultimate objective of the Convention, namely, to stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that prevents dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system,

Taking note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention,¹³

1. *Calls upon* States to work cooperatively towards achieving the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;¹

2. *Notes* that States that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change¹⁰ welcome the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol on 16 February 2005 and strongly urge States that have not yet done so to ratify it in a timely manner;

3. *Notes with interest* the activities undertaken under the flexible mechanisms established by the Kyoto Protocol;

⁷ See resolution 60/1.

⁸ *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10–14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

⁹ *Ibid.*, annex II.

¹⁰ FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

¹¹ See resolution 55/2.

¹² *Ibid.*, para. 23.

¹³ A/60/171, sect. I.

II

4. *Takes note* of the decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its tenth session,⁶ and calls for their implementation;

5. *Notes* the importance of the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, held in Montreal, Canada, from 28 November to 9 December 2005;

6. *Also notes* the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa¹⁴ and the Convention on Biological Diversity,¹⁵ and encourages cooperation to promote complementarities among the three secretariats while respecting their independent legal status;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make provisions for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its subsidiary bodies in his proposal for the programme budget for the biennium 2006–2007;

8. *Invites* the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the work of the Conference of the Parties;

9. *Invites* the conferences of the parties to the multilateral environmental conventions, when setting the dates of their meetings, to take into consideration the schedule of meetings of the General Assembly and the Commission on Sustainable Development so as to ensure the adequate representation of developing countries at those meetings;

10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the sub-item entitled “Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind”.

*68th plenary meeting
22 December 2005*

¹⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.



General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 February 2005



Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 85 (d)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/483/Add.4)]

59/234. Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 54/222 of 22 December 1999, its decision 55/443 of 20 December 2000 and its resolutions 56/199 of 21 December 2001, 57/257 of 20 December 2002 and 58/243 of 23 December 2003 and other resolutions relating to the protection of the global climate for present and future generations of mankind,

Recalling also the provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,¹ including the acknowledgement that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions,

Recalling further the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development,² the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),³ the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its eighth session, held in New Delhi from 23 October to 1 November 2002,⁴ and the outcome of the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties held in Milan, Italy, from 1 to 12 December 2003,⁵

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

³ *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

⁴ FCCC/CP/2002/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.8.

⁵ FCCC/CP/2003/6/Add.1 and 2.

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Noting the review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,⁶

Remaining deeply concerned that all countries, in particular developing countries, including the least developed countries and small island developing States, face increased risks from the negative impacts of climate change,

Noting that one hundred and eighty-nine States and one regional economic integration organization have ratified the Convention,

Noting also that, to date, the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁷ has attracted one hundred and twenty-eight ratifications, including from parties mentioned in annex I to the Convention, which account for 61.6 per cent of emissions,

Noting further the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the need to build and enhance scientific and technological capabilities, inter alia, through continuing support to the Panel for the exchange of scientific data and information, especially in developing countries,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration,⁸ in which Heads of State and Government resolved to make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, preferably by the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 2002, and to embark on the required reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases,⁹

Taking note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention,¹⁰

1. *Calls upon* States to work cooperatively towards achieving the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;¹

2. *Notes* that States that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁷ strongly urge States that have not yet done so to ratify it in a timely manner;

3. *Notes also* that States that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol welcome its ratification by the Russian Federation, which satisfies the requirements for the Kyoto Protocol to enter into force;

4. *Encourages* States that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol to continue their preparations for its entry into force;

5. *Notes with interest* the preparations undertaken for the implementation of the flexible mechanisms established by the Kyoto Protocol;

6. *Takes note* of the decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its ninth session,⁵ and calls for their implementation;

⁶ *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April–6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

⁷ FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

⁸ See resolution 55/2.

⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 23.

¹⁰ A/59/197, sect. I.

7. *Notes* the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,¹¹ and the Convention on Biological Diversity,¹² and encourages cooperation to promote complementarities among the three secretariats while respecting their independent legal status;

8. *Invites* the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the work of the Conference of the Parties;

9. *Invites* the conferences of the parties to the multilateral environmental conventions, when setting the dates of their meetings, to take into consideration the schedule of meetings of the General Assembly and the Commission on Sustainable Development so as to ensure the adequate representation of developing countries at those meetings;

10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session the sub-item entitled "Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind".

*75th plenary meeting
22 December 2004*

¹¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

¹² *Ibid.*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.



Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 94 (f)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/484/Add.6)]

58/243. Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 54/222 of 22 December 1999, its decision 55/443 of 20 December 2000 and its resolutions 56/199 of 21 December 2001 and 57/257 of 20 December 2002 and other resolutions relating to the protection of the global climate for present and future generations of mankind,

Recalling also the provisions of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,¹ including the acknowledgement that the global nature of climate change calls for the widest possible cooperation by all countries and their participation in an effective and appropriate international response, in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities and their social and economic conditions,

Recalling further the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development,² the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation")³ and the Delhi Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change at its eighth session, held in New Delhi from 23 October to 1 November 2002,⁴

Noting that one hundred and eighty-eight States and one regional economic integration organization have ratified the Convention,

Remaining deeply concerned that all countries, in particular developing countries, including the least developed countries and small island developing States, face increased risks from the negative impacts of climate change,

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

³ *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

⁴ FCCC/CP/2002/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.8.

Noting the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the need to build and enhance scientific and technological capabilities, inter alia, through continuing support to the Panel for the exchange of scientific data and information, especially in developing countries,

Noting also that, to date, the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁵ has attracted one hundred and nineteen ratifications, including from parties mentioned in annex I to the Convention, who account for 44.2 per cent of emissions,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration,⁶ in which heads of State and Government resolved to make every effort to ensure the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol, preferably by the tenth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 2002, and to embark on the required reduction in emissions of greenhouse gases,⁷

Taking note of the report of the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on the work of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention,⁸

1. *Calls upon* States to work cooperatively towards achieving the ultimate objective of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change;¹

2. *Notes* that States that have ratified the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁵ strongly urge States that have not already done so to ratify it in a timely manner;

3. *Notes with interest* the preparations undertaken for the implementation of the flexible mechanisms established by the Kyoto Protocol;

4. *Notes* the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and officers of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,⁹ and the Convention on Biological Diversity,¹⁰ and encourages cooperation to promote complementarities among the three secretariats while respecting their independent legal status;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make provisions for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its subsidiary bodies in his proposal for the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005;

6. *Invites* the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the work of the Conference of the Parties;

7. *Invites* the conferences of the parties to the multilateral environmental conventions, when setting the dates of their meetings, to take into consideration the

⁵ FCCC/CP/1997/7/Add.1, decision 1/CP.3, annex.

⁶ See resolution 55/2.

⁷ Ibid., para. 23.

⁸ A/58/308.

⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

¹⁰ Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.

schedule of meetings of the General Assembly and the Commission on Sustainable Development so as to ensure the adequate representation of developing countries at those meetings;

8. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session the sub-item entitled “Protection of global climate for present and future generations of mankind”.

*79th plenary meeting
23 December 2003*

C

Desertification

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General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 March 2006

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 52 (g)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/488/Add.7)]

60/201. Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 59/235 of 22 December 2004 and other resolutions relating to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,¹

Reaffirming the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”),²

Recalling its resolution 58/211 of 23 December 2003, in which it declared 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification,

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,³

Reaffirming the universal membership of the Convention, and acknowledging that desertification and drought are problems of a global dimension in that they affect all regions of the world,

Noting that timely and effective implementation of the Convention would help to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and encouraging affected country parties to include, as appropriate, in their national development strategies measures to combat desertification,

Stressing the need for further diversification of funding sources to address land degradation, in accordance with articles 20 and 21 of the Convention,

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

³ See resolution 60/1.

Expressing its deep appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Kenya for hosting the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Nairobi from 17 to 28 October 2005,

Welcoming the offer made by the Government of Spain to host the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in the autumn of 2007,

Welcoming also the offer made by the Government of Argentina to host the fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention in September 2006,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General⁴ on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa;¹

2. *Resolves to support and strengthen* the implementation of the Convention to address causes of desertification and land degradation, as well as poverty resulting from land degradation, through, inter alia, the mobilization of adequate and predictable financial resources, the transfer of technology and capacity-building at all levels;

3. *Notes with interest* the decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its seventh session on the outcomes of the third and fourth sessions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention;⁵

4. *Invites* the donor community to increase its support to the implementation of the Convention with a view to bringing greater international attention to bear on the issue of land degradation and desertification, which will contribute to the improvement of the sustainable development of drylands and the global environment;

5. *Welcomes* the decision of the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session to conclude with the Council of the Global Environment Facility and to adopt the memorandum of understanding on enhanced collaboration between the Convention and the Facility;⁶

6. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility to strengthen the focal area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation;

7. *Also invites* the Global Environment Facility to continue to make resources available for capacity-building activities in affected country parties implementing the Convention;

8. *Takes note with interest* of ongoing efforts to diversify the availability of financial resources to support activities aimed at combating desertification and poverty;

9. *Calls upon* Governments, where appropriate, in collaboration with relevant multilateral organizations, including the Global Environment Facility implementation agencies, to integrate desertification into their plans and strategies for sustainable development;

10. *Stresses* the importance of the implementation of all decisions of the Conference of the Parties, in particular the decisions taken at its seventh session on

⁴ A/60/171, sect. II.

⁵ See ICCD/COP(7)/16/Add.1.

⁶ Ibid., decision 6/COP.7 and annex.

strengthening of the Committee on Science and Technology and on the follow-up to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit,⁵ and supports the development of a ten-year strategy to foster the implementation of the Convention;

11. *Notes* steps taken by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session to introduce the euro as the budget and accounting currency as from the biennium 2008–2009;⁷

12. *Recalls* the request of the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session that the Executive Secretary notify parties of their contributions for 2006 by 21 November 2005 and for 2007 by 1 October 2006 to encourage early payment,⁷ and urges all parties that have not yet paid their contributions for 1999 and/or the bienniums 2000–2001 and 2002–2003 to do so as soon as possible;

13. *Recognizes* the need to provide the secretariat of the Convention with stable, adequate and predictable resources in order to enable it to continue to discharge its responsibilities in an efficient and timely manner, and further recognizes the provision in section A on budget reform in the decision of the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session on the programme and budget for the biennium 2006–2007, including the request that the Executive Secretary take additional measures necessary to address those recommendations, ensure that the financial rules are fully respected in the future and report on this matter to the meeting of the Bureau and in the performance report for the biennium 2006–2007;⁷

14. *Calls upon* Governments, and invites multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, regional economic integration organizations and all other interested organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to contribute generously to the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties,⁸ and welcomes the financial support already provided by some countries;

15. *Takes note* of the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,⁹ the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity,¹⁰ and further encourages continuing cooperation in order to promote complementarities among the secretariats, while respecting their independent legal status;

16. *Approves* the continuation of the current institutional linkage and related administrative arrangements between the Convention secretariat and the United Nations Secretariat for a further five-year period, to be reviewed by both the General Assembly and the Conference of the Parties no later than 31 December 2011, as decided by the Conference of the Parties at its seventh session;¹¹

17. *Decides* to include in the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 2006–2007 the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies envisaged for the biennium;

⁷ Ibid., decision 23/COP.7.

⁸ ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1 and Corr.1, decision 2/COP.1, annex, paras. 7–11.

⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

¹⁰ Ibid., vol. 1760, No. 30619.

¹¹ ICCD/COP(7)/16/Add.1, decision 26/COP.7.

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make provision for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, including the eighth ordinary session of the Conference of the Parties and the meetings of its subsidiary bodies, in his proposal for the programme budget for the biennium 2006–2007;

19. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the sub-item entitled “Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa”;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution.

*68th plenary meeting
22 December 2005*



General Assembly

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8 March 2006

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 52 (g)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/488/Add.7)]

60/200. International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 58/211 of 23 December 2003, in which it declared 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification,

Taking note of the decision of the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, held in Nairobi from 17 to 28 October 2005, on the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006,¹

Deeply concerned by the exacerbation of desertification in all regions of the world, particularly in Africa, and its far-reaching implications for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular on poverty eradication,

Deeply concerned also at the extensive destruction by Israel, the occupying Power, of agricultural land and orchards in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the uprooting of a vast number of fruit-bearing trees,

Conscious of the need to raise public awareness and to protect the biological diversity of deserts as well as indigenous and local communities and the traditional knowledge of those affected by this phenomenon,

Welcoming the decision of the Government of Algeria to convene and host an international conference with the participation of Heads of State and Government, dedicated to the protection of deserts and to combating desertification, in October 2006,

Welcoming also the decision of the Government of Israel to host, in cooperation with other stakeholders, an international conference entitled "Deserts and Desertification: Challenges and Opportunities" in Be'er Sheva, Israel, in November 2006,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the status of preparations for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006,²

¹ See ICCD/COP(7)/13, paras. 4–7.

² A/60/169.

1. *Welcomes* the nomination of United Nations honorary spokespersons for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, and encourages the Secretary-General to nominate additional personalities in that respect so as to promote a successful celebration of the Year worldwide;
2. *Reiterates its call upon* Member States and all relevant international organizations to support the activities related to desertification, including land degradation, to be organized by affected countries, in particular African countries and the least developed countries;
3. *Encourages* countries to contribute, as they are able, to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa³ and to undertake special initiatives in observance of the Year with the goal of enhancing the implementation of the Convention;
4. *Invites* Member States to make voluntary contributions to the Special Fund of the Convention in order to achieve the objectives of resolution 58/211 entitled “International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006”;
5. *Invites* Governments and all relevant stakeholders that have not yet done so to inform the secretariat for the Convention of activities envisaged for the observance of the Year;
6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary of the Convention to make available to the parties to the Convention and to observers a consolidated list of all activities reported, including lessons learned and best practices, in order to coordinate information and avoid overlapping of activities;
7. *Notes with interest* the decision of the Council of the Global Environment Facility to support, within its mandate, activities undertaken by affected developing countries parties to the Convention within the framework of the Year;
8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session on the celebration of the Year.

*68th plenary meeting
22 December 2005*

³ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

United Nations

A/60/169



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II

Sixtieth session

Item 54 (g) of the provisional agenda*

**Sustainable development: implementation
of the United Nations Convention to Combat
Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing
Serious Drought and/or Desertification,
Particularly in Africa**

Status of preparations for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The General Assembly, concerned over the exacerbation of desertification, particularly in Africa, and its far-reaching implications for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular on poverty eradication, adopted at its fifty-eighth session resolution 58/211, which declared 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. The resolution was adopted as a means of raising public awareness of the issue of desertification and of protecting the biological diversity, knowledge and traditions of those communities affected by desertification.

In paragraph 6 of its resolution 58/211, the General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its sixtieth session on the status of preparations for the Year.

The present report is being submitted as a follow-up to that specific request and provides information on the steps taken by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, as designated focal point for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, for the implementation of resolution 58/211. It also describes the objectives identified for the International Year and the coordination and cooperation initiatives with institutional partners and parties to the Convention.

The last part of the present report contains conclusions and recommendations to the General Assembly to ensure the success of the International Year.

* A/60/150.

I. Background

1. The twenty-second session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, recalling the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, adopted decision 22/15 inviting the General Assembly to consider declaring an international year of deserts and desertification as soon as possible.

2. At its fifty-eighth session the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/211, which declared 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. In doing so, the General Assembly underlined its deep concern over the exacerbation of desertification, particularly in Africa, and duly noted its far-reaching implications for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular those relating to poverty eradication.

3. In the resolution the General Assembly called upon Governments to contribute to the activities of the Year and was aimed at raising public awareness of the issue with a view to protecting the biological diversity of deserts as well as the traditional knowledge of those communities affected by desertification. It also:

(a) Invited all countries to establish national committees or focal points and to celebrate the Year by arranging appropriate activities;

(b) Designated the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, as focal point of the Year, in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and other relevant bodies of the United Nations;

(c) Encouraged countries to contribute, as they are able, to the Convention and to undertake special initiatives in observance of the Year with the goal of enhancing the implementation of the Convention;

(d) Called upon all relevant international organizations and Member States to support the activities related to desertification, including land degradation, to be organized by affected countries, in particular African and least developed countries.

II. Lines of action

4. The International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006 will coincide with the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The Convention, adopted in Paris on 17 June 1994 and opened for signature at the same venue on 14 and 15 October 1994, entered into force on 26 December 1996, 90 days after the fiftieth ratification was received. To this day, the Convention counts 191 parties, making it one of the most representative instruments of the Rio generation.

5. Within such a perspective, the International Year of Deserts and Desertification constitutes an opportunity to strengthen the visibility and importance

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of the drylands issue on the international environmental agenda. In that regard, it is a unique opportunity to bring across the message of the people of the drylands while underlining the daily plight and commitment of these communities to the objectives of sustainable development. It also draws the attention of the international community towards the great challenges that still lay ahead in this strategic field, and increases the momentum of the Convention process, by raising its public profile, promoting the role and comparative advantages of its parties and institutional partners.

6. With a view to fully capitalizing on the expected momentum to be generated by the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, its conception, launching and celebration are being engineered around the promotion of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification process and the complementary advantages of its multilateral and bilateral partners. In this context, it is expected that the Year will lead to the achievement of a set of concrete and measurable objectives:

(a) *Long-term oriented implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification* through the promotion of targeted local, national and international events with the aim of facilitating the implementation of the Convention, while also raising awareness about desertification and focusing attention on the way States parties, local communities and individuals contribute to combat desertification. The Bonn Declaration requested States parties to make all necessary arrangements to ensure that the elaboration of the action programmes was finalized by the end of 2005. The year 2006 could then be used as the starting line for broad implementation of those programmes worldwide. The momentum generated by the International Year could be of paramount importance for the implementation process of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, creating a multiplier effect at the national and international levels. Partnership agreements and donor round tables could be scheduled during the Year for the launching of the implementation of the action programmes. Building upon the dynamic of the Global Compact Initiative, the private sector could be further involved in the process through strategic financial support to targeted areas of interest;

(b) *Awareness of desertification implications*, by profiling desertification as a major threat to vulnerable ecosystems and to mankind, reinforced by the scenarios of climate change and loss of biological diversity, with due emphasis on the relationship with food insecurity, poverty, migration and conflicts in the context of the Millennium Development Goals;

(c) *Networking with all stakeholders*, by encouraging the mobilization of a broad and innovative international partnership to combat land degradation and desertification through patronage and partnerships with States parties, national and international organizations, civil society, academic institutions and the business community. The General Assembly, by designating the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as focal point of the Year, in conjunction with UNEP, UNDP, IFAD and other relevant bodies of the United Nations, clearly indicated the need for partnership in the implementation of the Convention. Accordingly, it builds upon the Convention mandate for partnership and collaboration with the United Nations in the implementation of the Convention to ensure that the International Year of Deserts and Desertification is a success. Additionally, and in accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/211, the

secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification will assist the 191 parties to the Convention to establish national committees, which will be in charge of coordinating the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification at the national level. The objective of the national committees will be to prepare, implement and follow up relevant year activities in their countries. The way in which the committees operate will be decided at the country level. The Convention secretariat could assist by preparing guidelines for committee establishment, with suggestions on their composition and work. The committees could be constituted by non-governmental or community-based organizations, scientific institutions and the public sector so as to ensure representation for all stakeholders, prevent duplication of the activities proposed and help to broaden the circulation of information;

(d) *Dissemination of information* related to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, by focusing attention on human activities that spread desertification throughout all regions of the planet, fine-tuning the message to also address emerging fields of interest and potential consequences that go beyond traditional focus fields (such as poverty and hunger, social unrest, political instability, conflict or mass migrations), and providing elements on effective ways to counter fatalistic perceptions. In such a context, emphasize the economic importance of ecosystem services in the drylands and promote best practices and disseminate information through all possible channels.

7. For that purpose, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification is planning to launch a dedicated “Year 2006” website expected to be set up well in advance of 2006 and run from the website of the Convention secretariat. However, simply establishing one website as a resource base will not provide the necessary technical support required by journalists worldwide. While the project will be aimed at establishing a web-based information centre and database, it will nevertheless need to strengthen the networks of journalists and other relevant information providers.

8. At the end of the Year, it is expected that a large network of environmental journalists in both developed and developing countries will have a better understanding of the global relevance of desertification. Furthermore, it is also expected that target groups, including government representatives, non-governmental organizations, local communities and the general public will be benefiting from the dissemination and sharing of a growing array of best practices and lessons learned through a variety of media channels.

III. Status of preparation

9. Following the declaration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification by the General Assembly on 23 December 2003, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, in his capacity as designated focal point of the Year, has given priority to the coordination of international and national initiatives with potential partners to ensure for the timely preparation and successful celebration of the Year.

A. International

10. With a view to defining a common strategy for the celebration of the Year and to take full advantage of the unique comparative advantages and expertise of the United Nations system, an inter-agency committee has been constituted, bringing together the principal institutional partners of the United Nations active in the Convention implementation process (UNEP, UNDP, IFAD, the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Volunteers, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and others), including those specifically designated by resolution 58/211.

11. A tentative list of activities has been drawn up by the inter-agency committee for the commemoration of the International Year (see annex). (For specific budget figures and further information on each one of the activities, refer to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification document ICCD/COP(7)/2.Add.2.) The activities identified essentially concern the fields of media, culture and communication, with a view to launching an ambitious information and awareness-raising campaign aimed at the international general public and decision makers.

B. Other activities at the international level

12. In addition to the activities jointly planned and scheduled by the inter-agency committee, partner international organizations have also provided for the organization of specific initiatives identified and devised on the basis of their respective fields of expertise and mandates.

13. In this regard, and upon a request by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the Council of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) has adopted and sent a circular to national postal administrations worldwide, encouraging the production of stamps for the promotion and commemoration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. A similar request has been addressed to the United Nations Postal Administration for the production of a series of stamps portraying the two issues at stake: deserts and desertification.

14. In addition, UNEP is planning to launch two publications on the occasion of 2006. The first, entitled Global Environmental Outlook for Deserts report (GEO-Deserts), is scheduled to be published on the occasion of the World Environment and World Desertification Days, respectively 5 and 17 June 2006. A second publication highlighting UNEP activities in dryland environmental management is to be launched in September or October 2006. Furthermore, UNEP is planning a scientific conference on the theme "Dryland environmental management and the Millennium Development Goals", expected to be held at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, in September/October 2006.

15. UNESCO, in collaboration with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat and a group of partner agencies (FAO, UNDP, UNEP, IFAD, the United Nations University (UNU), the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), GEF, the Sahara and Sahel Observatory, the International Council for Science

among others) is planning an international scientific conference, entitled The Future of Drylands. The conference, tentatively scheduled to be held in Tunis at the end of June 2006, will endeavour to take stock of 50 years of experience in dryland studies, policies and development programmes and to redefine future priorities to promote sustainable development in the world's drylands. A call for papers will be launched soon and it is hoped that a number of experts of affected States parties will be able to attend the conference.

16. Based on the success of the first edition of the UNESCO-United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification education kit on combating desertification, which was widely distributed to primary schools in desertification-affected countries, UNESCO expects, in cooperation with the Convention secretariat, to finalize a new edition of the kit. The new kit, labelled "A creative approach to environmental education in drylands and highlands", will be targeted at primary and secondary schools in dryland and mountainous countries.

17. The Convention on Biological Diversity, based on the programme of work on the biodiversity of dry and sub-humid lands, will collaborate with the secretariats of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to organize in 2006 regional synergy workshops in Asia or Latin America and the Caribbean to implement the programmes of work on dry and sub-humid lands and agricultural biodiversity.

18. UNDP will put in place a process for communicating information on the International Year of Deserts and Desertification to UNDP resident representatives to encourage active country-level participation during the celebration of the World Day to Combat Desertification and support advocacy efforts for hunger and poverty eradication in the drylands. UNDP will also support a number of countries celebrating the World Day to Combat Desertification by raising the profile of the events in each country and publicizing the overall effort globally. UNDP is also preparing a paper entitled "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals in the drylands".

19. In 2006, FAO will implement the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands programme, which will provide and disseminate a number of information and awareness documents. In addition, FAO has started to promote the forestry dialogue in eastern, southern and western parts of Africa in collaboration with subregional organizations.

20. The International Fund for Agricultural Development has established an interdepartmental working group to develop a communication plan with the aim of enhancing the objectives of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification. In collaboration with the Global Mechanism, it will prepare a showcasing of IFAD activities, with particular emphasis on women and desertification. IFAD will also prepare a document on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to draw lessons from relevant country and project case studies to facilitate mainstreaming of the objectives of the Convention.

21. In addition to the coordination role assigned to it by resolution 58/211, the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification has identified core activities to be promoted and launched by its secretariat for 2006:

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(a) Preparation of promotional publications and memorabilia, including new information products to be available in all six United Nations languages (2006 booklet, flyers, International Year of Deserts and Desertification press kit, poster campaign, etc.);

(b) Television and radio clips, films, documentaries and interviews on deserts and desertification. The International Year of Deserts and Desertification lends itself to the launching of a whole series of documentary programmes on desertification that could be produced and broadcast by major international media organizations and networks;

(c) Establishment of a dedicated website with contact information, a list of activities and events, guidelines, contact details and other issues related to the Year;

(d) A photo competition launched by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to promote the International Year of Deserts and Desertification in 2006. A jury of eminent personalities will select the three photographs that conceptually and artistically best depict the problem of land degradation. The project was made possible thanks to the generous support of Hewlett Packard, the World Bank, Terrafrica, the International Fertilizer Industry Association, Landgraedsla rikisins, the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies and Entico Corporation Ltd.;

(e) Logo competition. In March 2005, the United Nations agencies involved in the preparation and celebration of the 2006 International Year of Deserts and Desertification decided to organize a logo competition as the best way to identify the most suitable image to portray the message of the Year. One month after the opening of the competition to the general public, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat had received nearly 700 entries for the contest, a number far exceeding expectations. Submissions came from all over the world and were sent by people with different backgrounds, including graphic designers, students, artists and non-governmental organization representatives. After an arduous review of all entries and a selection process involving the members of the inter-agency cluster, the winning logo was unveiled in Bonn during the third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention. Its design and overall conception was found to best depict the issue at stake and convey the message of the United Nations for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

22. In addition to the above-mentioned international organizations, several countries and regional authorities have already shown their interest in organizing international events for the celebration of 2006.

23. The Government of Spain indicated its willingness to consider exploring ways and means of organizing a seminar on migration and desertification. Building upon the successful International Symposium on Desertification and Migrations, jointly organized in 1995 by the Government of Spain and the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, such a seminar would seek to address the extremely important links between land degradation, poverty and migration, the latter being one of the most visible and relevant consequences of desertification.

24. In the same framework, the Government of Italy has positively responded to the General Assembly call by supporting the Convention secretariat in the

organization of an international film festival on deserts and desertification, entitled Desert Nights. The festival will attempt to raise the awareness of the general public about the issue of desertification and its social and cultural implications, promote cultural identities and local capacities of dryland communities, and identify and launch concrete actions in support of affected developing countries, particularly in the field of arts and culture. The movies presented at the international film festival will portray day-to-day life in the drylands.

25. Regarding the involvement of regional authorities, the government of Bavaria has planned to organize in Rosenheim (Germany), from March to October 2006, a major archeological and cultural exhibition on the world's deserts, portraying their origin and changing face over thousands of years. Adopting an interactive approach, the exhibit will portray the unique fauna and flora of desert ecosystems, as well as the adaptation strategies developed by their respective communities.

C. Honorary spokespersons for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

26. To ensure a high international profile for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification and the indispensable public and media visibility required for its successful promotion worldwide, the Convention secretariat has explored the possibility of associating internationally recognized figures with the Year.

27. In this context, and after consultations with the Office of the Secretary-General, Wangari Maathai, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate for 2004 and Deputy Minister of Environment of Kenya, and Cherif Rahmani, Minister of Environment of Algeria, have been named honorary spokespersons for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

28. The Convention secretariat is currently exploring the possibility of associating other celebrities with the Year. Aware of the singular impact that people drawn from the fields of culture and entertainment may also have on public opinion, its efforts are currently focusing on those specific areas.

D. National

29. The Executive Secretary of the Convention contacted all parties to inform them of the decision taken by the General Assembly and requesting information on the ways and means envisaged at the national level for the celebration of the International Year. At the same time, States parties were encouraged to take the necessary steps required to provide high visibility to the activities forming part of the celebration of the Year and, in doing so, ensure the greatest possible impact at the national, regional and international levels. In this regard, a letter containing a questionnaire was sent to all parties to identify the person or institution that would be responsible for coordinating these activities at the national level.

30. Pursuant to paragraph 19 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 relating to procedures for organizing the celebration of international years and anniversaries, the letter indicated that provisions should be made for national committees to be set up to prepare for, conduct and follow up on the International Year, in close cooperation with the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to

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Combat Desertification. In this context and in order to fully build upon the comparative advantage of the Convention implementation process at the national level, the secretariat encouraged parties, when applicable, to consider entrusting their respective national committees on desertification with this task.

31. To date, the secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification has received 20 confirmations from parties in that regard. The secretariat understands that parties are still in the process of internal consultations and believes that the remaining confirmations will be received in due course. The activities envisaged by the countries that have replied to the request include a wide range of areas of interest and events that would certainly help in raising the visibility of the International Year nationally. These events can be grouped as follows:

- (a) Conferences, workshops and seminars (academic lectures, scientific meetings, press conferences);
- (b) Cultural events (museum exhibitions, musical events, film festivals);
- (c) Awareness-raising activities (production of materials, commemorative coins and stamps, organization of campaigns and competitions).

32. A compilation of these activities, together with their scheduled timing, will be made available online to facilitate the exchange of information among countries and allow for replication.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

33. A large number of partners have already confirmed their willingness to extend their cooperation and partnership for the successful celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

34. At the international level, and through the active involvement of those agencies identified by resolution 58/211 as well as the other international institutions active in the Convention implementation process, a promising tentative schedule of activities has been agreed upon. At the national level, after a period of consultations and information, encouraging feedback has started to reach the Convention secretariat, with several countries indicating their interest in playing an important role in the celebration of the Year.

35. However, more active support and a more timely response from the States parties would be highly appreciated, given the limited time available. Furthermore, due to the additional workload generated by the organization of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification, all estimated additional costs required for the coordination and celebration of the Year have been proposed as extrabudgetary activities and accordingly included in the supplementary fund document of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (ICCD/COP(7)/2.Add.2).

36. The General Assembly may wish therefore to encourage States parties to contribute to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Special Fund in order to ensure the fulfilment of resolution 58/211.

Annex**Tentative list of activities envisaged for the celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification****2005**

October	– COP 7 – Organization of side event on the International Year of Deserts and Desertification
October/November	– Presentation of report of the Secretary-General on the status of preparation for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification – Briefing of the regional groups of the United Nations – Organization of side event on the International Year of Deserts and Desertification – Joint reception in the Delegates' Dining Room
November	Organization of a special trip for international journalists to the Sahara region as prelude to a series of articles on the International Year of Deserts and Desertification
November/December	– Editing and printing of specialized publications on the International Year of Deserts and Desertification – Production of memorabilia articles for the International Year of Deserts and Desertification

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January	– Launching of the programme of celebration of the Year in each country. – Launching of national commemorative stamps
January/February	Production of advertising inserts and television commercials.
February	Assessment and review of implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification at the global level. Event: Global meeting. Location: Argentina.
February	Youth and the Environment: Lessons and Perspectives in Africa. Africa meeting. Mali.
March	Launching of specialized training seminars on environmental journalism.
April	Women and Desertification. Assessing the role of women in the implementation of the Convention. Event: Global meeting. Location: China.



May	Launching in Rome of the film festival Desert Nights
June (early)	– High-level conference in Algiers on the protection of deserts and combating desertification – Inauguration of the Observatoire de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre la Désertification of the museum of the Institut international des déserts in Ghardaïa, Algeria
5 June	Celebration of World Environment Day
17 June	World Day to Combat Desertification: major media event, organized in Algiers with the presence of Kofi Annan and Wangari Mathai
June (end)	UNESCO conference, The Future of Arid Lands
September	Launching of the cultural exposition Drylands 2006 at the Kunst Halle Museum in Bonn
October	Presentation of the report to the Secretary-General in the General Assembly by Cherif Rahmani and Wangari Mathai



General Assembly

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Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 85 (e)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/483/Add.5)]

59/235. Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 58/242 of 23 December 2003 and other resolutions relating to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,¹

Recalling also its resolution 58/211 of 23 December 2003, in which it declared 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification,

Reaffirming that desertification constitutes a serious obstacle to sustainable development and contributes to food insecurity, famine and poverty, which are factors that can give rise to social, economic and political tensions, including forced migration and conflicts, and that the Convention is an important tool for poverty eradication,

Reaffirming also the universal membership of the Convention, and acknowledging that desertification and drought are problems of a global dimension in that they affect all regions of the world,

Noting that timely and effective implementation of the Convention would help to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,²

Emphasizing the need for the provision of adequate resources for the focal area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, of the Global Environment Facility,

Stressing the need for further diversification of funding sources to address land degradation, in accordance with articles 20 and 21 of the Convention,

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

² See resolution 55/2.

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1. *Takes note* of the note by the Secretary-General;³
2. *Stresses* the importance of the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,¹ for meeting the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,² and in this regard invites all Governments to take further measures to strengthen the implementation of the Convention;
3. *Invites* the Secretary-General to give due consideration to the role and place of the Convention in ongoing work in the context of the preparations for the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly in 2005, including the report of the Millennium Project;
4. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility to strengthen the focal area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation;
5. *Takes note with interest* of ongoing efforts to diversify the availability of financial resources to support activities aimed at combating desertification and poverty;
6. *Invites* the donor community to increase its support to the Convention with a view to bringing greater international attention to bear on the issue of land degradation and desertification, which will contribute to the improvement of the sustainable development of drylands and the global environment;
7. *Invites* the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility and the secretariat of the Convention to finalize the draft memorandum of understanding in an expeditious way and to submit it, as mandated by Conference of the Parties decision 6/COP.6 of 3 September 2003,⁴ for the consideration of and adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and the Council of the Global Environment Facility;
8. *Takes note* of Conference of the Parties decision 23/COP.6 of 5 September 2003 on the programme and budget for the biennium 2004–2005,⁴ as an ongoing process of the Conference of the Parties to undertake a comprehensive review of the activities of the secretariat, as defined in article 23, paragraph 2, of the Convention, and looks forward to the review at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;
9. *Urges* United Nations funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions, the donor countries and other development agencies to integrate actions in support of the Convention into their strategies to support the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;
10. *Calls upon* Governments, where appropriate, in collaboration with relevant multilateral organizations, including the Global Environment Facility implementation agencies, to integrate desertification into their plans and strategies for sustainable development;
11. *Encourages* countries to undertake special initiatives in observance of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification and, as they are able, to contribute to its preparatory process;

³ See A/59/197, sect. II.

⁴ See ICCD/COP(6)/11/Add.1.

12. *Reiterates* the invitation to all parties to pay promptly and in full the contributions required for the core budget of the Convention for the biennium 2004–2005, and urges all parties that have not yet paid their contributions for 1999 and/or the bienniums 2000–2001 and 2002–2003 to do so as soon as possible in order to ensure continuity in the cash flow required to finance the ongoing work of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism;

13. *Calls upon* Governments, and invites multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, regional economic integration organizations and all other interested organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to contribute generously to the General Fund, the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties,⁵ and welcomes the financial support already provided by some countries;

14. *Takes note* of the ongoing work of the liaison group of the secretariats and offices of the relevant subsidiary bodies of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,⁶ the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, and the Convention on Biological Diversity,⁷ and further encourages continuing cooperation in order to promote complementarities among the secretariats, while respecting their independent legal status;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

16. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session the sub-item entitled “Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa”.

*75th plenary meeting
22 December 2004*

⁵ ICCD/COP (1)/11/Add.1 and Corr.1, decision 2/COP.1, annex, paras. 7–11.

⁶ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.



Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 94 (b)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/484/Add.2)]

58/242. Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 56/196 of 21 December 2001 and 57/259 of 20 December 2002 and other resolutions relating to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,¹

Recognizing the strong commitment of the international community, demonstrated at the World Summit on Sustainable Development² and the Second Assembly of the Global Environment Facility, to make the Facility available as a financial mechanism of the Convention, pursuant to article 21 of the Convention,

Recognizing also the role of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, as the highest decision-making body, in providing guidance on matters regarding the implementation of the Convention and in encouraging financial mechanisms to seek to maximize the availability of resources for affected developing countries, while respecting the respective mandates of the mechanisms,

Reaffirming that the Convention is an important tool for poverty eradication, particularly in Africa, and recognizing the importance of the implementation of the Convention for meeting the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,³

Reaffirming also the universal membership of the Convention, and acknowledging that desertification and drought are problems of a global dimension, in that they affect all regions of the world,

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex, and resolution 2, annex.

³ See resolution 55/2.

Expressing its deep appreciation and gratitude to the Government of Cuba for hosting the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention in Havana from 25 August to 5 September 2003,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;⁴
2. *Welcomes* the decision of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, at its sixth session, to accept the Global Environment Facility as a financial mechanism of the Convention, pursuant to article 21 of the Convention;
3. *Also welcomes* the decision of the Council of the Global Environment Facility at its meeting, held in Washington, D.C., from 14 to 16 May 2003, to establish a new operational programme on sustainable land management, and, in that regard, urges the Executive Secretary, in collaboration with the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism, to consult with the Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Global Environment Facility, with a view to preparing and agreeing upon a memorandum of understanding, as mandated by the Conference of the Parties, for the consideration of and adoption by the Conference of Parties and the Council of the Global Environment Facility;
4. *Further welcomes* the outcome of the Second Assembly of the Global Environment Facility, held in Beijing from 16 to 18 October 2002, in particular the decision to designate land degradation as a new focal area of the Facility, which will, inter alia, support the implementation of the Convention;
5. *Notes with appreciation* the increased number of affected developing country parties that have adopted their national, subregional and regional action programmes, and urges affected developing countries that have not yet done so to accelerate the process of elaboration and adoption of their action programmes, with a view to finalizing them as soon as possible;
6. *Invites* affected developing countries to place the implementation of their action programmes to combat desertification high among their priorities in their dialogue with their development partners;
7. *Calls upon* affected parties, with the collaboration of relevant multilateral organizations, including the Global Environment Facility implementation agencies, to integrate desertification into their strategies for sustainable development;
8. *Urges* the international community to take effective measures for the implementation of the Convention through bilateral and multilateral cooperation programmes;
9. *Urges* the United Nations funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions, the donor countries and other development agencies to integrate actions in support of the Convention in their strategies to support the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;³
10. *Welcomes* the strengthened cooperation between the secretariat of the Convention and the Global Mechanism through the elaboration and implementation of a joint work plan aimed at maximizing the impact of resources and actions,

⁴ A/58/158.

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avoiding duplication and overlap and tapping into the expertise, added value and network of each organization in a collaborative manner as action programmes are implemented;

11. *Invites* all parties to pay promptly and in full the contributions required for the core budget of the Convention for the biennium 2002-2003, and urges all parties that have not yet paid their contributions for the year 1999 and/or the biennium 2000-2001 to do so as soon as possible in order to ensure continuity in the cash flow required to finance the ongoing work of the Conference of the Parties, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism;

12. *Calls upon* Governments, and invites multilateral financial institutions, regional development banks, regional economic integration organizations and all other interested organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to contribute generously to the General Fund, the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund, in accordance with the relevant paragraphs of the financial rules of the Conference of the Parties,⁵ and welcomes the financial support already provided by some countries;

13. *Takes note* of Conference of the Parties decision 23/COP.6 of 5 September 2003 on the programme and budget for the biennium 2004-2005,⁶ as an ongoing process of the Conference of the Parties to undertake a comprehensive review of the activities of the secretariat, as defined in article 23, paragraph 2, of the Convention;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to make provision for the sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, including the seventh ordinary session of the Conference and the meetings of its subsidiary bodies, in his proposal for the programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005;

15. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

16. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session the sub-item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa".

*79th plenary meeting
23 December 2003*

⁵ ICCD/COP (1)/11/Add.1 and Corr.1, decision 2/COP.1, annex, paras. 7-11.

⁶ See ICCD/COP(6)/11/Add.1.



General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 February 2004



Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 94 (b)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/484/Add.2)]

58/211. International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006

The General Assembly,

Recalling chapter 12 of Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development,¹

Recalling also the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,²

Recalling further the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”)³ and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development,⁴

Having considered decision 22/15 of 7 February 2003 of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on an international year of deserts and desertification,⁵

Deeply concerned by the exacerbation of desertification, particularly in Africa, and its far-reaching implications for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular on poverty eradication,

Recalling the environment initiative of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development,⁶

Conscious of the need to raise public awareness and to protect the biological diversity of deserts as well as indigenous and local communities and the traditional knowledge of those affected by this phenomenon,

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

³ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. 1, resolution 2, annex.

⁴ *Ibid.*, resolution 1, annex.

⁵ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/58/25)*, annex.

⁶ A/57/304, annex, paras. 138-142.

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1. *Decides* to declare 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification;

2. *Designates* the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, as focal point of the Year, in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Fund for Agricultural Development and other relevant bodies of the United Nations;

3. *Invites* all countries to establish national committees or focal points and to celebrate the Year by arranging appropriate activities;

4. *Calls upon* all relevant international organizations and Member States to support the activities related to desertification, including land degradation, to be organized by affected countries, in particular African countries and the least developed countries;

5. *Encourages* countries to contribute, as they are able, to the Convention and to undertake special initiatives in observance of the Year with the goal of enhancing the implementation of the Convention;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the status of preparations for the Year.

*78th plenary meeting
23 December 2003*

D

Education

59/237

22 December 2004

United Nations Decade of Education for
Sustainable Development 138



General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 February 2005

Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 85 (g)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/483/Add.7)]

59/237. United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

The General Assembly,

Recalling chapter 36 of Agenda 21, on promoting education, public awareness and training, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992,¹

Recalling also the work programme on education, public awareness and training initiated by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourth session in 1996² and elaborated upon at its sixth session in 1998,³

Recalling further the relevant provisions of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation")⁴ on education to promote sustainable development, in particular its provision 124,

Recalling its resolutions 57/254 of 20 December 2002 and 58/219 of 23 December 2003,

Underlining in this regard the fact that the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development shall begin on 1 January 2005,

Welcoming the fact that the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its eleventh session, identified education as one of the cross-cutting issues of its multi-year programme of work,⁵

Reaffirming the internationally agreed development goal of achieving universal primary education, in particular that by 2015 children everywhere, boys

¹ See *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I, *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

² *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1996, Supplement No. 8 (E/1996/28)*, chap. I, sect. C, decision 4/11, para. 2.

³ *Ibid.*, 1998, *Supplement No. 9 (E/1998/29)*, chap. I, sect. B, decision 6/3, sect. C.

⁴ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

⁵ See Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/61 of 25 July 2003.

and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling and that boys and girls will have equal access to all levels of education,

Taking note of the oral report presented on 18 October 2004 at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly by the Assistant Director-General for Education of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization regarding its preparations for the Decade,⁶

Taking note also of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,⁷ in particular the reference to the issue “Learning to live with risk”, as regards the need to focus on education and awareness, linked with the Decade, to be considered at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005,⁸

Emphasizing that education is an indispensable element for achieving sustainable development,

1. *Reaffirms* that education for sustainable development is critical for promoting sustainable development;

2. *Requests* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as the designated lead agency, to promote the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, in coordination with other relevant United Nations organizations and programmes, while taking into account the special needs of developing countries;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to call upon the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to finalize the draft international implementation scheme for the Decade as soon as possible, preferably by the beginning of the Decade, in consultation with Governments, the United Nations and relevant international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders, while clarifying its relationship with the existing educational processes, in particular the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum⁹ and the United Nations Literacy Decade;¹⁰

4. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to call upon the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to submit the draft international implementation scheme to the governing bodies of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for their final consideration and adoption;

5. *Encourages* Governments to consider the inclusion, especially upon completion and adoption of the international implementation scheme, of measures to implement the Decade in their respective educational systems and strategies and, where appropriate, national development plans;

6. *Invites* Governments to promote public awareness of and wider participation in the Decade, inter alia, through cooperation with and initiatives

⁶ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Second Committee, 14th meeting (A/C.2/59/SR.14)*, and corrigendum.

⁷ A/59/228.

⁸ Ibid., para. 8.

⁹ See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26–28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000).

¹⁰ See resolution 56/116.

engaging civil society and other relevant stakeholders, especially at the beginning of the Decade;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to invite the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to prepare a mid-term review of the implementation of the Decade, for submission to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session under the sub-item entitled “United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development”.

*75th plenary meeting
22 December 2004*

E

Environment

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**REVIEW OF THE STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN ASIA
AND THE PACIFIC, 2005**

(Item 4 of the provisional agenda)

SUMMARY

This document reviews the state of the environment of the region from the perspective of both environmental sustainability and environmental performance. It shows that economic growth and social progress have been accompanied by increasing pressure on the environmental carrying capacity of the region. The establishment of institutional and legislative frameworks by member countries has resulted in improvements in urban air quality in some cities, slowed rates of forest loss, increased forest planting rates and considerably reduced the use of ozone-depleting substances. However, environmental degradation, natural disasters and the impacts of climate change continue to threaten human health, livelihoods and the overall vulnerability of member countries. Therefore, the most urgent imperative for the region is the pursuit of environmentally sustainable growth. The review concludes that a shift to a “green growth” development paradigm will be necessary to ensure that sustainable development can be attained without limiting economic growth and the prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

The Meeting is invited to discuss the issues and challenges raised and provide guidance on ways and means of solving these problems through incorporating relevant actions into the Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010.

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Introduction

1. This document reviews and highlights the impact of current economic growth patterns on the environmental sustainability of the region. The state of the environment of the region is reviewed from the perspective of both environmental sustainability and environmental performance. In this context, “environmental sustainability” refers to the capacity of a development process to ensure that natural resources are not depleted faster than they can be regenerated and that ecological systems remain viable. It reflects the pressure placed on ecological carrying capacity. The “environmental performance” of a Government may be assessed by the measurable results of environmental policy implementation, objectives and targets, regulations and legislation. In devising practical and effective response strategies for achieving sustainable development, these two dimensions must be considered in tandem.

2. The review shows that economic growth has enabled the reduction of poverty and social progress in many parts of the region. However, the pattern of growth has placed the environmental sustainability of the region in jeopardy. Action by Governments to improve environmental performance has resulted in improvements in urban air quality in some cities, slowed rates of forest loss, increased forest planting rates and considerably reduced the use of ozone-depleting substances. However, declines in fishery resources, marine and coastal degradation, biodiversity and forest loss, land degradation and natural disasters have continued to affect human health and livelihoods and increased the vulnerability of member countries. The review also notes the impacts of natural and human-induced disasters, including those of the recent tsunami in several Indian Ocean rim countries.

3. The review of the state of the environment in Asia and the Pacific reveals that the current pattern of economic growth is seriously threatening the environmental sustainability of the region. Therefore, the most urgent imperative for the region is the pursuit of environmentally sustainable growth. The review concludes that a shift to a “green growth” development paradigm will be necessary to ensure that sustainable development can be attained without limiting economic growth and the prospects for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

4. The key questions before us, therefore, are “How can we reduce the pressure placed by rapid economic growth on the environmental sustainability of the region?”, “How can we improve the environmental performance of the region?” and “How can we shift away from a ‘grow first, clean up later’ paradigm towards a ‘green growth’ paradigm?”. The Meeting is invited to discuss the issues raised and provide guidance on ways and means of addressing these challenges, in particular through the Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Implementation Plan for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2006-2010.

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I. ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

5. The concept of sustainable development first received global attention as a result of the work of the World Commission on Environment and Development and its report published in 1987. The concept was enriched at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, and reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002. Sustainable development is now widely accepted as resting on the three pillars of the sustainability of economic growth, social development and environmental protection.

6. The Asian and Pacific region is now the fastest-growing part of the global economy. Despite uncertainties brought about by the war in Iraq, high oil prices and the impact of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), average economic growth rates for the region in 2000-2003 ranged from 4.0 to 6.5 per cent. Asia and the Pacific is expected to remain the fastest-growing region at least in the medium term, with growth in China and India dominating. While many countries of the region are still predominantly agricultural, the share of GDP attributable to industrial activity is expanding.

7. ESCAP has 62 members and associate members, 58 of which are in the region. Of 39 countries reviewed, 32 showed increases in per capita income from 1990 to 2001 (ADB, 2004). It has been suggested that a threshold GDP per capita growth rate of at least 1.4 per cent per annum, starting in 1990, is required for countries to be able to achieve and sustain Millennium Development Goal 1 of halving the number of people in extreme poverty.¹ Most countries in the region have registered growth rates above this threshold in recent years.

8. Economic growth has provided resources for investment in social development. Several countries have registered positive gains in human development index² values in recent years. These countries include the Lao People's Democratic Republic, with higher school enrolment rates, and Bangladesh, Bhutan, Indonesia and Nepal, where significant reductions in under-five mortality rates have been achieved. The region's performance in reducing hunger is impressive, with the proportion of the undernourished in Asia and the Pacific falling from 20 to 16 per cent from 1990-1992 to 2000-2002 (FAO, 2004a).

9. However, the region has been far from successful eliminating its social ills. Poverty still persists in many corners of the region, with some economies in transition registering increasing poverty and declining life expectancy. Social equity continues to be a concern in many countries, and

¹ This figure is based on the estimate that if income distribution remains constant, the poverty rate declines by 2 per cent for each 1 per cent increase in average per capita income. If the increase in per capita growth needed to cut poverty in half must be accomplished starting in 2003, a much higher annual rate (2.9 per cent) is estimated to be needed. Sources: Bruno, Ravallion and Squire (1996) and Adams (2003).

² The human development index is compiled by the United Nations Development Programme. It is composite index measuring average achievements in three basic dimensions of human development, longevity, educational attainment and a decent standard of living.

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a significant number of persons are still undernourished in the region. While population growth has slowed in the region as a whole, it continues unabated in South Asia, and by 2015 it is projected that the population of South Asia will overtake that of North-East Asia.

II. IMPACT OF ECONOMIC GROWTH ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

10. Economic growth is based, in its most fundamental terms, on increased production and consumption and is a prerequisite for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. However, the rapid economic growth of the region has been based on industrialization, agricultural production systems that often overuse fertilizers and pesticides and the promotion of environmentally unsustainable consumption. The pressure on the environment resulting from the associated emissions and exploitation of energy, water and other natural resources has placed the region's environmental sustainability and the prospects for its future prosperity in jeopardy.

A. Threats to environmental sustainability

1. Industrialization

11. Industrialization based on export-oriented manufacturing is the most distinctive feature of the region's economic development strategy and is now a leading environmental challenge in the region. Although many countries are still considered agricultural economies, the contribution of industry to the GDP of the region has been increasing. Industrial production growth in the developing countries in the ESCAP region has outstripped that of the rest of the world in recent years; from 1995 to 2002 industrial production in Asia and the Pacific increased by almost 40 per cent as compared with 23 per cent globally (ESCAP, 2004a).

12. From 1995 to 2002, the fastest-growing areas of production were office, computing, radio, television and other electrical equipment; chemicals, petroleum, rubber and plastic products; and transport equipment (ESCAP, 2004a), many of these items produced by highly polluting industries. The rapidly expanding chemical industry has historically released more toxic substances than any other industry to air, water, land and underground, the impacts of which are manifested as carcinogens in the water supply and other threats to human health and the ecosystem. Food and beverage production is the single most important source of organic waste pollutants in the majority of countries of the region and is responsible for fish kills, nuisance odours and radical changes in ecosystems. The scale and quality of industrialization in the region make the shift to cleaner and more environmentally sustainable production an urgent priority.

13. The total value of exports from the region in 2002 was 75 per cent more than in 1992. The value of exports from developing countries alone more than doubled in this period. Similarly, imports to the region have more than doubled since 1990 (ESCAP, 2004a). The increasing trade activity brings several trade-environment issues to the fore, including trade in hazardous waste, the impact of
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trade liberalization on the environment, particularly in relation to agricultural activity, and trade in environmentally sensitive commodities such as minerals and timber. The complex interlinkages between trade and environment issues, and between global trade agreements under the World Trade Organization and multilateral environmental agreements are often not wholly recognized by policy and decision makers.

2. Expansion and intensification of agricultural production

14. Agricultural production in ESCAP member economies increased by some 62 per cent from 1990 to 2002 (ESCAP, 2004a); during this time global agricultural production increased by only 27 per cent. The dramatic increases in agricultural production have been largely achieved through the intensification of agrochemical and water use. The consumption of mineral fertilizers per hectare of agricultural land in the region increased by some 15 per cent, in contrast to a decline in the rest of the world, during 1991-2001. In 2002 twice as much mineral fertilizer was used per hectare in the region as in the rest of the world (FAO, 2004d). In at least 25 countries of the region, more than 60 per cent of water is used for agriculture (WRI and others, 2003).³

15. Overuse of agrochemicals has endangered the productive capacities of agricultural land and impacted on water quality, wildlife and human health. Agriculture is the most-often-cited cause of land degradation, a critical issue which affects the livelihoods of the rural communities, notably in the cotton-growing region of the Aral Sea Basin and South Asia. Where water scarcity is coupled with land degradation, the effects on rural communities that depend on the land are devastating. Fertilizer use is also a major source of reactive nitrogen in the natural environment, which contributes to processes such as climate change, smog production, contamination of groundwater, soil acidification and oxygen depletion in water bodies (UNEP, 2004).

16. The globally important aquaculture industry also poses a threat to environmental sustainability. The region accounts for an estimated 91 per cent of global aquaculture production, with the major contribution from China. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, aquaculture is estimated to have contributed almost 6 per cent of GDP in 2001 (FAO, 2004c). Declining wild fish stocks and lower catches per unit of effort make aquaculture an attractive alternative to capture fisheries. However, unsustainable aquaculture practices have resulted in land degradation, water pollution, clearing of mangroves and degraded wetland areas. Destruction of coastal ecosystems is responsible for further declines in fish stocks and negative impacts on the livelihoods of coastal communities.

³ Data from various years, mainly from 1987 to 1994.

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3. Deteriorating environmental sustainability of consumption patterns

17. As economic growth continues and disposable personal income rises, there has been a noticeable deterioration in the environmental sustainability of consumption patterns. While consumption has supported economic growth, both the level and nature of consumption have put increasing stress on ecological carrying capacity.

18. Economic recovery from the 1997 financial crisis has resulted in renewed growth in demand for personal modes of transport, housing and services, non-traditional and imported goods, information and communication technologies and energy-intensive products. As an example, the numbers of passenger cars in use in some fast-growing economies of South and South-East Asia have more than doubled from 1990 to 2002. In terms of absolute growth in numbers of cars in use, Japan, the Republic of Korea and Hong Kong, China, added some 32.6 million cars to their roads between 1992 and 2000 (ESCAP, 2004a). Urban smog caused by vehicle emissions is a feature of daily life in the larger urban centres in the region. With one car for every two persons, as in some parts of the United States of America today, the region would have 2 billion cars in 2025, a fleet that could prove environmentally disastrous, even with the best technologies.

19. Challenges in the area of waste management, especially solid waste management, loom large in the region. High-income countries typically generate more than twice the weight of waste per capita than low-income countries. It has been projected that the total expenditure on solid waste management activities in Asia may double from an estimated US\$ 25 billion in 1999 to US\$ 50 billion in 2025 (World Bank, 1999). Electronic waste or e-waste is growing exponentially. The estimated demand for personal computers in 2004 was twice that in 2000, and an estimated 45 million personal computers will be sold in the region in 2005. While some of the materials making up e-waste are recoverable, several, including heavy metals such as mercury and cadmium, are not. The recyclable components are an incentive for trade in e-waste for informal recycling. This activity exposes vulnerable communities to toxic metals whose health impacts include cancer and organ damage.

20. Policies to encourage environmentally sustainable lifestyles will ensure that consumer demand can be met in more environmentally friendly ways. Such policies can also support “green” economic growth. The economic costs of pollution and environmental degradation have been documented for some time. The development of efficient public transit infrastructure, use of clean technologies and fuels and policies for turning over the capital stock of older, highly polluting vehicles, recycling and proper disposal of vehicles all represent opportunities for cost savings and income generation. Similarly, promoting “cyclical” production and consumption systems⁴ results in economic benefits for Governments, firms and, by extension, wider populations.

⁴ Such systems reuse and recycle material in a zero-waste approach to consumption and production.

4. Urbanization

21. Urbanization poses significant environmental challenges related to waste management, air quality, climate change and environmental health issues. The region has been undergoing a significant demographic shift in the past few decades, with urban populations increasing from 20 per cent of the total population in the 1950s to 40 per cent by 2001 (United Nations, 2004a). The region is now home to 12 of the world's 20 mega-cities with populations of over 10 million each. Some 34 million persons are projected to swell the ranks of urban residents in the 16 cities that are already the largest in the region in the next 10 years. South Asia, in particular India, will form the epicentre of this growth. Rapid urbanization rates stretch the capacity of metropolitan authorities to provide adequate environmental services and facilities. In many urban centres, between 40 and 80 per cent of residents live in poverty, with very little or no access to shelter, basic urban services and social amenities as a result of rapid urbanization, structural adjustment problems, spatial and institutional mismanagement and the poor performance of formal housing and basic service delivery programmes (United Nations, 2004a).

22. Despite significant progress, inadequate infrastructure for solid waste management and for providing access to water and sanitation leave urban populations vulnerable to new health threats, such as SARS and avian flu, as well as natural disasters. It has been estimated that 600-800 million, or 35-50 per cent, of urban dwellers in Asia are without adequate provision for sanitation (UN-Habitat, 2003). In many developing countries less than 10 per cent of waste water is collected for treatment and disposal, and in some there is no treatment and disposal at all. Untreated domestic waste water is understandably one of the pollutants of growing concern. Lack of financial resources was identified as the major constraint to addressing this situation by 19 of the 21 countries responding to a survey in 2000 (ESCAP, 2000). Underdeveloped mass transport infrastructure also increases air pollution, with consequent impacts on environmental health and CO₂ emissions that add to the global warming threat.

5. Increasing energy demand

23. The high rates of growth in demand for energy as well as the environmental and health impacts of the consumption and production of energy, particularly from fossil fuels, are of major concern. In 2001, the ESCAP region accounted for 62 per cent of the world's population but only 40 per cent of the total primary energy supply (TPES). The region's TPES per capita was around 0.95 tons of oil equivalent (toe) per capita, as compared with the global figure of 1.64 toe per capita. Developed countries in the region possess approximately four times this value, while the TPES per capita of developing countries is only 0.7 toe per capita. The electric power sector has grown faster than others. In 2000 the per capita electricity consumption in the Republic of Korea was five times that of 1980.

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24. Increasing energy demand in the region, particularly in large economies such as China and India, will continue to have a significant impact on the environment, as it is likely that most of this demand will be met through continuing use of fossil fuels, coal, oil and natural gas. Despite the availability of effective pollution control technologies, many nations continue to establish new fossil-fuel-based energy-generating facilities with inadequate controls for emissions of particulate matter, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. Further, the high reliance on fossil fuels, coupled with limited energy efficiency measures in many countries, has increased CO₂ emissions and amplified the region's contribution to global warming. The CO₂ emissions from the region are estimated to make up 41 per cent of the global total. Levels of energy use are positively correlated with GDP in some countries. Differences in types of economic activity and energy efficiency measures can translate into more productive energy use and a less polluting economy. For example, a country like Japan manages to obtain an average of almost US\$ 6 of GDP for every kg of oil equivalent of energy, while some countries only obtain US\$ 1 of GDP from the same amount of energy (World Bank, 2003).

25. The growing demand for energy, rising oil prices, increasing impacts on climate change and the pollution associated with the use of fossil fuels make sustainable energy use and technological innovation in the energy sector urgent priorities. Major investment coupled with policy reform at the national, subregional and regional levels needs to be pursued to support the diversification of the energy mix through the use of indigenous energy resources including renewable energy and cleaner fuels. Such action would enable countries to reduce their dependence on energy imports, increase energy security and reduce the CO₂ intensities⁵ of their economies. Strengthened trade in energy can also facilitate diversification of the energy mix and reduction in CO₂ intensity and assist in meeting the expected increases in energy demand in a more sustainable manner.

6. Pressure on water supplies

26. While the population of Asia is estimated to constitute 61 per cent of the global population, the region is estimated to have only 36 per cent of global water resources available to it (United Nations, 2003). Water withdrawals in Asia are projected to increase by almost 25 per cent from 1990 to 2010 (Shiklomanov, 2004), mainly attributable to the agricultural sector, which dominates water use in every subregion. While agricultural intensification is increasing water demand in this sector, urbanization coupled with population growth and industrial development is responsible for a growing proportion of total water used. A shortage of water to meet sometimes conflicting demands is being experienced throughout the region and is exacerbated by the generally minimal attention to water efficiency measures in the region. Declining water quality linked to urbanization, industrialization and agricultural intensification reduces the availability of water of adequate quality and threatens

⁵ CO₂ intensity refers to CO₂ emissions per unit of GDP.

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human health and livelihoods. In general, the efficiency of water use in agriculture, industry and the domestic sector is low.

27. Per capita water use varies in the region, depending, among others, on levels of agricultural production, water efficiency and pricing measures. In a country like the Republic of Korea, the per capita withdrawal is estimated to be 400 m³ per capita⁶, while the highest per capita withdrawal of the region is experienced by one of the economies in transition and is estimated at 5,500 m³ per year, with almost all water being imported, mostly for use for irrigation and other agricultural needs. Measures to increase water efficiency in the agricultural, industrial and domestic sectors along with improvements in production and waste-water treatment processes are urgently needed. At the same time, intergovernmental commitment to and consensus on water resources issues are needed in the region. Significant support for developing countries will be required to meet the integrated water resources management targets set in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

7. Social equity concerns - disadvantaged groups

28. Not all segments of the regional population have benefited equally from economic growth. Where the share of income or consumption of the richest 20 per cent in the region can reach as high as 54 per cent in some countries, the poorest 20 per cent of the population in some cases have access to only 4 per cent of national income. The income gap is reportedly widening. The majority of the poor in the region live in rural areas and rural poverty is reported to be on the increase (IFAD, 2002). Where the poor are forced to eke out a living on marginal lands, or to engage in informal recycling or waste disposal activity as a means of generating income, environmental quality and human health are at risk. Gender inequality continues to persist in some countries despite the growing recognition that without increased gender equality, the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved.

29. Where they exists, extreme social inequity, gender inequality, poverty and marginalization affecting the poor, women, children, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, the internally displaced and the socially excluded have serious consequences for environmental sustainability. Disadvantaged groups are also often disproportionately affected by environmental degradation. However, they are also the least empowered with respect to their ability to influence development processes which impact them more immediately, but which also threaten the environmental sustainability of the wider population. Institutional, legal and, at times, sociocultural barriers remain obstacles to the empowerment of disadvantaged groups in a number of countries in the region and hinder their potential to become full and active proponents of a shift towards more sustainable societies. Environment-related data are rarely disaggregated by sex or age, and the differences between men, women, boys and girls and various social groups in terms of their roles in managing natural resources and the extent to which any given group is impacted by environmental degradation

⁶ The per capita consumption of the United States is estimated at 2,000 m³ per annum.

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are rarely highlighted.⁷ It is clear that non-recognition of the equity aspects of environment-development issues results in incomplete understanding by policy makers, as well as lost opportunities to develop creative approaches to improving environmental sustainability.

B. The need for a shift to a “green growth” paradigm

30. The previous section showed that economic growth and social progress are exerting significant pressure on environmental sustainability in the region. Despite this threat to environmental sustainability, economic growth must continue to be a priority for the region.

31. Meeting the needs of existing and future populations will require significant financial and natural resources. The total population of the region is now projected at approximately 3,964 million. This number is expected to increase by some 412 million persons by 2015 (United Nations, 2004b). Combating poverty remains an urgent priority. In 2002, the per capita GDP of the ESCAP developing countries was only one fifth of the global per capita GDP (ESCAP, 2004a), and some 712 million persons in the region, or about 65 per cent of the global total and 22 per cent of the region's population,⁸ are still estimated to be living on less than \$1 per day. South and Central Asia remain the most challenged in this respect. The special circumstances of the small island developing States of the region mean that the GDP growth rates of these countries are well below regional averages, with few exceptions. Meeting the housing, environmental and transport infrastructure needs of growing urban populations will also require significant investment. At the same time, debt management is still a serious issue for a number of developing countries in the region. The accumulated external debt within the region is valued at US\$ 1,060 billion (World Bank, 2003), triple the 1980 level. Despite the decline in total debt since 1996 and the steady increase in debt-servicing levels, it is unlikely that a substantial reduction in debt will ever be achieved. This has significant implications for the availability of resources for investment in sustainable development.

32. Agricultural production will need to keep up with growing populations. Despite the significant growth of agricultural output, an estimated 545 million people in the region are still undernourished, comprising 65 per cent of the world's ill-fed (FAO, 2004b). A focus on agriculture for export and growing industrialization mean that food security is still a concern.

33. Meeting future demand for water, energy and land resources will require huge amounts of new capital investment. Basing this investment on current economic growth patterns is an almost unthinkable option, given the scale of demand and the environmental pressures this would create. Maintaining the current course is more than likely to jeopardize both the Asian economic growth

⁷ As one example, given women's traditional role in the home, they, along with children, are more vulnerable to indoor air pollution and health impacts related to the use of solid biomass fuels. At the same time, this role in the home means that they are key actors in establishing domestic waste management and consumption patterns.

⁸ ESCAP estimate based on World Bank data at : <<http://www.developmentgoals.org/poverty.htm>>, 28 January 2005.

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miracle and quality of life. The urgency of a shift away from the “grow now clean up later” paradigm to a “green growth” paradigm based on environmentally sustainable systems of consumption and production should not be underestimated.

34. While action to improve environmental sustainability will lead to improved environmental performance, the reverse is not necessarily true. For maximum effect, both environmental sustainability and environmental performance must be addressed in tandem. Action to address both environmental sustainability and environmental performance starts with the establishment of clear national goals and targets, as represented by Millennium Development Goal 7 on ensuring environmental sustainability. While the World Summit on Sustainable Development urged member countries to complete the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and begin their implementation by 2005, there has been slow progress to date, which is not inconsistent with the global picture. Of 45 countries surveyed in the region, only 5 reported that they had completed and were implementing those important strategic policy documents (United Nations, 2004d). However, the establishment of multistakeholder agencies such as national commissions or councils on sustainable development and other apex bodies with the objective of promoting sustainable development has been a good sign. Also, within the region, around 674 local communities/governments from 17 countries are reported to have prepared and be in various stages of implementation of their local Agenda 21 plans (United Nations, 2002). These self-motivated and self-financed initiatives are evidence of the view that reform of institutions to improve environmental performance necessarily involves decentralization.

35. The need for both national and local strategies to clearly focus on production and consumption patterns, integrate economic, social and environmental objectives and foster a shift to a “green growth” paradigm is paramount.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE, CONDITIONS AND TRENDS

A. Environmental performance

36. A Government's environmental performance reflects its effectiveness vis-à-vis specific environmental targets and standards. Low environmental performance and high environmental sustainability (and vice versa) can characterize the same country and are not strictly linked at a given point in time.⁹ Governments, in particular in developing countries, have begun to successfully focus their attention on improving environmental performance, and many countries have established the legislative and institutional frameworks required for environmental protection and improvements in environmental quality. However, implementation is often subject to financial and capacity constraints

⁹ A country with a limited land area and high population density will be less environmentally sustainable than another with a large natural resource base and lower population density. At the same time, despite its low sustainability, the former may have very effective systems of environmental governance and, therefore, high levels of environmental performance.

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and enforcement remains inadequate in some countries, giving rise to issues of protection of complainants and activists in some countries. This is largely due to conflict between environmental protection and economic growth objectives, as well as to financial resource and capacity constraints. In some countries, the judiciary is becoming increasingly responsive to the need to reconcile economic growth and environmental protection objectives; examples include the “green courts” of India and Bangladesh. At the same time, in the absence of extrajudicial mechanisms for conflict resolution, growing competition for access to increasingly scarce natural resources and social inequality may give rise to more frequent and severe environmental conflicts.

37. The effectiveness of environmental performance depends on the extent to which Governments are able to develop a shared commitment to sustainable development among stakeholders, as well as other “enabling conditions”. Mechanisms for dialogue with all stakeholders (in particular the private sector) in the context of a comprehensive, long-term environmental policy framework are a basic requirement. The emergence of markets, evolving and strengthening property rights, economies of scale and political economy effects (income-induced changes in political decision-making processes), changes in economic production structures and relative openness of economies support improvement in environmental quality. Similarly, it has been found that underlying governance and institutional development are critical factors for environmental improvement (Yandle and others, 2004). All of these factors can be said to be improving, to various degrees, in the region. At the same time, there is room for more leadership by Governments in the form of improving the environmental performance and sustainability of their administrations. Green procurement, recycling, energy and water efficiency, and waste reduction measures can raise awareness and create confidence among the general population that government expressions of commitment to improved environmental quality go beyond political rhetoric.

38. Subregional and regional environmental cooperation arrangements support policy formulation and implementation at the national level and are deepening. Subregional cooperation secretariats are developing broad-based environmental action plans in support of national efforts. These include the Pacific Regional Environment Programme’s¹⁰ Action Plan (2005-2009), the Regional Environmental Action Plan for Central Asia, the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme’s Action Plan for the South Asian Regional Seas Programme and the Regional Haze Action Plan of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). There are also a number of important intergovernmental initiatives, including the Acid Deposition Monitoring Network in East Asia and the Malé Declaration on Control and Prevention of Air Pollution and Its Likely Transboundary Effects for South Asia. The ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution, the first regional arrangement of its kind in the world, which binds a group of contiguous States to tackle transboundary haze pollution resulting from land and forest fires, entered into force on 25 November 2003. Regional consensus and priority-

¹⁰ Formerly the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

setting, as manifested by successive Ministerial Conferences on Environment and Development, have served to reinforce government commitment to the ideals of sustainable development and served as a framework for regional cooperation.

B. Environmental conditions and trends

39. Environmental conditions and trends provide evidence of the effectiveness of the environmental performance of member Governments and also reflect the pressures on environmental sustainability exerted by socio-economic activities. A summary of conditions and trends related to air quality, freshwater, forests, land, biodiversity and marine and coastal resources is given in the table below. There is evidence of an improvement in air quality in some urban centres, slowed rates of deforestation and increased forest planting rates. Asia-Pacific consumption of chlorofluorocarbons, major ozone-depleting substances, has declined dramatically, falling by more than 65 per cent from 1995 to 2002.¹¹ However, biodiversity, freshwater, land and marine and coastal resources continue to be impacted by industrialization, agricultural intensification and urbanization with consequent impacts on rural and coastal livelihoods, biodiversity and human health.

40. The top 10 most disaster-prone countries in the world (Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines and Viet Nam) are all located in the region. Increasingly frequent extreme weather events have affected the Pacific islands and other countries, including the Philippines and Japan, and may be linked to climate change. Bangladesh, India and the Philippines are among the countries seriously affected by floods in recent years. Drought-prone countries (e.g., Afghanistan, China, India, Pakistan and Central Asian countries) have been suffering from severe recurrent drought, some in consecutive years, while the western Pacific countries have suffered from El Niño-induced drought (e.g., Indonesia and Papua New Guinea). Large-scale dust and sandstorms mainly originating in the deserts of Mongolia and the desert and semi-desert areas of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region of China have resulted in enormous economic losses and loss of life and adversely affected human health in China, Japan and the Korean Peninsula. Although the causative factors are mainly natural, land degradation and desertification attributable to anthropogenic activity have strengthened and intensified these effects.

41. It has been estimated that, during the past several decades, the total loss of life caused by natural disasters in the region accounted for 85 per cent of the worldwide figure. Based on available data,¹² the total number of deaths caused by natural disasters in Asia and the Pacific (excluding famines and epidemics) from 1990 to 2004 exceeded 680,000, including the more than 295,000 persons estimated¹³ to have been killed in the December 2004 tsunami event. The economic loss

¹¹ Based on data from the United Nations Environment Programme Ozone Secretariat.

¹² See <<http://www.em-dat.net>>.

¹³ Including over 130,000 missing as at 10 February 2005.

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arising from natural disasters in the region from 1990 to 2003 has been estimated at over US\$ 380 billion. The December 2004 tsunami has reportedly set development in Maldives back by 20 years, and an estimated 2 million persons could fall into poverty as a result of the event.¹⁴

42. Vulnerability to such hazards and hence the risk for damage and destruction can be reduced through appropriate disaster preparedness. Disaster risk management must be integrated or mainstreamed into the socio-economic planning and development process (ADPC, 2004) and comprehensive, integrated, multi-hazard early warning systems established.

43. Climate change is one of the most serious issues facing humanity in this century and the issue has been placed firmly on local, national and international agendas as a sustainable development, rather than an environmental, issue. Emissions from developing countries and particularly the large and rapidly developing economies like China and India are of increasing concern. CO₂ emissions from fuel combustion in developing Asia (excluding China) increased by some 78 per cent from 1990 to 2002, against a global increase of 16.4 per cent in the same period, with the major increases attributable to fuel public electricity and heat generation (IEA, 2004). Many countries, notably China and India, have received funding from the Global Environment Facility to undertake climate change mitigation projects.¹⁵

44. The impacts of global warming and climate change, such as the accelerated recession of glaciers, sea level rise, seasonal and latitudinal shifts in precipitation patterns, projected increase in the frequency, magnitude and intensity of extreme climatic events (e.g., temperature variations, cyclones, floods, droughts and soil moisture deficits), and linkages to El Niño are projected to profoundly affect water and land resources, ecosystems, biodiversity, agricultural productivity, forestry and human health (IPCC, 2001; McMichael and others, 2003).

45. Much of the land area in many small island developing States is less than 4 metres above the present mean sea level. In these countries, there are signs that sea level rise is under way, such as extended tide peaks, salt intrusion into agricultural lands and resultant impacts on freshwater availability. Large deltaic regions and low-lying countries in South and South-East Asia are also at risk from sea level rise. A 1-metre rise in sea level would inundate about 17.5 per cent of Bangladesh and about 80 per cent of Majuro Atoll in Marshall Islands. In the Himalayas, which play a critical role in the provision of water to continental monsoon Asia, there is increasing danger from glacial lake outburst floods, as experienced in Bhutan. Climate change considerations and adaptation strategies must be incorporated into the national development planning process.

¹⁴ Asian Development Bank news release No. 005/05, 13 January 2005.

¹⁵ See <<http://www.gefonline.org/home.cfm>>.

State of the environment in Asia and the Pacific						
	Air	Freshwater	Forests	Land	Biodiversity	Marine and coastal resources
Overall conditions and trends	Poor air quality in urban centres, indoor air and transboundary air pollution continuing to impact on health and mortality rates ■ PM10⁶ is the main air pollutant of concern (Huizenga and others, 2004). In over 50 per cent of reporting cities, average annual concentrations of suspended particulates and NO₂ have exceeded WHO standard limits. ■ Many cities have reported improvements in the last 10 years, including Kolkata and Shanghai,^c but suspended particulates are a	Growing water scarcity and contamination by nitrates and heavy metals ■ Per capita water availability is approaching “scarcity limits” in many areas which are subject to seasonal water shortages. In particular, South-Asia, North China and Mongolia are affected. ■ Extraction of water for various uses projected to increase by 25 per cent from 1990 to 2010, slightly higher than the global figure (Shiklomanov, 2004). ■ Surface and	Slowed rates of forest loss, increased planting rates ■ About 28 per cent of the total land area is forested (FAO, 2004b).^b ■ Forest losses since 1990 are heaviest in South-East Asia and Pacific island countries, but significant areas have also been lost in South-Asia. ■ Increase in the proportion of land covered by forest in the Commonwealth of Independent States (Asia) and East Asia (United Nations, 2004c).	Significant land degradation due to agriculture and deforestation ■ The region has the largest agriculturally used dryland affected by land degradation. ■ Over 28 per cent of the region’s land area is degraded to some degree (FAO, 2004b).^b ■ Significant degradation (71 per cent) in dryland areas used for agriculture (UNEP, 1997).	Significant regional contribution to the rapid global decline of biodiversity ■ Rapid global decline of species. Some 10-25 per cent of mammals, birds and amphibians currently threatened with extinction (Reid, 2004). Amphibians under greatest threat (IUCN, 2004). ■ Several countries of the region have particularly large numbers of threatened species (IUCN, 2004). ■ Indomalaya^d is identified as one of three subregions with the highest number of threatened species,	Dramatic declines in fishery resources and continued degradation of coastal ecosystems ■ Almost two thirds of the major fish species are either fully exploited or overexploited (FAO, 2004c). ■ The most dramatic declines in fish stocks are in South-East Asia, which has doubled its marine production since 1970. In some areas a decline of 40 per cent in five years has been observed (FAO, 2004c). ■ Stocks of more commercially valuable stock higher up the food chain show major

⁶ PM10 refers to particles of less than 10 µm in diameter, associated with reduced lung function, aggravation of respiratory ailments and mortality. PM10 particulates are generally created during burning processes related to power generation and automobiles, among other sources. A total of 15 cities provided data for suspended particulates and 19 and 17 cities for NO₂ and SO₂ respectively. Data for 2000-2003. Upper limit of guideline range for suspended particulate matter used. Based on data provided in Huizenga and others (2004).

^b Excluding Armenia, Azerbaijan, Brunei Darussalam, Georgia, the Russian Federation, Singapore and Turkey.

^c Data from the Clean Air Asia secretariat (2004).

^d Indomalaya refers to the biogeographic region encompassing the South Asian subcontinent and South-East Asia, including lowland areas of Taiwan Province of China, China and Japan's Ryukyu Islands.

State of the environment in Asia and the Pacific					
	Air	Freshwater	Forests	Land	Biodiversity
	concern to a growing number of countries. - A much lower percentage of cities exceed limits for concentrations for SO₂, in which significant improvements are reported. - Significant mortality and health impacts of indoor air pollution from the use of solid fuels in the home (mainly women and children affected).	groundwater resources degraded owing to overextraction and pollution. Main pollutants are nitrates (untreated domestic waste) and heavy metals (naturally occurring and anthropogenic).	New forest area planted from 1990 to 2000 was about 34 million hectares (excluding Japan and Australia), about 79 per cent of global forests planted (FAO, 2004b). Major increase in China.		birds in particular (IUCN, 2004). - Oceania^e has a significantly high proportion of threatened species (IUCN, 2004). - Threatened marine species are concentrated in the northern Pacific Ocean, eastern Indian Ocean and south-west and west-central Pacific (IUCN, 2004). - Ratios of protected area to total territorial area: Eastern Asia 11.8 per cent, South-Central Asia 5.5 per cent, South-Eastern Asia 7.8 per cent and Oceania 7.1 per cent (United Nations, 2004c).^h
					decreases (FAO, 2004c). - The area of mangrove forest lost in the region from 1990 to 2000 represents approximately 60 per cent of the global loss. South-East Asia accounted for the majority of the total mangrove area lost in the region. The North-East Asia subregion lost almost half of its mangrove area during that time.^f - Approximately 60 per cent of the region's coral reefs are estimated to be at risk.^g

^e The Oceania biogeographic region encompasses the Pacific Ocean islands of the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji and most of Polynesia (with the exception of New Zealand).

^f ESCAP estimate based on data from FAO (2003).

^g ESCAP estimate based on data from Spalding and others (2001).

^h Regions according to Millennium Development Goals regional composition adopted for 2003 reporting. See <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/mi_worldmillennium1.asp>.

State of the environment in Asia and the Pacific					
	Air	Freshwater	Forests	Land	Biodiversity
Major issues and challenges	- Urbanization and inadequate commuter transport development. - Access to technologies that use cleaner fuels or take smoke outdoors. - Increasing fuel costs are driving the use of highly polluting and health-endangering low-cost fuel mixtures such as industrial solvents and kerosene in South-Asia.	- Urban environmental infrastructure is failing to keep up with expanding urban populations. Less than 10 per cent of wastewater treated in many developing countries (ESCAP, 2000). - Agricultural intensification leading to heavy agrochemical use and overextraction. - Inadequate water efficiency policy and measures. - Inappropriate sanitation technology used in areas of hydrologically sensitive atolls in the Pacific islands leading to pollution of groundwater sources.	- Lack of enforcement of logging bans. - Forest area management regimes that can lead to conflict between the needs of rural communities and forest protection objectives.	- Limited availability of arable land (0.16 ha per capita as compared with 0.37 ha per capita in the rest of the world) (FAO, 2004b). - Continued land degradation attributed to agricultural intensification coupled with water scarcity and competing demands, particularly in South, South-East and Central Asia. - Deforestation.	- Habitat destruction, degradation and fragmentation. - Trade in endangered species (South-East Asia) and overexploitation (marine species). - Introduction of alien and invasive species, particularly on islands. - Protected area management regimes that can lead to conflict between the needs of rural communities and habitat protection objectives. - Illegal logging activity. - Protected areas in South Central Asia, South-East Asia and Oceania still fall short of the 10 per cent guideline value.
					Marine and coastal resources
					Development and urbanization in coastal zones.

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IV. CONCLUSIONS

46. The Asia-Pacific region has become a dynamic economic growth centre, with industrialization based on the production of manufactures for export as the primary driver of this growth. However, the unwelcome environmental costs incurred by the use of outdated production processes, overuse of agricultural chemicals, declining sustainability of consumption patterns, rapid urbanization and increasing demand for energy and water resources all threaten the long-term prospects for both the continued economic growth and environmental sustainability of the region.

47. Current efforts to meet the challenges of sustainable development have largely focused on improving environmental performance, particularly related to pollution control measures. Governments have made significant progress in establishing legislative and institutional frameworks for environmental protection. There has been a measurable improvement in urban air quality in some cities, slowed rates of forest loss, increased forest planting rates and considerable success in reducing the use of ozone-depleting substances. However, environmental degradation, natural disasters and the regional contribution to climate change processes continue to threaten human health, livelihoods and the overall vulnerability of member countries and have assumed global significance.

48. Conflict between environmental protection and economic growth objectives as well as financial and capacity inadequacies have stymied implementation and enforcement efforts. It is clear that a focus on environmental performance alone will not significantly reduce current and future pressures on environmental carrying capacity. Ensuring that sustainable development can be attained without limiting economic growth will require Governments of the region to address the underlying causes of environmental degradation and improve eco-efficiency.

49. A shift from a “grow now and clean up later” to a “green growth” development paradigm is necessary. As stated in chapter III of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, “fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development”. This is a particularly urgent challenge for Asia and the Pacific, one in which indigenous knowledge, traditional lifestyles and cultural values can serve as an important foundation.

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General Assembly

Distr.: General
9 February 2006Sixtieth session
Agenda item 52**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly***[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/488)]***60/189. Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its twenty-third session***The General Assembly,*

Recalling its resolutions 2997 (XXVII) of 15 December 1972, 53/242 of 28 July 1999, 56/193 of 21 December 2001, 57/251 of 20 December 2002, 58/209 of 23 December 2003 and 59/226 of 22 December 2004,

Taking into account Agenda 21¹ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”),²

Reaffirming the role of the United Nations Environment Programme as the principal body within the United Nations system in the field of environment, which should take into account, within its mandate, the sustainable development needs of developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition,

Reaffirming also that capacity-building and technology support to developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition, in environment-related fields are important components of the work of the United Nations Environment Programme,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme at its twenty-third session³ and the decisions contained therein;

2. *Notes* that the Governing Council, at its twenty-third session, discussed all components of the recommendations on international environmental governance as contained in its decision SS.VII/1,⁴ and notes also that reporting on international environmental governance is included in the agenda of its ninth special session;

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

³ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 25 and addendum (A/60/25 and Add.1).*

⁴ *Ibid.*, *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 25 (A/57/25)*, annex I.

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3. *Welcomes* the adoption of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building,⁵ calls for the intensification of ongoing efforts to implement the Plan with regard both to mobilizing adequate resources, from all sources, as well as the strengthening of cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and other stakeholders, based on their comparative advantages, and invites Governments and other stakeholders in a position to do so to provide the necessary funding and technical assistance for its full implementation;

4. *Also welcomes* the continued efforts by the United Nations Environment Programme through the joint United Nations Environment Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs Environment Unit, taking into account the respective mandates of relevant United Nations entities towards the strengthening of environmental emergency response and disaster prevention, preparedness and early warning systems;

5. *Emphasizes* the need for the United Nations Environment Programme, within its mandate, to further contribute to sustainable development programmes, the implementation of Agenda 21¹ and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation² at all levels and to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, bearing in mind the mandate of the Commission;

6. *Recognizes* the need to strengthen the scientific base of the United Nations Environment Programme, as recommended by the intergovernmental consultation on strengthening the scientific base of the Programme, including the reinforcement of the scientific capacity of developing countries, as well as countries with economies in transition, including through the provision of adequate financial resources;

7. *Recalls* the resolve of Member States to promote the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, aiming to achieve that by 2020 chemicals are used and produced in ways that lead to the minimization of significant adverse effects on human health and the environment using transparent and science-based risk assessment and risk management procedure, by adopting and implementing a voluntary strategic approach to international management of chemicals, and to support developing countries in strengthening their capacity for the sound management of chemicals and hazardous wastes by providing technical and financial assistance, as appropriate;

8. *Calls upon* the United Nations Environment Programme to continue within its mandate its activities related to small island developing States, in pursuance of the outcome of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Port Louis from 10 to 14 January 2005;⁶

9. *Emphasizes* the need to further enhance coordination and cooperation among the relevant United Nations organizations in the promotion of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, and welcomes the continued active participation of the United Nations Environment Programme in the United Nations Development Group;

10. *Welcomes* the progress made in the implementation of the provisions of section III.B. of the appendix to decision SS.VII/1 of the Governing Council on

⁵ UNEP/GC.23/6/Add.1 and Corr.1, annex.

⁶ *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10–14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

strengthening the role and financial situation of the United Nations Environment Programme, including the significant broadening of the donor base and increasing total contributions to the Environment Fund, and in this regard notes that the Governing Council will review the implementation of those provisions at its twenty-fourth session;

11. *Reiterates* the need for stable, adequate and predictable financial resources for the United Nations Environment Programme, and, in accordance with resolution 2997 (XXVII), underlines the need to consider the adequate reflection of all administrative and management costs of the Programme in the context of the United Nations regular budget;

12. *Emphasizes* the importance of the Nairobi headquarters location of the United Nations Environment Programme, and requests the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of the Programme and the United Nations Office at Nairobi under review so as to permit the delivery, in an effective manner, of necessary services to the Programme and to the other United Nations organs and organizations in Nairobi;

13. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", a sub-item entitled "Report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme on its ninth special session".

*68th plenary meeting
22 December 2005*



Sixtieth session
Agenda item 52 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/488/Add.1)]

60/192. International Year of Planet Earth, 2008

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming Agenda 21,¹ the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”)² and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015,³

Noting that the wealth of scientific information available on planet Earth remains largely untapped and hardly known to the public or to policymakers and decision makers,

Convinced that education in Earth sciences provides humankind with tools for the sustainable use of natural resources and for building the scientific infrastructure essential for sustainable development,

Welcoming the decision of the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to support the declaration of 2008 as the International Year of Planet Earth with a view to highlighting the importance of Earth sciences,

Taking into account the crucial role the Year could play, inter alia, in raising public awareness of the importance for sustainable development of the Earth’s processes and resources; disaster prevention, reduction and mitigation; and capacity-building for the sustainable management of resources; and its important contribution to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development,

1. *Decides* to declare 2008 the International Year of Planet Earth;

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

³ Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2).

2. *Designates* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as the lead agency and the focal point for the Year to organize activities to be undertaken during the Year, in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme and other relevant entities of the United Nations system, as well as the International Union of Geological Sciences and other Earth science societies and groups throughout the world, and in this regard agrees that the activities of the International Year of Planet Earth will be funded from voluntary contributions, including, inter alia, from industry and major foundations mobilized by a consortium of international organizations, led by the International Union of Geological Sciences;

3. *Encourages* all Member States, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the Year to increase awareness of the importance of Earth sciences for the achievement of sustainable development and to promote action at the local, national, regional and international levels;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session on the progress of the preparations for the International Year of Planet Earth.

*68th plenary meeting
22 December 2005*

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Freshwater

59/228	22 December 2004	Activities undertaken during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, preparations for the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005–2015, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources.....	170
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General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 February 2005

Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 85 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/483/Add.1)]

59/228. Activities undertaken during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, preparations for the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005–2015, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/196 of 20 December 2000, by which it proclaimed 2003 the International Year of Freshwater, and its resolution 58/217 of 23 December 2003, by which it proclaimed that the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005–2015, would commence on World Water Day, 22 March 2005,

Emphasizing that water is critical for sustainable development, including environmental integrity and the eradication of poverty and hunger, and is indispensable for human health and well-being,

Recalling the provisions of Agenda 21,¹ the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 adopted at its nineteenth special session,² the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”)³ and the decisions of the Economic and Social Council and of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its sixth session⁴ relating to freshwater,

Reaffirming the internationally agreed development goals on water and sanitation, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,⁵ and determined to achieve the goal to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water, and the goals set out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to halve the proportion of people

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

² Resolution S-19/2, annex.

³ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

⁴ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 9* (E/1998/29).

⁵ See resolution 55/2.

without access to basic sanitation as well as to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005, with support to developing countries,

Taking note of the Ministerial Declaration, entitled “Message from the Lake Biwa and Yodo River Basin”, adopted on 23 March 2003 at the Ministerial Conference of the Third World Water Forum, held in Kyoto, Japan,⁶ and the Dushanbe Water Appeal, proclaimed on 1 September 2003 at the International Freshwater Forum, held in Dushanbe from 29 August to 1 September 2003,⁷

Noting that the Fourth World Water Forum will take place in Mexico in March 2006,

Taking note with interest of the establishment of the Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation by the Secretary-General,⁸ and looking forward to its contribution to the mobilization of efforts and resources towards the implementation of the commitments, goals and targets agreed upon in those areas,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;⁹
2. *Welcomes* the activities related to freshwater undertaken by Member States, the United Nations Secretariat and the organizations of the United Nations system, inter alia, through inter-agency work, as well as contributions from major groups, for the observance of the International Year of Freshwater, 2003;
3. *Encourages* Member States, the Secretariat, organizations of the United Nations system and major groups to continue their efforts to achieve the internationally agreed water-related goals contained in Agenda 21,¹ the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,² the United Nations Millennium Declaration⁵ and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;³
4. *Welcomes* the work of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and looks forward to the upcoming thirteenth session of the Commission on the thematic cluster of issues on water, sanitation and human settlements;
5. *Invites* the Secretary-General to take appropriate actions in organizing the activities of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005–2015, taking into account the results of the International Year of Freshwater and the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions;
6. *Calls upon* the relevant United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system to step up their efforts to deliver a coordinated response in order to make the Decade a decade of delivering promises through the use of existing resources and voluntary funds;
7. *Notes with interest* the partnership initiatives on water and sanitation undertaken within the framework of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and in the follow-up to the Summit and in accordance with the criteria and

⁶ A/57/785, annex.

⁷ A/58/362, annex.

⁸ See A/59/167, para. 42.

⁹ A/59/167.

guidelines adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session;¹⁰

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution, as well as on the activities planned by the Secretary-General and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system for the Decade;

9. *Decides* to consider, at its sixtieth session, the future arrangements for the review of the implementation of the Decade, including the possibility of a review on a biennial or triennial basis or a mid-term review.

*75th plenary meeting
22 December 2004*

¹⁰ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 9 (E/2003/29)*.

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III

Fifty-ninth session

Item 87 of the provisional agenda*

Sustainable development

Activities undertaken during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/252, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its fifty-ninth session a report on the activities undertaken during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003. In its resolution 55/196, the Assembly proclaimed 2003 the International Year of Freshwater; encouraged Member States, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the Year to increase awareness of the importance of freshwater; and called upon Member States, national and international organizations, major groups and the private sector to make voluntary contributions in accordance with the guidelines for international years and anniversaries. In its resolution 56/192, the Assembly welcomed the activities undertaken by States, the Secretariat, organizations of the United Nations system that are engaged in inter-agency work related to freshwater and major groups for the observance of the Year. The present report takes stock of the activities undertaken during the Year at all levels. It also reports on partnerships and alliances created for the Year's activities and examines the potential for planned activities beyond 2003. Public outreach initiatives have been at the core of the Year's activities, and the report provides a detailed overview of public awareness efforts at all levels. The legacy of the Year beyond 2003 is evident from the declaration by the General Assembly of 2005-2015 as the International Decade of Action, "Water for Life". Other future activities dedicated to the sustainable use and management of freshwater are outlined in the report.

* A/59/150.

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I. Introduction and background

1. In its resolution 55/196 of 20 December 2000, the General Assembly proclaimed 2003 the International Year of Freshwater. In that resolution the Assembly encouraged Member States, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the Year to increase awareness of the importance of freshwater and called upon Member States, national and international organizations, major groups and the private sector to make voluntary contributions in accordance with the guidelines for international years and anniversaries. In its resolution 56/192 of 21 December 2001, the Assembly welcomed the activities undertaken by States, the Secretariat, organizations of the United Nations system engaged in inter-agency work related to freshwater and major groups in observance of the Year. The Assembly also requested, in resolution 57/252 of 20 December 2002, that the Secretary-General submit to it at its fifty-ninth session a report on the activities undertaken during the Year. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

2. Awareness of the relationship between freshwater use and sustainable development has increased dramatically in recent years. This can be partly attributed to a number of ongoing national and international initiatives and activities, including the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The Millennium Declaration focused attention on such issues by establishing internationally agreed development goals pledging to halve the number of people unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water by 2015 and to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation resulting from the World Summit reaffirmed and further elaborated these goals, setting the target of establishing national water-resource management strategies by 2005 and pledging to halve the proportion of people without basic sanitation by 2015.

3. The International Year of Freshwater, 2003, provided an opportunity to follow up on the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the Millennium Development Goals and to consolidate and build upon the many previous efforts to protect, use and manage freshwater resources in a sustainable manner. The real challenge today is to focus attention on action-oriented activities and policies that facilitate the long-term protection of freshwater and increase sanitation coverage. In order to develop freshwater as a sustainable resource, collective efforts to build and strengthen capacity will have to extend far beyond 2003. The Year contributed to raising awareness of the importance of water to life and to culture, and to getting people directly involved in spreading the messages about conserving and valuing this precious resource. The awareness-raising had an impact; by the end of the Year, the General Assembly had proclaimed the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015.

4. All activities undertaken during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, including the production of public information and educational materials, were funded through the donations of interested Governments or major stakeholders. Donations for the International Year were generously provided by the Governments of Japan, the Netherlands, Singapore, Switzerland, Tajikistan and others, as well as by non-governmental organizations and private sector partners. Valuable support was provided by the United Nations Department of Public Information for the production of information and press materials, the dissemination of information

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about the Year throughout the world and the organization of briefings and events. The United Nations agencies concerned with water resources, coordinated through UN-Water, undertook particular efforts to celebrate the Year and in their budgets and programmes put a special focus on its observance.

5. The International Year attracted widespread interest and inspired a range of actions around the world on water and sanitation issues. From the official launch of the International Year on 12 December 2002 until beyond the end of 2003, it captured the imagination of international agencies and development banks, national focal points, Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector, water managers and experts, entertainers, authors, painters and private citizens from many countries.

II. Institutional arrangements and inter-agency coordination

6. The International Year of Freshwater, 2003, provided an opportunity to further develop existing networks and coordination both among the United Nations agencies and bodies in UN-Water and between the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders. The Year also provided a platform for promoting ongoing water-related initiatives and coordinated the efforts of United Nations agencies to promote integrated water-resource management.

7. In its resolution 55/196, the Assembly invited the Subcommittee on Water Resources of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (now UN-Water) to serve as the coordinating entity for the Year. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) agreed to jointly coordinate United Nations-system activities for the Year.

8. The Year was launched on 12 December 2002 in two parallel events, at United Nations Headquarters in New York and at UNESCO headquarters in Paris. In New York, an all-day event was organized for Governments, NGOs and the private sector, generously financed by the Singapore Public Utilities Board and a private firm. At UNESCO, the Director-General convened a similar event to mark the beginning of the International Year.

9. Other actions supported by United Nations agencies and launched during the Year were the following:

(a) UNESCO and the World Water Council, supported by the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the Universities Partnership for Transboundary Waters, established a new Water Cooperation Facility to address issues related to international watercourses, means of equitable river-basin sharing and conflict resolution;

(b) The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council launched the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for All in Schools campaign in a number of countries;

(c) The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched its Community Water Initiative (\$50 million for 2003-2008) and its Gender and Water Resource Guide (with the Gender and Water Alliance);

(d) UNDP and the Global Water Partnership and others launched a programme on effective water governance;

(e) The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) signed a memorandum of understanding with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to create the Water for Asian Cities programme (\$10 million in grants from ADB and UN-Habitat for the first two phases and \$500 million in ADB loans for water and sanitation projects in cities across Asia over the next five years);

(f) During the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in New York from 28 April to 9 May 2003, several special events were held, including the opening of the Water Drop multimedia exhibit, a half-day meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development focusing on the Year and a briefing on the *World Water Development Report*. The Commission selected water, sanitation and human settlements as the main themes for its first two-year cycle (twelfth and thirteenth sessions, 2004-2005);

(g) The United Nations Postal Administration launched a special series of stamps commemorating the International Year of Freshwater, issued in New York, Geneva and Vienna;

(h) The Secretary-General issued statements stressing the importance of freshwater on the international agenda on the occasions of the World Day for Water, World Environment Day, the Dushanbe Freshwater Forum and World Habitat Day. He also wrote the foreword to the *World Water Development Report*;

(i) Many special issues of magazines and journals published by bodies of the United Nations were dedicated to the Year.

10. The United Nations system agencies have worked closely together throughout the Year in a number of global activities focusing on water resources, including the celebrations of World Day for Water, World Environment Day and World Habitat Day. United Nations agencies also created an Inter-Agency Gender and Water Task Force, whose members include focal points for gender and for water from 15 United Nations agencies and 4 non-United Nations entities. The Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs was nominated as task manager. The Task Force aims to have significant input into the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2004 and 2005, the work of the Task Force on Water and Sanitation of the Millennium Project and especially the programmes of the "Water for Life" Decade.

11. The collaborative work that has been carried out during the Year with partners from the United Nations system, Governments, non-governmental organizations, institutions and the private sector has been extremely valuable in the lead-up to the twelfth and thirteenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development and will be carried on through the "Water for Life" Decade. The activities initiated jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and UNESCO have laid a solid foundation for expanded work in the future.

12. The closing ceremonies for the International Year of Freshwater took place at UNESCO headquarters on 20 January 2004 in the presence of the Director-General, the representative of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and special guests, at the end of a two-week exhibition, in the UNESCO Hall, of the Water Drop multimedia exhibit.

III. Other international activities

13. The Year was also marked by a number of other major water-related conferences in many different countries, including the following:

(a) The Third World Water Forum, hosted by the Japanese Government, under the auspices of the World Water Council, was held in Kyoto, Osaka and Shiga from 16 to 23 March 2003. The International Year of Freshwater guided the focus of the conference and led to specific commitments by international organizations, Governments and major stakeholders on activities that would move beyond “business as usual”;

(b) The International Forum on Freshwater, from 29 to 31 August 2003, was hosted by the Government of Tajikistan and sponsored by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, the Aga Khan Foundation and the Swiss Development Agency. The Dushanbe Water Appeal called for an International Decade for Action: “Water for Life”, 2005-2015, which was proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/217 of 23 December 2003;

(c) The International Conference Water for the Poorest: Responding to the Millennium Development Goals was held in Stavanger, Norway, on 4 and 5 November 2003, under the aegis of the International Water Academy in cooperation with a community of Norwegian non-governmental organizations;

(d) The Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water was held in Addis Ababa from 8 to 12 December 2003 under the auspices of the African Ministerial Council on Water, the New Partnership for Africa’s Development and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;

(e) The international symposium Basis of Civilization: Water Sciences was held in Rome from 3 to 6 December 2003, organized by the Italian National Committee for the International Association of Hydrological Sciences and the Italian National Committee for the UNESCO International Hydrological Programme.

14. Other important international conferences held during the International Year included those that took place in Moscow, Kyiv, Madrid, Boston, Los Angeles and Minneapolis (United States of America), Lisbon, Paris, Rome, and Geneva. These either were organized in observance of the International Year of Freshwater or dedicated a majority of programme elements, panels and side events to the Year’s agenda.

IV. National activities

15. As Governments play the most important role in the creation and implementation of water policies and agreements made at the global and national level, special attention was paid to what was happening in countries and the work being done by national focal points. There were over 70 country-nominated focal points — 36 from International Hydrological Programme committees worldwide — and most countries around the world organized events for the Year. The national focal points represented 25 countries in Europe, 14 in the Americas and the Caribbean, 12 each in Africa and Asia, 3 in Central Asia and 5 in the Middle East.

16. In most countries, the national focal points appointed for the Year have provided support for activities at the national level and have been able to authorize the use of the official WaterYear2003 logo for non-commercial purposes. In many countries, events have been organized at the municipal, provincial and national levels, in many cases supported by United Nations information centres.

17. The Intergovernmental Council of the International Hydrological Programme and its committees, in particular, were very active in organizing both scientific and technical events and awareness-building events. The video *Water: The Drop of Life*, produced for the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, has been shown at many special national or local events, as well as being broadcast on TV in many countries.

18. Within the official web site of the International Year of Fresh Water, 2003 (www.wateryear2003.org), a series of pages were created for each country, allowing the national focal points to promote, in their native languages, the celebrations at the national level and to publicize activities being organized in the country. These national pages included a national events calendar linked to the international events calendar; an education corner to highlight educational material dealing specifically with water in that country; and a page with information about the water situation in the country, with links for obtaining more information. A number of countries ran imaginative public awareness campaigns by producing advertising for use in movie theatres, on national television or on public transport.

V. Public outreach and education

19. The most important accomplishments of the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, were in the areas of public information and educational projects, geared towards all ages, all countries and all professions. The Year's official web site was based at UNESCO and was an important tool for making information accessible on events happening worldwide through an up-to-date calendar, as well as providing educational material for people of various age levels and cultural backgrounds. Links to national web sites, United Nations background documents on water issues and concrete information on how to get involved were also featured. Through the web site's extensive educational material, facts and figures, activities and newsletter, as well as the partnerships and work at the local, national and international levels, the number-one message conveyed was that awareness-raising was crucial for bringing water education into the community.

20. The multimedia travelling exhibit for the International Year (Water Drop) was financed by the Government of the Netherlands and was launched by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs at the Water Dome in Johannesburg during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, as a preview for the Year. This excellent, informative exhibit then travelled to the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto and on to New York during the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in the spring of 2003. It subsequently made stops in Madrid and Geneva before going to UNESCO in Paris in January 2004.

21. A major contribution of the United Nations agencies during the Year was the first edition of the *World Water Development Report: Water for People, Water for Life*, launched on World Day for Water at the Third World Water Forum in Japan. Partly because the launch coincided with the Forum, the report received high-level

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media attention. The *World Water Development Report* covers the full spectrum of water-related issues, from life and well-being issues (health, ecosystems, cities, food, industry, energy) to management challenges (managing risks, sharing water, valuing water, ensuring the knowledge base, governance). The report places the emphasis firmly on people and Governments as both the cause of and the solution to today's water problems. The executive summary of the report was released in nine language versions (Arabic, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Russian and Spanish).

22. The newsletter *Splash!* was transmitted electronically and featured best practices, upcoming water events and conferences and news stories from around the world. It introduced new educational material on water management and conservation issues and proved to be an effective way to get people actively involved during the Year. The newsletter was published every three weeks in three official United Nations languages (English, French and Spanish).

23. A press section was maintained to support the work of interested media and journalists. The educational web site of the United Nations Department of Public Information (www.cyberschoolbus.un.org) provided a range of interactive learning tools for children to gain knowledge about water and sanitation issues. The work of the United Nations in promoting the Year focused strongly on providing tools for groups to use in order to take action in their communities and for individuals to become aware of the issues.

24. At the beginning of December 2003, the United Nations University, in cooperation with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and with financing from the United Nations Development Account, announced the launch of an online diploma course aimed at training water-management experts. The 10-subject, 250-hour course will be aimed mainly at current government officials and engineers and will be initially based at three regional centres, in West Africa, the South Pacific and Asia. The programme, to be offered free of charge, will award graduates a diploma bearing the United Nations seal. The curriculum was developed by more than 60 academics and professionals around the world.

25. System-wide United Nations efforts have been supported by United Nations information centres around the world. The information centres helped coordinate and initiate events and conferences at the national and local levels. They also bore the full costs of producing and translating information materials. Information centres in Italy, Japan, Portugal and Spain demonstrated a particularly high commitment to the International Year of Freshwater, 2003. Some countries, including Pakistan and Tajikistan, produced special publications on their water resources for the Year.

26. The Department of Public Information and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs jointly organized a public-information day on 16 October 2003 in observance of the International Year of Freshwater. As part of the weekly Department of Public Information NGO briefings, a panel discussion was held, entitled "Water for life: stewardship and sustainability", followed by musical performances and two afternoon meetings on the topic "Fresh perspectives on the world's water crisis". These discussions involved various speakers from the United Nations, national delegations, NGO representatives and ecological activists. The level of attendance and interest shown by NGOs was high.

27. The organizing team for the Year coordinated, both from New York (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) and Paris (UNESCO), a general WaterYear2003 e-mail-account, responding to thousands of queries and proposals in more than six languages. Questions and enquiries came daily from students working on school assignments on water, Ph.D. candidates, university professors, local newspapers, scientific journals, schoolteachers, public and private water utilities, development consultants, city council members and environmental groups.

28. The large number of enquiries from teachers and professionals demonstrated an exceptionally high demand for educational material on freshwater issues, which eventually led to the publication, by the Department of Public Information, of the cross-cultural United Nations classroom resource guide on water, *Every Body Counts, Every Drop Matters*. The hardcover book is commercially available through the Department of Public Information and the United Nations Bookstore.

VI. Partnerships

29. The Year provided an excellent opportunity for United Nations agencies to work with NGOs, the private sector and other members of civil society. The success of the Year was due principally to the involvement of these partnerships in projects, events and joint activities throughout 2003. NGOs and civil society provided content for the web site and the electronic newsletter and were the heart and energy of the Year's events. The focal points for the Year, based at United Nations agencies and at the national level, worked hard to encourage NGOs to work together locally and nationally and to connect projects with civil society groups and vice versa. With approximately 30 e-mail messages a day coming in from NGO groups around the world, the Year was able to feature much of the work that these groups do.

30. Since activities for the Year were self-funding, in accordance with the policy for international years, partnerships were essential. They played an important role in developing and contributing to the success of the International Year of Freshwater, 2003. The partnerships created over the course of the year made various contributions, particularly in publicity, financing and project development.

31. Local, national and international NGOs played a very active role in the promotion of the Year around the world. For example, the United Kingdom-based WaterAid joined forces with other organizations to participate in the celebrations of the Year in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The United Kingdom regional initiative, aimed at raising awareness of freshwater issues, included competitions in photography, essays and art. The Earth Day Network initiated a two-year campaign (2003-2004) highlighting critical water access, health and usage issues. Its interactive web site featured a compilation of literature for educators and students on how to evaluate the quality of community water resources and made suggestions for action. The web site also gave examples of communities around the world confronting water problems, including the stories of 10 thirsty children from around the world. It posted an invitation to corporations asking them to join in the effort to conserve water by participating in the Earth Day Corporate Water Challenge. Rotary International took an active role in the Year. One of its main projects was to provide emergency water storage solutions for the people of Papua New Guinea, where freshwater access is limited.

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32. Youth represent the world's future water users, managers, professionals and leaders. They are, thus, the key to a future where people are aware of water issues and capable of solving problems related to overconsumption, exploitation of resources and pollution. Thus, it was crucial to involve youth actively in the Year: youth focal points were established in many countries, and several youth groups and NGOs came on board to celebrate the Year. The focal points were sent resource information each month and were invited to contribute to the electronic newsletter and the web site.

33. The private sector participated, both financially and otherwise, in various projects throughout the Year. In several cases, private enterprises were willing to donate products to regions in need of water-resource solutions. Many artists showed great interest in the Year, by donating paintings and other works and by using their talents to promote awareness. For example, some of the photos on the International Year of Freshwater web site were provided free of charge by Panos Pictures, a photo agency based in London that represents photojournalists around the globe.

34. Many private sector companies eagerly volunteered to assist in disseminating the Year's messages. An example of this is the use of the WaterYear2003 logo on the publicity posters for a children's film, *Les enfants de la pluie*, aimed at conveying the importance of sustainable solutions for water resources. The film company also contributed educational materials based on the theme of the film to promote the Year.

VII. Some lessons learned

35. **The coordinating agencies were fortunate to have existing United Nations system-wide programmes working in the area of water resources (UN-Water and its World Water Assessment Programme) that participated in the activities of the Year. This facilitated communication and information-sharing among the agencies and provided concrete information for the web site and agency activities, as well as for enquiries from and communication with the public, NGOs and the private sector.**

36. **The public is very interested in knowing what the United Nations agencies do. It is important that information be presented in a way that can be understood and used by the public. The joint web site, run by various United Nations agencies, helped to make the system's activities and projects accessible to the public.**

37. **United Nations agency and national focal points are also needed to make such a campaign viable. These focal points should have contacts with the major stakeholders interested in the issue, such as youth, women and businesses. It would be useful to have a list of major group contact points in each country available on the web site. These groups should be provided with educational materials, the logo, a web space, etc.**

38. **Materials that are appropriate and usable for youth groups should be created, including stickers, posters and other resources, as well as ideas for projects. Often such groups were interested in receiving a guide on how to get involved, what kind of projects to do, how to find funding, etc. Youth provide a good avenue for disseminating the messages.**

39. It would have been useful to have guidelines for national focal points on how to approach the private sector for funding and partnerships. These guidelines could be available on the web site as well. It would also have been useful to have a person whose function was to work with the private sector and negotiate and secure partnerships to provide microcredit, scholarships, grants, etc., to groups around the world doing work at the local and national levels. This possibility could be explored for the “Water for Life” Decade.

40. The electronic newsletter *Splash!* was an important tool for keeping people informed in multiple languages and also for directing people to the web site. If significant work and time are being put into developing a web site as a tool for groups, then the same also needs to be done to ensure that this tool remains useful by being kept up to date.

VIII. Beyond 2003

41. Water continues to be a central issue in the international community, and, in the coming years this centrality will be supported by a number of pivotal international events. The Commission on Sustainable Development, in its current cycle of review and policy years (twelfth and thirteenth sessions, 2004-2005), is reviewing the thematic cluster of water, sanitation and human settlements.

42. On World Day for Water (22 March) in 2004, the Secretary-General announced the establishment of a high-level Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, which aims to galvanize global action on these issues as part of the international effort to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs will serve as secretariat to the Board. Former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan has agreed to serve as Chairman of the Board, which includes a wide range of eminent persons, technical experts and other individuals with proven experience in inspiring people, moving the machinery of government and working with the media, the private sector and civil society. The Board is expected to use the unique expertise of its members to raise awareness of water and sanitation issues, to help mobilize funds for water and sanitation projects and to encourage new partnerships.

43. On World Day for Water 2005, the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, will be launched, to run from 2005 to 2015. The timetable for the Decade coincides with the timing to reach the Millennium Development Goals and the commitments of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation on water and sanitation, providing an excellent rationale to concentrate on water and sanitation issues. The “Water for Life” Decade provides an additional opportunity to get more people more involved and to plan real, long-term projects to help involve all sectors of society more actively in the sustainable use and management of freshwater resources. A programme of work for the “Water for Life” Decade, with a strong focus on implementation, is currently under consideration by UN-Water. The lessons learned, partnerships formed and information collected during the International Year will be invaluable for commencing the “Water for Life” Decade.

E/CN.6/2005/ L.6/Rev. 1	4 March 2005	Integrating a gender perspective in post-disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, particularly in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster	186

E/CN.6/2005/11 E/2005/27	17 May 2005	Commission on the Status of Women Report on the forty-ninth session (28 February-11 and 22 March 2005) (Abstract: Resolution 49/5)	190

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II

Commission on the Status of Women

Forty-ninth session

28 February-11 March 2005

Agenda item 3

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”

Philippines:* revised draft resolution

Integrating a gender perspective in post-disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, particularly in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 59/279 of 19 January 2005, 59/232 of 22 December 2004, 59/231 of 22 December 2004 and 59/212 of 20 December 2004, as well as the agreed conclusions of the Commission in 2002 on environmental management and the mitigation of natural disasters,

Recalling also the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction held in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, which recognized that a gender perspective should be integrated into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes, including those related to risk assessment, early warning, information management and education and training,

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action¹ and the commitment to design, implement and monitor, with the full participation of women, effective, efficient and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive policies and programmes at all levels that will foster the empowerment and advancement of women,

* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions at the Economic and Social Council.

¹ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

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Recalling the commitments regarding women and girls affected by natural disasters, displacement and other such emergencies in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome document of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,²

Recalling also its resolution 48/4 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/4 of 7 July 2004 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system,

Conscious of the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact, including the tsunami disaster that struck the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian regions on 26 December 2004, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions of displaced and homeless persons,

Expressing concern that women and children account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by natural disasters and their aftermath, including the recent tsunami disaster, and that those living in poverty are most affected,

Noting that women have multiple and varied roles, including caring for survivors and maintaining family and community in disaster situations,

Concerned that women and girls are more vulnerable to violence, including sexual abuse and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence in many emergency situations, including in the aftermath of natural disasters,

Also concerned that women and girls in many disaster situations, including in the aftermath of the tsunami disaster, continue to be victims of violence, including sexual abuse and sexual and other gender-based violence,

Welcoming the response, support and assistance of the international community in the relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, which reflect the spirit of international solidarity and cooperation in addressing the recent tsunami disaster and other disasters,

Concerned that existing post-disaster relief, recovery rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, including in the recent tsunami disaster, have not sufficiently addressed the gender dimensions of the situation,

1. *Urges* Governments, in planning for disaster preparedness and responding to natural disasters, to integrate a gender perspective as well as to ensure that women take an active and equal role in all phases of disaster management;

2. *Calls* on United Nations entities and international and local humanitarian relief organizations to strengthen the gender dimensions of their responses to disaster situations;

3. *Strongly calls* on Governments and other relevant bodies, in their responses to disaster situations, to meet the needs of affected populations such as food, clean water, shelter and physical security, as well as to provide services such as health care, including reproductive health, psychological health and psychosocial support and education, taking into account the particular needs of women and girls;

4. *Emphasizes* the importance of developing and implementing sustainable anti-poverty programmes led by the Governments of affected countries, that

² General Assembly resolution S-23/3, annex.

improve access to and control over productive resources for women and girls affected by disasters;

5. *Underlines* the need to address the gender equality dimensions of livelihood, security, land tenure, land rights, property and housing since they pose major challenges to women, in particular widows, women heads of households, women with disabilities and women who have lost family members in natural disasters;

6. *Also underlines* the need to give special attention to the vulnerabilities and capacities of marginalized groups of women and girls;

7. *Stresses* the need to utilize the expertise, knowledge and networks of women to promote gender equality and social justice in the context of disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction and to facilitate women's access to media and information and communication technologies;

8. *Strongly urges* Governments, United Nations entities and other relevant bodies to take necessary measures, including the development and implementation of gender-sensitive codes of conduct, to protect women and girls from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and all other forms of violence in the context of natural disasters and to provide appropriate care for women and girls who have been exposed to sexual abuse and other forms of violence;

9. *Urges* Governments, United Nations entities and other relevant bodies involved in post-disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction to provide training on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women and girls and to promote gender balance and gender sensitivity among their representatives and staff;

10. *Calls* on Governments to involve women in all levels of decision-making in disaster situations, including in community-level welfare centres for displaced persons;

11. *Also calls* on Governments to promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights by women, including in the context of natural disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts;

12. *Encourages* Governments and relevant bodies of the United Nations system, and invites donor countries, regional and international financial institutions and civil society involved in relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts to implement gender-sensitive, community-based approaches, so that women can take an active and equal role in all stages and at all levels, and to monitor these through various measures, including the collection and use of sex-disaggregated statistical data to accurately track progress and women's participation;

13. *Urges* Governments, United Nations entities and relevant stakeholders to support gender-sensitive capacity-building at all levels of disaster management;

14. *Requests* Governments of affected countries, the United Nations system, regional organizations and donor countries to recognize the vulnerabilities and capacities of women and girls and to address these through a gender-responsive allocation of resources in their relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his reports to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, the gender dimensions of relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts coordinated by the United Nations in situations of natural disasters, including the recent tsunami disaster.



United Nations

Commission on the Status of Women

**Report on the forty-ninth session
(28 February-11 and 22 March 2005)**

**Economic and Social Council
Official Records, 2005
Supplement No. 7**

(p) Establish or reinforce existing institutional mechanisms at all levels to work with national machineries for the advancement of women to strengthen societal support for gender equality, in cooperation with civil society, in particular women's non-governmental organizations;

7. *Emphasizes* that, while the primary responsibility for implementing gender mainstreaming rests with Governments, partnership, cooperation and the exchange of experience with all relevant stakeholders at all levels contribute to effective outcomes;

8. *Calls upon* the international community, including the United Nations system and other regional and subregional organizations, to support efforts to mainstream a gender perspective at the national level by:

(a) Supporting national Governments in their efforts to strengthen national mechanisms through official development assistance and other appropriate assistance;

(b) Encouraging multilateral, bilateral, donor and development agencies to include in their programmes of assistance activities that strengthen national machineries;

(c) Providing technical cooperation and other forms of assistance to the developing countries, in particular in Africa and the least developed countries, in implementing the Beijing Platform for Action;

(d) Facilitating the sharing of information on guidelines, methodologies and best practices and making such information available, *inter alia*, through a variety of formats, including web-based and electronic formats;

9. *Emphasizes* that the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment and the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly are among the essential elements for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, and stresses the need to ensure the integration of a gender perspective both in the preparations for and at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the review of the Millennium Declaration;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fiftieth session, on progress in mainstreaming a gender perspective in the development, implementation and evaluation of national policies and programmes, bearing in mind its two thematic issues as outlined in its multi-year programme of work.

Resolution 49/5

Integrating a gender perspective in post-disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, including in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster*

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 59/212 of 20 December 2004, 59/231 of 22 December 2004, 59/232 of 22 December 2004

* For the discussion, see chap. II.

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and 59/279 of 19 January 2005, as well as the agreed conclusions of the Commission in 2002 on environmental management and the mitigation of natural disasters,⁴⁰

Recalling also the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, which recognized that a gender perspective should be integrated into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes, including those related to risk assessment, early warning, information management and education and training,

Reaffirming the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action⁴¹ and the commitment to design, implement and monitor, with the full participation of women, effective, efficient and mutually reinforcing gender-sensitive policies and programmes at all levels that will foster the empowerment and advancement of women,

Recalling the commitments regarding women and girls affected by natural disasters and other such emergencies in the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,⁴²

Recalling also its resolution 48/4 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/4 of 7 July 2004 on mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system,

Conscious of the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact, particularly in developing countries, including the tsunami disaster that struck the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian regions on 26 December 2004, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths and over a million displaced and homeless persons,

Expressing concern that women and children account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by natural disasters and their aftermath, including the recent tsunami disaster, and that those living in poverty are most affected,

Noting that women have multiple and varied roles, including caring for survivors and maintaining family and community in disaster situations,

Concerned that women and girls are more vulnerable to violence, including sexual abuse and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence in many emergency situations, including in the aftermath of natural disasters,

Welcoming the response, support and assistance by the affected countries and the international community in the relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, which reflect the spirit of national as well as international solidarity and cooperation in addressing the recent tsunami disaster and other disasters,

Concerned that existing post-disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, including in the recent tsunami disaster, have not sufficiently addressed the gender dimensions of the situation,

⁴⁰ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2002, Supplement No. 1 (E/2002/99), resolution 2002/5, sect. B.*

⁴¹ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

⁴² General Assembly resolutions S-23/2, annex, and S-23/3, annex.

1. *Urges* Governments, in planning for disaster preparedness and responding to natural disasters, to integrate a gender perspective as well as to ensure that women take an active and equal role in all phases of disaster management;
2. *Calls* on United Nations entities and international and local humanitarian relief organizations to strengthen the gender dimensions of their responses to disaster situations;
3. *Strongly calls* on Governments and other relevant bodies, in their responses to disaster situations, to meet the needs of affected populations such as food, clean water, sanitation, shelter and physical security, and to provide services such as health care, including reproductive health, psychological health and psychosocial support as well as education, taking into account the particular needs of women and girls;
4. *Emphasizes* the importance of developing and implementing sustainable poverty reduction programmes led by the Governments of affected countries that improve access to and control over productive resources for women and girls affected by disasters;
5. *Underlines* the need for the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action⁴¹ and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly⁴² in order to address the major challenges to women and girls in natural disasters and in their aftermath;
6. *Also underlines* the need to give special attention to the vulnerabilities and capacities of marginalized groups of women and girls;
7. *Stresses* the need to utilize the expertise, knowledge and networks of women to promote gender equality and social justice in the context of disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction and to facilitate women's access to media and information and communication technologies;
8. *Strongly urges* Governments, United Nations entities and other relevant bodies to take necessary measures, including the development and implementation of gender-sensitive codes of conduct, to protect women and girls from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse and all other forms of violence in the context of natural disasters and to provide appropriate care and support for women and girls who have been exposed to sexual abuse and other forms of violence;
9. *Urges* Governments, United Nations entities and other relevant bodies involved in post-disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction to provide training on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women and girls and to promote gender balance and gender sensitivity among their representatives and staff;
10. *Calls* on Governments to involve women in all levels of decision-making in disaster situations, including in community-level welfare centres for displaced persons;
11. *Also calls* on Governments to promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights by women and girls, including in the context of natural disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts;
12. *Encourages* Governments and relevant bodies of the United Nations system, and invites donor countries, regional and international financial institutions

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and civil society involved in relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts to implement gender-sensitive, people-centred and community-based approaches to ensure women's full and equal participation, and also encourages Governments to monitor these through various measures, including the collection and use of sex-disaggregated statistical data, in order to accurately track progress and women's participation;

13. *Urges* Governments, United Nations entities and relevant stakeholders to support gender-sensitive capacity-building at all levels of disaster management;

14. *Encourages* Governments, the United Nations system, regional organizations, and invites donor countries to address the vulnerabilities and capacities of women and girls through gender-responsive programming and allocation of resources in their post-disaster relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in coordination with the Governments of affected countries;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to include in his reports to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, the gender dimensions of relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts coordinated by the United Nations in situations of natural disasters, including the recent tsunami disaster.

Resolution 49/6 Strengthening of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women*

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling all relevant General Assembly resolutions on the future operations of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/57 of 24 July 2003, in which the Council decided to amend the statute of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women,

Bearing in mind the framework of the strategic plan for the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2004-2007,

Recognizing a number of important strategic initiatives undertaken by the Institute, including the redesign of its website, the strengthening of cooperative arrangements with United Nations entities, the expansion of its research programme, the intensification of its fund-raising campaign, the enhancement of communication with governmental agencies, civil society, academia and the private sector and the strengthening of its training, capacity-building and outreach activities,

Recognizing also that the implementation of the work programme and strategic plan of the Institute will contribute to the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action⁴³ and the outcome documents of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,⁴⁴

1. *Welcomes* the active participation and contributions of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women to the review and

* For the discussion, see chap. II.

⁴³ *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

⁴⁴ General Assembly resolution S-23/2, annex, and resolution S-23/3, annex.

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Human Settlements

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General Assembly

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Sixtieth session
Agenda item 53

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/489)]

60/203. Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3327 (XXIX) of 16 December 1974, 32/162 of 19 December 1977, 34/115 of 14 December 1979, 56/205 and 56/206 of 21 December 2001, 57/275 of 20 December 2002, 58/226 and 58/227 of 23 December 2003 and 59/239 of 22 December 2004,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolutions 2002/38 of 26 July 2002 and 2003/62 of 25 July 2003 and Council decisions 2004/300 of 23 July 2004 and 2005/298 of 26 July 2005,

Recalling the goal contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration¹ of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020 and the goal contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”)² to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people who lack access to safe drinking water and sanitation,

Recalling also the Habitat Agenda,³ the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium,⁴ the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development,⁵ the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,⁶

¹ See resolution 55/2.

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

³ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3–14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

⁴ Resolution S-25/2, annex.

⁵ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

⁶ *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18–22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

Recalling further the 2005 World Summit Outcome,⁷

Recalling the decisions of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session related to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and human settlements,⁸

Recognizing that the overall thrust and strategic vision of UN-Habitat and its emphasis on the two global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance are strategic points of entry for the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda, especially for guiding international cooperation in respect of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development,

Conscious of the unique opportunity provided by the Cities Without Slums Initiative mentioned in the Millennium Declaration for realizing economies of scale and substantial multiplier effects in helping to attain the other Millennium Development Goals,

Acknowledging the significance of the urban dimension of poverty eradication and the need to integrate water and sanitation issues within a broad-based approach to human settlements,

Expressing its appreciation to the regular Assembly of Ministers and High-level Authorities of the Housing and Urban Development Sector in Latin America and the Caribbean and its recent plan of action on the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals,

Expressing its appreciation also to the African Union, UN-Habitat and the Government of South Africa for convening and hosting the first African conference of housing and urban development ministers in Durban from 31 January to 4 February 2005, which established the African Ministerial Conference on Housing and Urban Development to promote sustainable human settlements in Africa,

Expressing its appreciation further to the Government of Canada and the city of Vancouver for their willingness to host the third session of the World Urban Forum in June 2006 and to the Government of China and the city of Nanjing for their willingness to host the fourth session of the World Urban Forum in 2008,

Taking note of the reports entitled *The State of the World's Cities 2004–2005: Globalization and Urban Culture*⁹ and the *Global Report on Human Settlements 2005: Financing Urban Shelter*,¹⁰

Noting the efforts by UN-Habitat to strengthen its collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and other international organizations and its participation in the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs,

Recognizing the continued urgent need for increased and predictable financial contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation to ensure timely, effective and concrete global implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium and the relevant internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in

⁷ See resolution 60/1.

⁸ *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 9 (E/2005/29), chap. I, sect. C.*

⁹ United Nations publication, Sales No. 04.III.Q.2.

¹⁰ United Nations publication, Sales No. 05.III.Q.1.

the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation, and the relevant decisions of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme on the work of its twentieth session,¹¹ the report of the Secretary-General on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda¹² and the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat);¹³

2. *Encourages* Governments to consider an enhanced approach to achieving the Cities Without Slums Initiative mentioned in the United Nations Millennium Declaration¹ by upgrading existing slums and creating policies and programmes, according to national circumstances, to forestall the growth of future slums, and in this regard invites the international donor community and multilateral and regional development banks to support the efforts of developing countries, inter alia, through increased voluntary financial assistance;

3. *Recognizes* that Governments have the primary responsibility for the sound and effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda,³ the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium⁴ and the Millennium Declaration, and stresses the need for the international community to fully implement commitments to support Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in their efforts, through the provision of the requisite resources, capacity-building, the transfer of technology and the creation of an international enabling environment;

4. *Calls for* continued financial support to UN-Habitat through increased voluntary contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, and invites Governments to provide multi-year funding to support programme implementation;

5. *Also calls for* increased, non-earmarked contributions to the Foundation;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of UN-Habitat under review so as to enhance its effectiveness in supporting national policies, strategies and plans in attaining the poverty eradication, gender equality, water and sanitation and slum upgrading targets of the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

7. *Emphasizes* the need for UN-Habitat to develop a results-based and less fragmented budget structure with a view to securing maximum efficiency, accountability and transparency in programme delivery regardless of funding source;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of UN-Habitat and the United Nations Office at Nairobi under review so as to permit the delivery, in an effective manner, of necessary services to UN-Habitat and the other United Nations organs and organizations in Nairobi;

9. *Invites* the international donor community and financial institutions to contribute generously to the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, the Slum Upgrading Facility and the technical cooperation trust funds to enable UN-Habitat to assist

¹¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/60/8).*

¹² E/2005/60.

¹³ A/60/168.

developing countries to mobilize public investment and private capital for slum upgrading, shelter and basic services;

10. *Acknowledges* contributions of the regional consultative initiatives, including conferences of ministers in the area of human settlements, for implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, and invites the international community to support such efforts;

11. *Stresses* the importance of publishing the financial rules and regulations of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation in time for their adoption no later than the end of 2005;

12. *Requests* UN-Habitat to intensify coordination in the framework of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the common country assessment and to continue to work with the World Bank, regional development banks, other development banks, regional organizations and other relevant partners to field-test innovative policies, practices and pilot projects in order to mobilize resources to increase the supply of affordable credit for slum upgrading and other pro-poor human settlements development in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

13. *Invites* all Governments to participate actively in the third session of the World Urban Forum, and invites donor countries to support the participation of representatives from developing countries, in particular the least developed countries, and countries with economies in transition, including women and youth, in the Forum;

14. *Encourages* Governments to establish local, national and regional urban observatories and to provide financial and substantive support to UN-Habitat for the further development of methodologies for data collection, analysis and dissemination;

15. *Recognizes* the important role and contribution of UN-Habitat in supporting the efforts of countries affected by natural disasters and complex emergencies to develop prevention, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes for the transition from relief to development, and in this regard requests UN-Habitat, within its mandate, to continue to work closely with other relevant agencies in the United Nations system, and invites the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to consider including UN-Habitat in its membership;

16. *Requests* UN-Habitat, through its involvement in the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and through contacts with relevant United Nations agencies and partners in the field, to promote the early involvement of human settlements experts in the assessment and development of prevention, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes to support the efforts of developing countries affected by natural disasters and other complex humanitarian emergencies;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution;

18. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)".

68th plenary meeting
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II

Sixtieth session

Item 55 of the provisional agenda*

Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) has made significant progress in strengthening the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation pursuant to the requests of the General Assembly to enable the Foundation both to support the activities of UN-Habitat and to mobilize resources to complement efforts by Member States to provide affordable shelter, infrastructure and basic services. A three-year pilot project for the Slum Upgrading Facility has been launched. UN-Habitat expanded its efforts at the country level to build the capacity of Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goal targets on slums and to respond to demand for disaster mitigation and post-conflict humanitarian assistance and reconstruction. Based on a collaboration agreement with the United Nations Development Programme, UN-Habitat placed 32 national Habitat Programme Managers to bring human settlements issues into the mainstream in national development strategies. The monitoring and research activities of the Programme have been adjusted to support the efforts of Member States to monitor the implementation of the targets concerning slums in the Millennium Development Goals and to analyse policies and prepare flagship reports that will enable Governments and other Habitat Agenda partners achieve those targets. UN-Habitat published the *State of the World's Cities 2004*, and the *Global Report on Human Settlements* for 2005, on the theme of financing urban shelter.

* A/60/150.

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As the Programme of the United Nations responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and for assisting Member States achieve the targets set forth in the Millennium Declaration, UN-Habitat has created forums for global networking and established strategic partnerships. The second World Urban Forum was successfully held in Barcelona, Spain, in September 2004. Plans are under way to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the Habitat Conference by holding the third session of the World Urban Forum in Vancouver, Canada, in June 2006. The Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance were launched in over 10 countries within the framework of the Millennium Development Goal targets and the Programme of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, with follow-up actions being initiated to build local capacities. Water and sanitation programmes in least developed countries in the Great Lakes region of East Africa and the Mekong Delta of South-East Asia have been launched under the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund. The report concludes with a set of recommendations.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/239 of 22 December 2004, entitled “Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).”

II. Progress made in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

A. Institutional context and operating environment

1. The Millennium Development Goals

2. The Millennium Development Goals have served during the reporting period as powerful vehicles for giving focus to the work of UN-Habitat and for harmonizing the collective efforts of United Nations organizations and Member States to eradicate poverty. This is particularly so for the development of human settlements, where the preferred approach is, by necessity, multisector, multiactor and integrated — and where coordination is all the more imperative.

3. The living and working conditions of urban slum-dwellers have historically been a peripheral concern of the international community. The advent of the seventh Millennium Development Goal, however, has changed this situation, elevating the issue significantly. International organizations and Member States, together with other Habitat Agenda partners, are increasingly coming to terms with the mammoth challenge of dealing with rapid, poorly managed urbanization and the consequential proliferation of unplanned, unserviced slums and informal settlements. Target 10 to reduce by half the persons living without safe drinking water and sanitation, and target 11 to improve the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by the year 2020, as well as working to achieve the objective of “cities without slums” — are increasingly featured in the national development agenda of many Member States. Some Governments have established trust funds for slum upgrading, while others have instituted national policies and programmes with a view to offering the urban poor security of tenure and a role in decision-making as genuine development partners.

4. That said, not all countries have embraced the significance of the slum targets and the catalytic role embodied in the goals of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Unlawful forced evictions and demolitions remain a bad practice of many Member States. Rather than consult with slum-dwellers and engage in a process of shared responsibility for relocation and resettlement and rather than recognize the urban poor as a feature of the new urban economy with a need to be empowered, there remains an unrealistic hope for the urban poor that they will simply return to their rural areas. The adamancy underlying these regressive views underscores the challenges and important role ahead for UN-Habitat. Now more than ever, it will be crucial to advance a normative agenda through the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance, to

offer practical policy alternatives supported through peer exchange and the exchange of lessons learned from best practice and to back advocacy with technical assistance that ensures investment follow through.

2. In-depth evaluation

5. During the reporting period, the Office of Internal Oversight Services carried out an in-depth evaluation of UN-Habitat. The evaluation report will serve as an excellent tool to strengthen the management and performance of UN-Habitat, in the light of the heavy responsibility placed on the newly transformed programme to respond appropriately to the serious challenges posed by rapid urbanization. At its forty-fifth session, in June 2005, the Committee for Programme and Coordination expressed satisfaction with the recommendations made by the Office, noting the report's overall positive assessment of UN-Habitat and supporting the very important work conducted by the Programme, particularly in implementing the Millennium Development Goals.

6. The Committee for Programme and Coordination agreed with the main critical finding of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, that UN-Habitat needed to sharpen its focus and narrow its scope of activities. Additional recommendations of the Office included to accelerate the recruitment of a Deputy Executive Director in order to support the Executive Director in promoting the work of the Programme externally, administering the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation and enhancing coordination among subprogrammes. UN-Habitat has since made progress on recruiting a Deputy Executive Director and anticipates filling the position within the calendar year.

7. The in-depth evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services embraced the findings of a separate external evaluation on the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance. It called for greater linkage between the advocacy instruments and other programmes and advisory services of UN-Habitat and for increased core funding for the global campaigns. The Office further recommended an increase in the regular budget resources for UN-Habitat, promulgating the operating rules of the Foundation and for the Programme to become a full participating member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee.

3. Commission for Sustainable Development

8. UN-Habitat successfully contributed to the preparations for and deliberations of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session. At its twentieth session, in April 2005, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat deliberated on the issues that would be considered by the Commission pertaining to water, sanitation and human settlements — the three pillars of sustainable development. These deliberations resulted in the adoption by the Council of its resolution 20/20, entitled "Thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development". The Council also adopted a summary by the President of the Governing Council. The Executive Director presented the summary of the President to the Commission at its high-level segment.

9. The Commission embraced the core message of the Governing Council that the issues of water and sanitation should be integrated into a broad-based framework on human settlements. It acknowledged the significance of the urban dimension of poverty reduction, recognizing the need for a multisector, multiactor, integrated

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approach to human settlements development. In addition, the Commission advanced understanding on the strategic links between sustainable human settlements and sources of energy, the central theme of the Commission at its fourteenth and fifteenth sessions.

10. Resolution 13/1 adopted by the Commission at its thirteenth session, *inter alia* requests UN-Habitat as the focal agency for human settlements, to facilitate, in close collaboration with relevant United Nations organizations and programmes as well as other partners, effective global monitoring of progress in the implementation of human settlements goals and targets, as well as measures agreed at the thirteenth session of the Commission concerning human settlements.

B. United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation

11. UN-Habitat made significant progress in strengthening the Foundation, pursuant to the requests of the General Assembly to enable the Foundation both to support the activities of the Programme and to mobilize resources to complement efforts by Member States to provide affordable shelter, infrastructure and services. The Foundation serves two purposes: it is a repository of voluntary earmarked and non-earmarked contributions by Member States for the implementation of the work programme of UN-Habitat; and, since 2004, it is a special vehicle designed to assist Member States in mobilizing public and private capital for follow-up investment.

1. Voluntary contributions to UN-Habitat

12. UN-Habitat launched an aggressive campaign to solidify its financial base to carry out and improve the delivery of its approved work programme. The total voluntary contributions to the Foundation increased by almost 30 per cent, from \$26 million in 2003 to \$33 million in 2004. Two multi-year funding agreements were signed with major donors. In addition, donors have been encouraged to sign multi-year partnership agreements, in order to provide more predictable soft earmarked funding for major thematic priorities of the work programme and better to respond to demands by Member States.

13. Of the total voluntary contributions to the Foundation, non-earmarked contributions rose from \$8.3 million in 2003 to \$10.5 million in 2004, while earmarked contributions rose from \$17.2 million to \$22.2 million during the same period. While commendable progress has been made in resource mobilization, there is still a major imbalance between earmarked and non-earmarked contributions. Furthermore, approximately 75 per cent of the non-earmarked contributions came from five donors, indicating a need to broaden the donor base.

14. The twentieth session of the Governing Council took note of these challenges and called upon Governments and other Habitat Agenda partners to increase their contributions to the Foundation and to give priority to non-earmarked, multi-year funding to support the Executive Director in her efforts to broaden the donor base of the Programme. In addition, the Executive Director was requested to develop an overarching resource-mobilization strategy, taking into account options pursued by other United Nations bodies for broadening the donor base and, in particular, encouraging non-earmarked contributions.

2. Human Settlements Financing

15. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat officially launched its newest subprogramme, the Human Settlements Financing Division, providing the Foundation with an operational platform for mobilizing resources at the country level for shelter, infrastructure and basic services. Significant progress was made in establishing the Slum Upgrading Facility, a technical assistance and seed-capital vehicle for attracting domestic capital investments for slum upgrading, including raising \$1.8 million for the design phase and \$10 million for a three-year pilot phase, with an additional amount of \$10 million pledged. The scope of the Facility during the initial three-year pilot phase includes East Africa, West Africa, South Asia and South-East Asia and constitutes one of the most innovative strategies adopted by UN-Habitat. When fully functional, the Slum Upgrading Facility will provide follow-up assistance to ongoing pre-investment activities carried out under the Programme's technical cooperation activities (see paras. 17-22, below). It will accomplish this by enabling cities, slum-dwellers, financial intermediaries, Governments and the financial service sector to package their upgrading projects in ways that will attract private investment. It will also make available to local actors, bridging finance and credit enhancements that can catalyse domestic capital, thereby augmenting community savings and public investment. The work of the Facility is essential to field-test financial instruments and approaches, such as loan guarantees and special purpose vehicles in emerging market economies where domestic capital is plentiful but the means to harness it scarce. UN-Habitat will implement the Facility by combining in-house political and technical expertise on slum upgrading with the support of an international service contractor, recruited through competitive bidding, specializing in investment and project finance.

16. Significant progress was made in working in parallel with international financial institutions. These partners include the World Bank group and regional development banks (see paras. 27-33, below), as well as GuarantCo, a loan guarantee facility of the Private Infrastructure Development Group that has expressed interest in ring-fencing 20 per cent of its funds for pilot projects initiated by the Slum Upgrading Facility. Further, UN-Habitat has strengthened inter-institutional relations with the Development Credit Authority of the United States Agency for International Development and is exploring co-financing support to slum upgrading initiatives in Ghana and Uganda. Additional work with international financial institutions includes opportunities for support from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and a number of private foundations.

C. Technical assistance and cooperation at the country level

17. UN-Habitat continued to expand the technical assistance it provides to over 80 Governments in two broad areas of intervention: building the capacity of Member States to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and responding to demands for disaster mitigation and post-conflict reconstruction. Contributions to its technical cooperation activities increased considerably, from \$15.2 million in 2003 to \$52.5 million in 2004. The funding was predominantly for reconstruction and disaster mitigation activities at the country level from a variety of donors. The Special Human Settlements Programme for the Palestinian People in support of human settlements development in the occupied Palestinian territories has to date been capitalized with an amount of slightly over \$1.5 million since its

establishment. Efforts to mobilize additional financial resources towards the full capitalization of \$5 million are continuing. UN-Habitat has requested additional resources from the regular budget in its budget submission for the biennium 2006-2007, which includes two additional Professional level posts.

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1. Support to Member States for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals

18. The type of support provided by the Programme for local implementation of the Millennium Development Goals has included a combination of advocacy, country assessment, policy advice, capacity-building, project demonstration and field-testing of approaches and instruments. Technical assistance of this kind has been directed at organizations of slum-dwellers, support non-governmental organizations, local authorities, private service providers and utility companies, and departments of central Government, with emphasis on ministries of lands, housing, local government, construction and water. Substantive inputs to local actors range from land administration to demand-based water management, participatory planning, urban crime and safety and inclusive urban management. The advent of the new subprogramme has resulted in the expansion of local actors to include retail banks, cooperative savings associations, housing microfinance institutions, as well as ministries of finance and in the expansion of substantive inputs to include investment, housing and project finance.

2. Post-conflict humanitarian assistance and reconstruction

19. UN-Habitat recently became a member of the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs. It has contributed its experience in disaster mitigation and post-conflict assistance in Afghanistan, Iraq, Timor-Leste, Liberia, the West Bank and Gaza, countries affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami and the Sudan. In these countries and regions, the Programme has sought to promote shelter and urban issues. For example, in the humanitarian crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan, the Programme has, in its work with the United Nations country team, stressed the massive influx of migration to Khartoum resulting from the conflict. Preliminary analysis indicates that most of the internally displaced persons will remain in Khartoum after the crisis in Darfur subsides, with significant social, political and economic implications for the city. UN-Habitat has also introduced shelter policy elements into post-disaster and post-conflict situations at the early stages of humanitarian assistance rather than later during the reconstruction phase when policy interventions may be less effective. The United Nations organizations and Member States have found this contribution especially helpful in situations where land policies and zoning and building standards determine how and where affected populations recover from human or natural disasters. Specific technical assistance provided by UN-Habitat has included training and capacity-building for ministries and line agencies in charge of disaster prevention and management; identification of disaster prone areas and formulation of mitigation strategies; rapid response to post-disaster and post-conflict situations and sustained technical assistance to post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

3. Coordination and regional support

20. UN-Habitat has provided technical assistance to Member States to implement the Millennium Development Goals and to respond to human and natural disasters

by coordinating its efforts with other organizations of the United Nations system. Through a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Development Programme, it has placed national Habitat Programme Managers in 32 countries. These experienced professionals with in-depth knowledge of local conditions are contributing to bringing human settlements issues into the mainstream in national agendas and promoting an urban dimension to poverty reduction strategy papers, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the World Bank Country Assistance Strategies.

21. Human settlements officers working in regional offices of UN-Habitat have played a vital role in back-stopping operations at the country level and supporting the work of Habitat Programme Managers. The regional offices in Fukuoka, Japan (for Asia and the Pacific), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (for Latin America and the Caribbean) and Nairobi (for Africa and the Arab States) also work closely with the United Nations economic and social commissions for Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa, respectively.

22. During the reporting period, UN-Habitat contributed to a report by the Economic Commission for Africa that has identified rapid urbanization as a key challenge for Africa. The Programme has also worked closely with the New Partnership for Africa's Development to advance the urban agenda. Emphasis has been placed on national policies for urban development, shelter and slum upgrading.

D. Monitoring and research

23. UN-Habitat has adjusted its monitoring and research activities to support the efforts of Member States to monitor the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and to analyse policies and practices that will enable them to achieve the targets.

1. Monitoring activities

24. Urban indicators, initially developed to monitor the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, were revised in line with the goals of the Millennium Declaration and all data collected since 2004 is disaggregated by gender. Strategic partnerships at the global and national levels were established to strengthen the capacity of national bureaux of statistics to collect data on urban indicators and inform urban policy in 11 countries in Africa and Asia. Work on the documentation and dissemination of best practices in improving the living environment reached a new milestone, with over 2,000 peer-reviewed practices from 140 countries currently available online, while a new methodology was successfully field-tested and applied in 10 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America for the participatory assessment of pro-poor, gender-sensitive urban policies and legislation in support of the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. Other outputs include strategic guidelines for working with civil society organizations and youth; materials on advocacy for women's rights to land; a handbook on gender mainstreaming in human settlements; a guide to community-based housing finance credit schemes and a number of case studies on financing low-income housing. Seminal research was undertaken in analysing urban economic conditions, rural-urban linkages and effective strategies for improving urban self-employment and livelihood for the urban poor.

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2. Flagship reports

25. To bring full circle the lessons of its activities and networks in a contribution to the global base of knowledge, UN-Habitat continues to produce two flagship reports in alternating years. In 2004, the second *State of the World's Cities* report on multicultural cities was published, highlighting the cultural dimension of cities at a time of rapid urbanization. In 2005, the *Global Report on Human Settlements* has as its theme financing urban shelter. The report will assess current economic development trends, examine the performance of housing finance systems, including community-based intermediaries, and analyse policy responses and development prospects. The thematic agendas of the two reports have been restructured to focus on selected aspects of the Millennium Development Goals each year. The *State of the World's Cities* series is produced using in-house expertise and data generated through the networks of the Best Practices and Local Leadership Programme and the Global Urban Observatory. The *Global Report on Human Settlements* series takes advantage of multiple networks of researchers in bringing expert opinion from around the world to bear on priority themes.

3. Rural-urban linkages

26. Pursuant to Governing Council resolution 19/10, entitled "Urban-rural linkages and sustainable urbanization", the Programme has pursued normative and operational activities. In October 2004, UN-Habitat, together with the United Nations Environment Programme and the International Institute for Environment and Development, hosted an interregional conference on rural-urban linkages. Drawing upon lessons learned from over 10 countries in Asia, Europe and Africa, the participating experts and practitioners deliberated on ways to promote rural-urban linkages and incorporate these into regional and national development strategies. The conference report stresses the strategic importance of investing in physical infrastructure (telecommunications, electricity and roads) that link rural areas to urban centres. Such investment will greatly facilitate social, environmental and economic linkages. In addition to international symposiums, UN-Habitat has also provided technical assistance to Governments and local authorities to promote rural-urban linkages in regional development planning processes. The regional office in Fukuoka, Japan, supported the Poverty Alleviation through Rural-Urban Linkages initiative in Indonesia and the Rural-Urban Partnership Programme in Nepal.

E. Global networking and partnerships

27. As the Programme of the United Nations responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Habitat Agenda and for assisting Member States achieve the targets of the Millennium Declaration, UN-Habitat has created forums for global networking and established strategic partnerships.

1. World Urban Forum

28. The biennial World Urban Forum was established by the Governing Council of UN-Habitat in its resolution 18/5 as a multi-stakeholder forum to support dialogue and the exchange of experience in support of the implementation of the Habitat Agenda. The second World Urban Forum was held in Barcelona, Spain, in

September 2004, under the theme of cities as crossroads of culture. Through a set of structured dialogues among various Habitat Agenda partners, significant attention was paid to the Millennium Declaration, with special emphasis on progress made in achieving target 10 under goal 7 on water and sanitation and target 11 under goal 7 on improving the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by the year 2020. The Forum attracted 4,389 participants, including Government officials (17.7 per cent), local authorities (16.4 per cent), non-governmental organizations (21.2 per cent), United Nations entities (4.1 per cent), professional and research institutions (8 per cent) and the private sector (8 per cent). A range of initiatives and best practices were showcased by 60 exhibitions from all over the world. The Forum consisted of dialogues among partners on urban culture, urban realities, urban governance and urban renaissance, as well as thematic discussions on urban poverty, urban resources, urban sustainability, urban services, and urban disasters and reconstruction. The whole event was characterized by vibrant exchanges. Distinguished participants included former presidents Mikhail Gorbachev and Martti Ahtisaari, Jeffrey Sachs and the late Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafic Hariri, who was presented with a special citation of the Habitat Scroll of Honour for his visionary role in the reconstruction of post-conflict Lebanon. Evaluation of the World Urban Forum by participants was very positive. The third World Urban Forum will be held in Vancouver, Canada, in June 2006 on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, which gave birth to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

2. Multilateral development institutions

29. The World Bank group is one of the main partners of UN-Habitat in improving the living and working conditions of the urban poor. During the reporting period, the Executive Director of UN-Habitat and the President of the World Bank held consultations and agreed to establish a cooperation agreement to provide greater coherence to urban development interventions at the country level. Emphasis was placed on ways to promote housing finance and urban development more squarely in the national development agenda, including in the Country Assistance Strategy used by the World Bank to establish investment programming and poverty reduction strategy papers. In addition, the World Bank and UN-Habitat carried out a number of activities under their joint Cities Alliance programme, with 10 bilateral development agencies and associations of local authorities. The Cities Alliance provides small grants that support the formulation of city development strategies and citywide slum upgrading initiatives. In Egypt, Morocco, the Philippines, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen, working within the Cities Alliance, the World Bank and UN-Habitat are collaborating to strengthen local government authorities, help in the emergency reconstruction of urban infrastructure, initiate and sustain labour-intensive municipal public works, formulate city development strategies and set up urban indicators databases. The members of the Cities Alliance also played a crucial role in supporting the development of the UN-Habitat Slum Upgrading Facility, mobilizing financial contributions through a trust fund of the World Bank dedicated to that purpose.

30. UN-Habitat also signed agreements with the Asian Development Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the African Development Bank for joint projects and programmes for water, sanitation, housing and urban development, focusing on improving the living conditions of the urban poor. These agreements

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have led to substantial programme collaboration, for example on the Water for Asian Cities programme, which provides a pipeline of \$10 million in grants from the Asian Development Bank and UN-Habitat for the first two phases and \$500 million in Asian Development Bank loans for water and sanitation projects in cities across Asia. Negotiations with the African Development Bank for a similar facility are at an advanced stage. The partnerships have leveraged additional funding from the Government of the Netherlands.

South-south cooperation

31. A key tool in attaining the targets of the Millennium Declaration, particularly the slum, water and sanitation targets, is south-south cooperation. While two decades ago the effectiveness of south-south cooperation may have been limited, many developing countries have since acquired substantial technical and policy expertise. UN-Habitat is bringing the use of such expertise into the mainstream throughout its normative and operational activities.

32. UN-Habitat is a strong and committed advocate for peer learning and problem solving. At a high level, UN-Habitat actively supports and participates in regional ministerial meetings on housing, land and urban development in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The African Ministers Conference on Housing and Urban Development took place in 2005 in Durban, South Africa, as a joint undertaking by UN-Habitat, the African Union and the Government of South Africa. Ministers agreed to carry the Conference forward in a biennial series of ministerial meetings to be convened in Nairobi on the occasion of the biennial sessions of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat. For its part, the African Union at its annual meeting held in the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in June 2005, formally accepted the Conference and affirmed sustainable urbanization as a policy priority. The African Union further called upon UN-Habitat and the United Nations Environment Programme to support development and effectiveness of the Conference. A similar high-level meeting was held in Latin America during the reporting period and one is scheduled in Asia for 2006.

33. UN-Habitat has also supported peer learning at the city level, sponsoring exchanges, workshops, training and field trips among cities (for example, Addis Ababa; Arusha; Dar es Salaam; Durban, South Africa; Cuba; Manila; Medellin, Colombia; Mumbai; Nairobi; Johannesburg, South Africa; and United Republic of Tanzania). These activities involved city authorities and community leaders, including those from slums, to ensure cross-fertilization between urban poor communities regarding community mobilization strategies, negotiation practices for access to land, community-based savings and strategies for citywide slum upgrading. Topics of recent city-to-city cooperation sponsored by UN-Habitat include land law, land tenure, women's security of tenure, local government training, city environmental profiles, best practices, safety and justice and the use of information and communication technology.

F. Advocacy, tool development and capacity-building

1. Security of tenure

34. During the period under review, the Global Campaign for Secure Tenure was successfully launched in five countries in West Africa and Latin America and the

Caribbean. Preparatory activities were initiated in eight additional countries. Memorandums of understanding were signed with three countries in East Africa, while cooperation agreements were concluded with five other countries to promote slum upgrading. The Land Tool Network, a global network of land tool developers, was established as a practical follow-up action to campaign advocacy. Work was carried out on law and land review in three regions and lessons learned from peer-reviewed best practices were fed into the campaign. The International Advisory Group on Forced Evictions, an international task force to facilitate negotiated policy alternatives to unlawful eviction, was established resulting in the creation in several countries of a post of housing rights officer. Progress was made in implementing the Water for African Cities and Water for Asian Cities programmes. This included regional and national consultations in the Great Lakes region of Africa and the Mekong Delta and technical assistance to community-led initiatives for improving water and sanitation. Consultations on water for Eastern European cities were initiated, while training and capacity-building for water supply management was carried out in eight countries. The period also saw the inception of the Cities Without Slums Subregional Programme for Eastern and Southern Africa, facilitating cooperation between slum-dwellers and city governments in Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

2. Urban governance

35. The Global Campaign on Urban Governance was launched in Burkina Faso, Cuba, Mexico, Morocco and Senegal. Follow-up support on the application of inclusive urban governance was provided to African and South Asian countries. The international association United Cities and Local Governments held a unification congress in 2004 and draft guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities were prepared and widely disseminated. UN-Habitat has strengthened its relationships with local authorities and their associations through a cooperation agreement signed in September 2004 with United Cities and Local Governments and the establishment of an Advisory Group of Experts on Decentralization. The efforts by UN-Habitat to promote pro-poor, gender-sensitive policy tools to improve urban governance have led to high demand by local authorities for training and advisory services. Considerable inroads were made in environmental planning and management in Africa and South Asia. Work on the strategy for addressing shelter problems for women and orphans affected by HIV/AIDS in informal settlements is ongoing in East Africa.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

36. **The consequences of rapid urbanization, combined with poor urban governance, weak economic growth and HIV/AIDS, have reached crisis proportions in cities and urban areas of much of the developing world, especially in Africa. The sustainability of cities, highlighted by the slum target of the Millennium Development Goals, has become a key challenge for the international community.**

37. **Cognizant of this crisis, the General Assembly transformed UN-Habitat into a programme of the United Nations system and called for the strengthening of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation. An**

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aggressive campaign has been launched by the secretariat of UN-Habitat to fulfil its role and mandate as a full-fledged programme through internal organization enhanced by an in-depth evaluation by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, through external engagements of the World Urban Forum and through partnerships with the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and other international organizations.

38. Slum upgrading provides a unique opportunity for attaining the Millennium Development Goals. Security of tenure and improvements in shelter, water and sanitation have automatic knock-on effects in terms of health and nutrition, gender equality and the empowerment of women, and reduction of vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Both the crisis of rapid urbanization and the unique opportunity presented by slum upgrading for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals call for Governments to adopt, as a matter of urgency, pro-poor, gender-sensitive urban policies and action plans, as called for in the Habitat Agenda.

39. Governments in a position to do so are encouraged to strengthen the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation by providing non-earmarked, predictable funding and regular budget resources for its core programme activities.

40. Governments and financial institutions are encouraged to contribute generously to the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, the Slum Upgrading Facility and other technical cooperation trust funds to enable UN-Habitat to mobilize public investment and private capital for shelter and basic services.

41. Governments are encouraged to support the normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat, working with Habitat Programme Managers to promote slum upgrading, affordable shelter and sustainable urbanization.

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Economic and environmental questions: human settlements

Coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The overall purpose of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is to improve the living and working environment for all through more effective, participatory and transparent management and the development of human settlements. UN-Habitat is deeply committed to supporting countries in the implementation of Habitat Agenda, the Declaration of the Cities and Other Human Settlements and Millennium Development Goal 7, to ensure environmental sustainability, and its targets 10 and 11, which call for the reduction by half of the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and the achievement of significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020. While the Programme beneficiaries are the urban poor, its main audience remains the policymaker who carries the power and authority to improve the lives of the poor by providing the resources and removing the obstacles to their well-being.

The work of UN-Habitat is organized around the following four subprogrammes: subprogramme 1, "Shelter and sustainable human settlements development"; subprogramme 2, "Monitoring the Habitat Agenda"; subprogramme 3, "Regional and technical cooperation"; subprogramme 4, "Human settlements financing". The four subprogrammes have been interconnected through the

* E/2005/100.

** Submission of the report was delayed owing to consultations.

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UN-Habitat strategic vision document, approved by its Governing Council in 2003. Addressing the explosive formation of slums and the widespread lack of water and sanitation in slums, which are home to one sixth of the Earth's people, is now very close to the top of the world's list of development priorities. UN-Habitat is emerging as a leading player in both areas, aiming at on-the-ground improvements that can be translated into policies or, conversely, developing policy concepts that can be tested in the field.

In this regard, the four subprogrammes have become a four-pillar strategy in attaining the goal of cities without slums. This strategy consists of advocacy of global norms, analysis of information, field-testing solutions and financing. All UN-Habitat shelter, urban development, research and finance programmes, as well as its two global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance, have been re-tooled, in order to contribute to the UN-Habitat strategic vision.

The present report is organized, in the first instance, according to the four subprogrammes of the Human Settlements Programme. The report then touches upon work with partners, flagship reports, innovations and management issues, and ends with several recommendations.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to paragraph 3 of Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/300.

II. Progress in programme implementation

A. Shelter and sustainable human settlements development

2. The overall objective of subprogramme 1 is to improve the shelter conditions of the world's poor and to ensure sustainable human settlements development, the two Habitat Agenda goals.

3. During the period under review, a global campaign for secure tenure was successfully launched in three countries in West Africa; memoranda of understanding were signed with three countries in East Africa, while cooperation agreements were concluded with five other countries to promote slum-upgrading; work was carried out on law and land review in three regions and the best practices noted are being integrated into the campaign on secure tenure; an international task force to facilitate negotiated policy alternatives to unlawful eviction was established and, as a result, some Governments have established a housing rights officer post in the relevant ministries; progress was made in implementing the water for African cities and water for Asian cities programmes; regional and country consultations were carried out, while strategic support was provided to community-led initiatives for improving water and sanitation for the urban poor; consultations on water for Eastern European cities were also initiated. Training and capacity-building were carried out in various groups, including water utility managers, in eight countries.

4. A United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) unification congress was successfully launched in 2004, and guidelines on decentralization and strengthening of local authorities were prepared and are now available for use. Due to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) promotion of tools to improve urban governance, there is a high demand by local authorities for training tools, including those regarding participatory budgeting. In 2004, a global campaign on urban governance was launched in Burkina Faso, Morocco and Senegal. Support was also provided to local governments in the application of urban governance tools in Africa and South Asia. In 2004, considerable progress was made in environmental planning and management in Africa and South Asia. New field operations in disaster management and response were identified in 15 countries and several islands. Work on the strategy for addressing shelter problems regarding HIV/AIDS-infected women and orphans in informal settlements is ongoing in East Africa.

B. Monitoring the Habitat Agenda

5. The aim of subprogramme 2 is to monitor and assess progress towards the attainment of the Habitat Agenda goals and the Millennium Declaration targets on slums and water and sanitation. The monitoring systems of UN-Habitat were strengthened to enable effective tracking of the Millennium Development Goal on improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers. Urban Inequities Surveys

were implemented in selected cities, and modules were added on to the Demographic and Health Surveys, as well as multiple indicator cluster surveys of UNICEF. The proportion of slum dwellers in cities was estimated from existing surveys and censuses and published in the Secretary-General's report on the Millennium Development Goals, starting with 2002, and in *Human Development Reports*. The Millennium Project Task Force 8 benefited from the global and regional estimations, in order to formulate policy suggestions.

6. The slum estimations forecast that there will be 1.4 billion slum dwellers by 2020, if it is assumed that current proportions of slums to urban populations remain valid during the forthcoming five-year periods, until 2020. In response to this daunting figure, the international development community, including the Millennium Project, the Governing Council of UN-Habitat and the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session, debated the relevance of the targeted level of 100 million slum dwellers. The Millennium Project drew attention to the new slum formation and the need to provide positive alternatives to new slum formation. In its decision, the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its thirteenth session, called for support to countries, including through UN-Habitat, in their ability to provide data and information on existing slums with a projection on new slum formation by 2020, and thereafter for them to adopt and implement plans to achieve these targets linked to poverty reduction strategies, national sustainable development strategies or other relevant policy plans.

7. The Commission's call on Governments and the United Nations system will encourage further monitoring activities by UN-Habitat, to facilitate and provide methodological support to countries for estimating country-level slums, as well as for projecting levels until 2020. This facilitation and coordination role on the technical front should empower Governments to set up their own targets. The approach will be a major starting point in localizing the Millennium Development Goals, at the country and city levels.

8. UN-Habitat research priorities address the following issues: slums and urban poverty, secure tenure, market eviction and gentrification, rental housing within slums and the implications for slum upgrading, housing rights, and natural disasters or conflict, as well as gender equality in housing access.

9. In 2004, UN-Habitat made considerable progress in preparing the global urban indicators database version 3. The following specific activities were carried out. Urban indicators were revised in line with the Millennium Development Goals; strategic partnerships were developed for data collection and fund-raising; capacity-building of national statistical officers was undertaken for Africa and Asia; all data now collected is disaggregated by gender; and knowledge management to support policy formulation and urban management programmes were undertaken.

10. To bring experience and lessons from the field full circle to contribute to the global base of knowledge, UN-Habitat continues to produce two series of flagship reports in alternating years. In 2004, *The State of the World's Cities Report 2004/2005: Globalization and Urban Culture* was launched at the second session of the World Urban Forum and was very well received. This year will see the next edition of the *Global Report on Human Settlements*, which has as its theme city and shelter finance. The thematic agendas of the two report series have now been restructured to focus directly on some aspect of the Millennium Development Goals each year. *The State of the World's Cities* series is produced using in-house expertise

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and data generated through the Urban Observatory Network. The *Global Report on Human Settlements* series takes advantage of multiple networks of researchers in bringing nuanced and fine-grained details from around the world to bear on priority themes.

11. Other activities included: a successful international conference on exchanging lessons learned from best practices in good urban governance policies and enabling legislation; strategy formulation for working with civil society organizations and youth; preparation of materials on advocacy for women's rights to land and a handbook on gender mainstreaming in human settlements; work towards a community-based housing finance credit scheme, which is almost complete, and the completion of case studies on financing low-income housing. Progress was made towards monitoring and promoting understanding of urban economic conditions and rural-urban linkages, as well as monitoring and developing strategies and frameworks for improving urban self-employment and livelihood for the urban poor.

C. Regional and technical cooperation

12. The objective of subprogramme 3 is to strengthen organizational and technical capacity primarily at the national and local levels for the formulation and implementation of policies, strategies and programmes, in accordance with the principles and commitments of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Declaration targets.

13. In 2004, the Regional and Technical Cooperation Division of UN-Habitat assisted Governments with the design and implementation of capacity-building projects, in collaboration with funding partners; provided advisory services and implemented technical programmes and projects within the context of the global campaigns; assisted a number of countries with post-war reconstruction and recovery; worked on training programmes and capacity-building of ministries and agencies in charge of disaster prevention and management; assisted countries in identifying disaster prone areas and formulating mitigation strategies; worked as part of the United Nations strategy programme for Iraq reconstruction and fund-raising; strengthened collaboration with regional economic commissions; coordinated Cities Alliance projects; carried out country assessments in 10 countries and fund-raising for regional and national projects; through its regional offices, established and maintained effective relationships with Governments and other Habitat Agenda partners. Besides working diligently to ensure that human settlements issues found their way into national agendas, especially poverty reduction strategy papers and the United Nations development assessment framework, Habitat programme managers worked closely with Governments and other partners in their respective countries on monitoring and promoting implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the Habitat Agenda.

D. Human settlements financing

14. The main objective of subprogramme 4 in 2004 is to increase funds from international and domestic sources in support of shelter, related infrastructure development programmes and housing finance institutions and mechanisms, particularly in developing countries.

15. During the period under review, significant progress was made in establishing a slum upgrading facility. Subprogramme 4 will follow a two-track strategy. Nearly all the staff required for the division was recruited in 2004. In terms of mobilization of resources, US\$ 1.8 million for the design phase and US\$ 10 million for the slum upgrading facility three-year pilot phase was raised. Donors approached expressed interest in providing funds through their country programmes. Considerable progress was made in preparing a pipeline of programmes in three East African countries. Consultations on establishing the cooperation framework for country collaboration are at an advanced stage with the World Bank, the African Development Bank and the Asian Development Bank. There was some delay in starting the project pipeline and the pilot projects due to delays in securing donor funding. A number of countries in sub-Saharan Africa received advisory services related to strengthening capacity of domestic resources.

E. Working with partners

16. The second session of the World Urban Forum was held in Barcelona, Spain, in September 2004. Although the biennial World Urban Forum is not an official United Nations conference, it was mandated by the UN-Habitat Governing Council through its resolution 18/5, and is fundamental to the implementation of the Habitat Agenda at the international level. The theme of this global event was "Cities: crossroads of culture, inclusiveness and integration?". Through a set of structured dialogues among various Habitat Agenda partners, priority Habitat Agenda issues were discussed. Significant attention was paid to the Millennium Development Goals, with special emphasis on progress made in achieving Goal 7, particularly target 10, on water and sanitation, and target 11, on improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by the year 2020. The biennial global event was very well attended, attracting a total of 4,389 participants, among them, Government officials (17.7 per cent); local authorities (16.4 per cent); non-governmental organizations (21.2 per cent); other United Nations agencies (4.1 per cent); professional and research institutions (8 per cent); and the private sector (8 per cent). There were 60 exhibitors from all over the world, showcasing a range of initiatives and best practices. There were three plenary meetings, partners' dialogues on urban culture, urban realities, urban governance and urban renaissance, as well as thematic dialogues on urban poor, urban resources, urban sustainability, urban services and urban disasters and reconstruction. The whole event was characterized by vibrant discussions. Among the distinguished participants were the former President of the former Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, Martti Ahtisaari of Finland and Jeffrey Sachs, the Special Adviser of the United Nations Secretary-General on the Millennium Development Goals. The late Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafik Hariri, was presented with a scroll of honour for his outstanding and visionary role in the reconstruction of post-conflict Beirut. Evaluation of the World Urban Forum by participants was very positive.

17. The Urban Millennium Partnership on localizing the Millennium Development Goals, promoted by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UCLG was launched at the World Urban Forum and received support from many partners. Preparatory activities under this new initiative have already begun.

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18. The third session of the World Urban Forum will be held in Vancouver from 19 to 23 June 2006. It will be organized by UN-Habitat, in cooperation with the Government of Canada and the City of Vancouver. Governments and all Habitat Agenda partners are encouraged to participate in the third session of the World Urban Forum for a vibrant exchange of information and best practices on urban sustainability. It is hoped that the Forum will assert that thoughtful, evidence-based and rigorously evaluated programmes and policies are the measures of success and that key to these discussions should be an effort to turn ideas into action.

19. Through Cities Alliance, one of UN-Habitat's main partners in slum upgrading work is the World Bank. Cities Alliance is a global partnership created to test new tools and practical approaches to promote local economic development in a direct attack on urban poverty. Working within Cities Alliance in East Asia and in Afghanistan, Egypt, Latvia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Yemen, both the World Bank and UN-Habitat are collaborating to strengthen local government authorities, help in the emergency reconstruction of urban infrastructure, initiate and sustain labour-intensive municipal public works, formulate city development strategies and set up urban indicators databases, among other objectives.

20. UN-Habitat has a good working relationship with the Bank, but that relationship should be broader, extending beyond Cities Alliance. Despite progress made in promoting the urban agenda, a lot still remained to be done to "lift the game" and ensure that decision makers give adequate attention to urban management and development issues.

21. UN-Habitat has also signed memorandums of understanding with the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, and is working towards a memorandum of understanding with the African Development Bank on joint projects and programmes for water, sanitation, housing and urban development issues, with emphasis on improving the living conditions of the poor. These memorandums of understanding have led to substantial programme collaboration, for example, on the water for Asian cities programme, which provides a pipeline of US \$10 million in grants from the Asian Development Bank and UN-Habitat for the first two phases and US \$500 million in loans from the Asian Development Bank for water and sanitation projects in cities across Asia. This memorandum of understanding has leveraged additional funding for water for Asian cities from the Government of the Netherlands.

22. A key tool in attaining the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the slum, water and sanitation targets, is south-south cooperation or, as it used to be called, technical cooperation among developing countries. Just 20 years ago, the effectiveness of south-south cooperation may have been limited. Today, however, many countries grow their own technical and policy expertise and are ready to share that expertise with others in their regions.

23. UN-Habitat is a strong and committed advocate for peer learning and problem solving. We are sponsoring a continuing series of regional ministerial meetings on housing, land and urban development in Latin America, Africa and Asia. The African Ministers Conference on Housing and Urban Development took place early this year in Durban, South Africa, and was a joint undertaking by UN-Habitat, the African Union and the Government of South Africa. There is a commitment to carry the Conference forward in a biennial series of ministerial meetings. A similar high-

level meeting has been held in Latin America and an Asian counterpart has been called for 2006.

24. UN-Habitat has also supported recent peer learning at the city level, sponsoring exchanges, workshops, training and field trips among cities (e.g., Mumbai, Manila, Addis Ababa, Arusha, Durban, Havana, Medellin, Dar es Salaam, Nairobi and Johannesburg). These activities involve city authorities and community leaders, including from slums, to ensure cross-fertilization between urban poor communities regarding community mobilization strategies, negotiation practices for access to land, community-based savings and frameworks and tools for city-wide slum upgrading. Topics for recent exploration have included land law, land tenure, women's security of tenure, local government training needs, city environmental profiles, best practices and safer cities, as well as information management.

F. Innovations

25. In the 2004 programme plan and management review, UN-Habitat reported on an innovative initiative aimed at promoting the Millennium Development Goal on slums. In this initiative, UN-Habitat was an intermediary in a debt-for-land swap scheme between the Government of Finland and the Government of Kenya, the first of its kind. The UN-Habitat/Government of Kenya slum upgrading programme is located at the Athi River and at Kibera, the largest urban slum in Africa. The slum upgrading programme continues to constitute a path-breaking process, in which each stage contributes significantly towards achieving the Millennium Declaration target on slums. During the period under review, UN-Habitat has undertaken the physical and social planning of the two sites, while site preparation is in progress. House designs are ready and the Settlement Executive Committee, which will coordinate community participation in the project, is in place and operational. The Government partnerships, the slum dweller organizations and UN-Habitat in Nairobi are becoming stronger, but more work needs to be done in this respect.

26. In 2005, work will be undertaken to train slum dwellers in the areas of innovative building skills and materials development, cooperative formation and management, and in the capacity-building of local authorities.

27. The slum upgrading facility, conceived to facilitate the mobilization of public and private sector resources to support the implementation of the Millennium Declaration target on slums at country and city levels in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, is one of the most innovative strategies of UN-Habitat. When fully functional, it will provide financing for the mobilization of seed capital and technical assistance to develop and support mechanisms for mobilizing domestic resources and capital in order to improve the availability of affordable housing, adequate shelter and infrastructure. The facility links four key groups, comprising local authorities, community-based organizations, local finance institutions and international donor programmes. It will also play a catalytic and preparatory role in leveraging domestic investment for slum upgrading and other pro-poor human settlements development.

28. UN-Habitat initiated the strategy of Habitat programme managers, in collaboration with UNDP. The main responsibility of Habitat programme managers is to enhance normative work, especially with respect to implementation of the Habitat Agenda and the Millennium Development Goals 7, targets 10 and 11, at the

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country level. Habitat programme managers work to promote mainstreaming of human settlements issues in the poverty reduction strategy papers and United Nations development assistance frameworks. They oversee implementation of UN-Habitat programmes and projects at the country level. Their presence has reduced the number of missions undertaken. Even at this early stage, it has become clear that Habitat programme managers will have a significant impact on promoting the work of UN-Habitat at the country level. Lack of donor financial support for the Habitat programme managers is one of the challenges facing UN-Habitat. An increase in non-earmarked contributions and in the regular budget allocation would represent a meaningful and long-term solution to the problem.

29. The UN-Habitat Water and Sanitation Trust Fund was launched in 2004, to promote Millennium Development Goal 7, target 10, on water and sanitation. The Trust Fund, which is based on a well-coordinated programmatic approach, allows donors to improve their aid-effectiveness by contributing to a consolidated fund, dedicated to a well-defined goal with clearly set objectives. The Fund offers its contributors an opportunity to effectively target a high-priority sector by taking advantage of the mandate and well-demonstrated core competencies of UN-Habitat. The programme is developing a dedicated gender-mainstreaming component, with the collaboration of the African Development Bank and the Gender and Water Alliance. Selection of participating countries is based on the interest expressed by the countries, and the willingness to commit Government support, as set out in the Trust Fund document, among other indicative criteria. In 2005, the Trust Fund will undertake the following activities: full operationalization of the regional water programmes in Africa and Asia; implementation of the Lake Victoria initiative in six pilot towns; development of the Mekong regional initiative; further development of normative activities with emphasis on their application in the regional water programmes; and commencement of baseline data collection for monitoring progress in meeting Millennium Declaration Goal 7, target 10. A mid-term review of the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund is envisaged for early 2006.

Enabling civil society within the city

30. In addressing directly the problems of the world's slums, an enabling strategy is integral to the approach of UN-Habitat and is a substantial part of the value added by UN-Habitat in the slum upgrading process. Although time frames and strategies must be adjusted whenever communities engage in self-diagnosis and bootstrap development, enfranchisement is deeply gratifying to slum residents, who take greater ownership in their communities as a result. Governments and local authorities that commit to the empowerment of the poor are in effect leveraging public resources. They are, in addition, helping poor communities directly, especially in acquiring land, securing tenure and providing infrastructure and basic services. In the field, UN-Habitat disaster recovery activities related to the South Asian tsunami are bringing a long-term community-oriented perspective to rapid recovery efforts of sister agencies and non-governmental organizations in Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand. It is the same enabling orientation that has proved so valuable in repairing shattered communities in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, Somalia the Sudan and other countries of recent conflict. In fact, UN-Habitat community-based work in Somalia has led to the inclusion of UN-Habitat in the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs.

G. Financial management

31. The management and monitoring of the UN-Habitat regular budget resources showed a utilization rate of 89 per cent of the approved allotment in 2004. There was a slight increase over the 2002-2003 biennium allotment as a result of the approval of the two additional posts for the 2004-2005 biennium. Regular budget resources constituted 30 per cent of the core allotted resources, excluding project funds, and they remain a key resource in the effective implementation of the activities outlined in the programme budget.

32. The total voluntary contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation increased by 28 per cent, from US\$ 25.5 million in 2003 to US\$ 32.7 million in 2004. An increase in both the general-purpose and special-purpose contributions was recorded during 2004, with the general-purpose contributions amounting to US\$ 10.5 million and the special-purpose contributions to US\$ 22.2 million. While both general-purpose and special-purpose contributions recorded an all-time high, there remains an imbalance between the two types of contributions. The donor base for these contributions has remained relatively narrow.

33. Expenditure against allotments for the extrabudgetary resources, excluding project funding, was at 93 per cent of the approved allotment and was within the expected target rate at this time of the year.

34. The income received for technical cooperation activities grew by more than 200 per cent, from US\$ 15.2 million in 2003 to US\$ 52.5 million in 2004. In 2005, the utilization of the core resources, regular budget and extrabudgetary resources, excluding project funds, is expected to remain within the authorized allotments.

H. Human resources management

35. In 2003, the total vacancy rate, excluding projects posts, was 2.7 per cent for Professional and General Service staff and 3.4 per cent for Professional staff only. By December 2004, the vacancy rate, excluding projects posts, was 8.9 per cent for Professional and General Service staff and 11.9 per cent for Professional staff only. In 2004, the gender balance for all Professional posts was 35.7 per cent female and 64.3 per cent male, an improvement compared to 2003, when the percentage was 35.2.

36. Attempts are currently under way to fill the vacant posts as quickly as possible and to bring the vacancy rates within the established rate of 5 per cent and maintain them within that range. In order to improve the gender balance, UN-Habitat will increase its efforts to recruit women into the Professional categories in 2005. A special effort will be made with regard to recruitment at senior Professional levels. That remains a challenge, as many of the posts require technical expertise that may not be readily available among women. With regard to recruitment from unrepresented and underrepresented Member States, UN-Habitat remains committed to employing Professionals from such countries and hopes to improve in that regard in 2005.

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I. Information management

37. In 2004, UN-Habitat launched an Intranet to facilitate easy access to information for staff in their day-to-day work. The Intranet provides a central repository containing documents on substantive programmes, an events calendar to improve coordination of meetings and provide easy access to background documentation for meetings, a global staff directory, which includes the names of UN-Habitat staff not based at Headquarters, a virtual library to provide quick access to online subscriptions to research and reference material, and an image gallery with UN-Habitat photographs, which can be easily downloaded for use in publications.

38. In 2004, UN-Habitat developed an integrated database of key partners that will be launched in 2005. This database will be accessible on the UN-Habitat Intranet and parts of it will also be available on the public site. It will improve the organization's capacity to better target its communications, publications and invitations to events. It will also eliminate duplication of effort and provide easy-to-use tools for updating the database and generating targeted mailing lists.

39. A publications management system to support the planning, monitoring and reporting on the organization's publications programme was developed in 2004. The system, which is available via the organization's Intranet, gives all UN-Habitat staff in Nairobi and the field access to the organization's publications programme. It enables authoring sections to add new publications and monitor the progress of the publication process, and allows for updating of the editorial, design and print sections on the status of the production. The system also provides management reporting for the Publications Board and monitoring of expenditure on publications, as well as ensures that the programme is in line with the approved programme of work.

40. UN-Habitat collaborated with the United Nations Environment Programme on a project to re-establish the library in Nairobi. The new library, which also has a website, was opened in June 2004. It has an up-to-date and consolidated collection of materials on human settlements issues and provides online services to library visitors. About 17,600 visitors were received by the library in 2004.

41. During the second session of the World Urban Forum, held in September 2004, all meeting documents, including pre-session, in-session and approved documents, the daily journal and the daily programme, were posted on the UN-Habitat website. The website was also used to publish documents for other major events such as World Habitat Day and other major meetings announced on its calendar of events.

III. Recommendations

42. Governments are encouraged to include human settlements in their national development plans and to promote city and metropolitan planning in their national poverty reduction strategy documents and in their United Nations development assistance frameworks.

43. Governments are encouraged to assess conditions and trends in their urban slums and to create a pro-poor policy environment that places the highest priority on improving the living environments of slum dwellers, as per

targets 10 and 11 of Millennium Development Goal 7, and are invited to collaborate with UN-Habitat in monitoring the implementation of these targets.

44. Governments are encouraged to participate, and to support the participation of Habitat partner groups from developing countries, in the third session of the World Urban Forum, to be held in Vancouver, Canada, in June 2006.

45. Governments in a position to do so are encouraged to increase the non-earmarked component of their contribution in order to facilitate the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium and the relevant commitments of the Millennium Declaration, particularly the commitment to achieve a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020.

III



Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 86

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/484)]

59/239. Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3327 (XXIX) of 16 December 1974, 32/162 of 19 December 1977, 34/115 of 14 December 1979, 56/205 and 56/206 of 21 December 2001, 57/275 of 20 December 2002 and 58/226 and 58/227 of 23 December 2003,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolutions 2002/38 of 26 July 2002 and 2003/62 of 25 July 2003 and Council decision 2004/300 of 23 July 2004,

Recalling the Habitat Agenda¹ and the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium,²

Taking into account the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development³ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”),⁴ as well as the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,⁵

Recalling the goal contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration⁶ of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020, as proposed in the Cities Without Slums Initiative, and recalling further the goal contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to halve, by

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3–14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

² Resolution S-25/2, annex.

³ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

⁴ *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

⁵ *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18–22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

⁶ See resolution 55/2.

2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or afford safe drinking water and the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation,

Recognizing that the overall thrust of the strategic vision of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and its emphasis on the two global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance are strategic points of entry for the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda, especially for guiding international cooperation in respect of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development,

Conscious of the need to achieve greater coherence and effectiveness in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium and the relevant internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,

Recognizing the continued urgent need for increased and predictable financial contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation to ensure timely, effective and concrete global implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium and the relevant internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation,

Reiterating the call to the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to increase the efforts to strengthen the Foundation in order to achieve its primary operative objective of supporting the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, including supporting shelter, related infrastructure-development programmes and housing-finance institutions and mechanisms, particularly in developing countries,

Recognizing that humanitarian assistance in the field of human settlements must be provided in ways that will be supportive of reconstruction and long-term development,

Noting the convening of the second session of the World Urban Forum, organized by UN-Habitat in cooperation with the Government of Spain, the Autonomous Government of Catalonia and the Municipality of Barcelona, in Barcelona, from 13 to 17 September 2004,

Expressing its appreciation to the Government of Canada and the city of Vancouver for their willingness to host the third session of the World Urban Forum in 2006,

Emphasizing the importance of access to basic services for the urban poor, and in this regard noting the decision of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat at its nineteenth session on water and sanitation in cities,⁷

Noting the commitment to integrate urban planning and management in relation to housing, transport, employment opportunities, environmental conditions and community facilities, and further noting the commitment to promote, where appropriate, the upgrading of informal settlements and urban slums as an expedient measure and pragmatic solution to the urban shelter deficit,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;⁸

⁷ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/58/8), annex I, resolution 19/6.*

⁸ A/59/198.

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2. *Recognizes* that Governments have the primary responsibility for the sound and effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda¹ and the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium,² and stresses that the international community should fully implement its commitments to support the Governments of developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition in their efforts, through the provision of the requisite resources, capacity-building, the transfer of technology and the creation of an international enabling environment;

3. *Calls for* continued financial support to UN-Habitat through increased voluntary contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, and invites Governments to provide multi-year funding to support programme implementation;

4. *Also calls for* increased, non-earmarked contributions to the Foundation;

5. *Requests* the Executive Director to continue to work with the World Bank Group, regional development banks, other development banks, the private sector and other relevant partners to field-test approaches through pilot projects and to develop longer-term programmes to mobilize resources to increase the supply of affordable credit for slum upgrading and other pro-poor human settlements development in developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition;

6. *Calls upon* the international donor community and financial institutions to contribute generously to the Technical Cooperation Trust Fund and other operational activities of UN-Habitat for the effective implementation of its field programmes;

7. *Recognizes* the important role of regional offices and personnel of UN-Habitat in providing operational support to developing countries, and in this regard calls upon Governments to strengthen and support financially the regional offices of UN-Habitat in order to expand operational support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

8. *Calls upon* UN-Habitat to continue to work closely with the other organizations of the United Nations system, integrating UN-Habitat staff as appropriate into existing United Nations country offices;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of UN-Habitat and the United Nations Office at Nairobi under review so as to permit the delivery, in an effective manner, of necessary services to UN-Habitat and the other United Nations organs and organizations in Nairobi;

10. *Encourages* Governments to establish local, national and regional urban observatories and to provide financial and substantive support to UN-Habitat for the further development of methodologies for data collection, analysis and dissemination;

11. *Encourages* Member States as well as Habitat Agenda partners to provide support for the preparation of the UN-Habitat flagship reports, the *Global Report on Human Settlements* and the *State of the World's Cities* report, on a biennial basis so as to raise awareness of human settlements and to provide information on urban conditions and trends around the world;

12. *Encourages* Governments to support the UN-Habitat Global Campaign for Secure Tenure and the Global Campaign on Urban Governance as important tools for, inter alia, promoting administration of land and property rights, in

accordance with national circumstances, and enhancing access to affordable credit by the urban poor;

13. *Invites* Governments to continue to promote linkages between urban and rural areas in line with the Habitat Agenda, which recognized that cities and rural areas are interdependent economically, socially and environmentally;

14. *Encourages* Governments and UN-Habitat to continue to promote partnerships with local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other Habitat Agenda partners, including women's groups and academic and professional groups, in order to empower them, within the legal framework and conditions of each country, to play a more effective role in the provision of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world;

15. *Also encourages* Governments to support and enable the participation of youth in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda through social, cultural and economic activities at the city level and other national- and local-level activities;

16. *Further encourages* Governments to include issues pertaining to shelter, sustainable human settlements and urban poverty in their national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist;

17. *Urges* the donor community to support the efforts of developing countries to make pro-poor investments in services and infrastructure in order to improve living environments, in particular in slums and informal settlements;

18. *Requests* UN-Habitat, within its mandate, to continue to support the efforts of countries affected by natural disasters and complex emergencies to develop prevention, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes for the transition from relief to development, and encourages UN-Habitat to continue to work closely with the members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and other relevant agencies in the United Nations system in this field;

19. *Invites* the Secretary-General to incorporate the assessment of progress made towards the target of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020 in his report on the review in 2005 of the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration;⁶

20. *Calls upon* UN-Habitat and the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat to work together closely in the preparations for the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in order to ensure a fruitful policy discussion of the thematic cluster of issues on water, sanitation and human settlements;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

22. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session an item entitled "Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)".

75th plenary meeting
22 December 2004



Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 101

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/491)]

58/226. Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 3327 (XXIX) of 16 December 1974, 32/162 of 19 December 1977, 34/115 of 14 December 1979, 56/205 and 56/206 of 21 December 2001 and 57/275 of 20 December 2002,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolutions 2002/38 of 26 July 2002 and 2003/62 of 25 July 2003,

Recalling the Habitat Agenda¹ and the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium,²

Recalling also the goal contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration³ of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020, as proposed in the Cities Without Slums Initiative, and recalling further the goal contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation")⁴ to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or afford safe drinking water and the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation,

Taking into account the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development⁵ and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, as well as the

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), Istanbul, 3-14 June 1996* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.97.IV.6), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

² Resolution S-25/2, annex.

³ See resolution 55/2.

⁴ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

⁵ *Ibid.*, resolution 1, annex.

Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,⁶

Recognizing that the overall thrust of the new strategic vision of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and its emphasis on the two global campaigns on secure tenure and urban governance are strategic points of entry for the effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda, especially for guiding international cooperation in respect of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development,

Conscious of the need to achieve greater coherence and effectiveness in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium and the relevant internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,

Recognizing the need for increased and predictable financial contributions to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation in the new millennium to ensure timely, effective and concrete results in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium and the relevant internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Declaration and Plan of Implementation, particularly in developing countries,

Welcoming the establishment by the Executive Director of UN-Habitat of a Water and Sanitation Trust Fund as a financing mechanism to support the creation of enabling environments for pro-poor investment in water and sanitation in developing-country cities,

Commending those countries that have contributed to the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council,⁷

Reiterating the call to the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to increase her efforts to strengthen the Foundation in order to achieve its primary operative objective, as set out in resolution 3327 (XXIX), of supporting the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, including supporting shelter, related infrastructure-development programmes and housing-finance institutions and mechanisms, particularly in developing countries,

Recalling the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session to address the themes of water, sanitation and human settlements in its next review and policy sessions,⁸

Noting the efforts by UN-Habitat to forge partnerships with Habitat Agenda partners, other United Nations funds and programmes and international financial institutions, such as the World Bank,

Recognizing that shelter and human settlements planning and administration are important sectors in humanitarian efforts,

⁶ *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

⁷ E/2003/76.

⁸ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 9 (E/2003/29)*, chap. I, sect. A.

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Expressing its appreciation to the Government of Spain and the city of Barcelona for their willingness to host the second session of the World Urban Forum in 2004 and to the Government of Canada and the city of Vancouver for their willingness to host the third session of the World Urban Forum in 2006,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) on the work of its nineteenth session⁹ and the report of the Secretary-General on the special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of UN-Habitat;¹⁰

2. *Recognizes* that Governments have the primary responsibility for the sound and effective implementation of the Habitat Agenda¹ and the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium,² and stresses that the international community should fully implement its commitments to support the Governments of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in their efforts, through the provision of the requisite resources, capacity-building, the transfer of technology and the creation of an international enabling environment;

3. *Encourages* Governments to include issues pertaining to shelter and sustainable human settlements and urban poverty in their national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist;

4. *Urges* Governments to promote pro-poor investments in services and infrastructure, in particular water and sanitation, in order to improve living environments, in particular in slums and informal settlements;

5. *Encourages* Governments to establish local, national and regional urban observatories and to provide financial and substantive support to UN-Habitat for the further development of methodologies for data collection, analysis and dissemination;

6. *Also encourages* Governments to support and enable the participation of youth in the implementation of the Habitat Agenda through social, cultural and economic activities at the city level and other national- and local-level activities;

7. *Encourages* Governments and UN-Habitat to continue to promote partnerships with local authorities, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and other Habitat Agenda partners, including women's groups and academic and professional groups, in order to empower them, within the legal framework and conditions of each country, to play a more effective role in the provision of adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world;

8. *Encourages* UN-Habitat to continue to work closely with other relevant agencies within the United Nations system, in particular members and observers of the United Nations Development Group and the members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee;¹¹

9. *Requests* UN-Habitat to strengthen further its efforts to make the Cities Alliance initiative an effective means for the implementation of the twin goals of the

⁹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 8 (A/58/8).

¹⁰ A/58/178.

¹¹ Established pursuant to resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991.

Habitat Agenda, namely, adequate shelter for all and sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world;

10. *Takes note with appreciation* of the efforts by the Cities Alliance partnership between the World Bank and UN-Habitat, and other donor countries, to continue to provide an important forum for policy coordination and development, as well as to provide support for the preparation of pro-poor city development strategies and slum-upgrading programmes within the legal framework and conditions of each country;

11. *Invites* the Secretary-General to incorporate the assessment of the progress towards the target of achieving a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020 in his report on the review in 2005 of the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration;³

12. *Welcomes* the fund-raising efforts of the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, which realized an increase in the general-purpose contributions of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the year 2003;

13. *Calls* for continued financial support to UN-Habitat through increased voluntary contributions to the Foundation, and invites Governments to provide multi-year funding to support programme implementation;

14. *Requests* UN-Habitat to collaborate with the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat in the preparations for the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development to promote a fruitful discussion on the thematic cluster of issues on water, sanitation and human settlements;

15. *Requests* the Executive Director of UN-Habitat to inform the Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme of the results of the discussions on the topics of water, sanitation and human settlements at the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

16. *Notes* that the upcoming sessions of the World Urban Forum, a non-legislative technical forum, which will be held in Barcelona in 2004 and in Vancouver in 2006, will offer an opportunity to experts to exchange experiences, best practices and lessons learned in the field of human settlements;

17. *Invites* donor countries to support the participation of representatives of the developing countries in the second and future sessions of the World Urban Forum;

18. *Requests* the Secretary-General to keep the resource needs of UN-Habitat and the United Nations Office at Nairobi under review so as to permit the delivery, in an effective manner, of necessary services to UN-Habitat and the other United Nations organs and organizations in Nairobi;

19. *Requests* UN-Habitat, as the focal point for human settlements development and for coordination of human settlements activities within the United Nations system, to work towards coordination of human settlements issues as inputs to the overall coordination of humanitarian efforts, including through its participation in the consideration by the Economic and Social Council, in the near future, of the issue of the transition from relief to development;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution;

21. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session an item entitled “Special session of the General Assembly for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and the strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)”.

*78th plenary meeting
23 December 2003*

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General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 March 2006Sixtieth session
Agenda item 73 (a)**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly***[without reference to a Main Committee (A/60/L.39 and Add.1)]***60/125. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development***The General Assembly,*

Reaffirming its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, the annex to which contains the guiding principles for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, as well as all its resolutions on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development, and recalling the resolutions of the humanitarian segments of the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the importance of the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Reiterating that independence means the autonomy of humanitarian objectives as distinct from the political, economic, military or other objectives that may be pursued by any actor with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented,

Welcoming the Hyogo Declaration,¹ the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters² and the common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster: risk reduction for a safer future,³ as adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005,

Emphasizing that the affected State has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory and in the facilitation of the work of humanitarian organizations in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters,

Emphasizing also the responsibility of all States to undertake disaster preparedness, response and mitigation efforts in order to minimize the impact of

¹ A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 1.

² Ibid., resolution 2.

³ A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, annex II.

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natural disasters, while recognizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of affected countries which may have limited capacities to fulfil this requirement,

Noting the critical role played by local resources, and by existing in-country capacities, in natural disaster management and risk reduction, disaster response, rehabilitation and development,

Recognizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters in all their phases, and of strengthening the response capacity of countries affected by disaster,

Noting with appreciation the important role played by Member States, including developing countries, that have granted necessary and continued generous assistance to countries and peoples stricken by natural disasters,

Recognizing the significant role played by national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, as part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in disaster preparedness and risk reduction, disaster response, rehabilitation and development,

Emphasizing the importance of addressing vulnerability and integrating risk reduction into all phases of natural disaster management, post-natural disaster recovery and development planning,

Welcoming the work carried out by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the setting up of regional tsunami early warning systems, in the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the north-east Atlantic, and noting the proposed convening of a Third International Conference on Early Warning, to be held from 27 to 29 March 2006 in Bonn, Germany,

Recognizing that efforts to achieve economic growth, sustainable development and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, can be adversely affected by natural disasters, and noting the positive contribution that those efforts can make in strengthening the resilience of populations to such disasters,

Emphasizing, in this context, the important role of development organizations in supporting national efforts to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General entitled “International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development”;⁴ “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”;⁵ “Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster”;⁶ “The transition from relief to development”;⁷ and “Improvement of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund”;⁸

⁴ A/60/227.

⁵ A/60/87-E/2005/78.

⁶ A/60/86-E/2005/77.

⁷ A/60/89-E/2005/79.

⁸ A/60/432.

2. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact, resulting in massive losses of life and property worldwide, in particular in vulnerable societies lacking adequate capacity to mitigate effectively the long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences of natural disasters;

3. *Calls upon* States to fully implement the Hyogo Declaration¹ and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,² in particular those commitments related to assistance for developing countries that are prone to natural disasters and for disaster-stricken States in the transition phase towards sustainable physical, social and economic recovery, for risk-reduction activities in post-disaster recovery and for rehabilitation processes;

4. *Calls upon* all States to adopt, where required, and to continue to implement effectively, necessary legislative and other appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and integrate disaster risk reduction strategies into development planning, and in this regard requests the international community to continue to assist developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition;

5. *Welcomes* the effective cooperation among the affected States, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, donor countries, regional and international financial institutions and other relevant organizations, such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and civil society, in the coordination and delivery of emergency relief, and stresses the need to continue such cooperation and delivery throughout relief operations and medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, in a manner that reduces vulnerability to future natural hazards;

6. *Reiterates* the commitment to support the efforts of countries, in particular developing countries, to strengthen their capacities at all levels in order to prepare for and respond rapidly to natural disasters and mitigate their impact;

7. *Stresses* that, to increase further the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, particular international cooperation efforts should be undertaken to enhance and broaden further the utilization of national and local capacities and, where appropriate, of regional and subregional capacities of developing countries for disaster preparedness and response, which may be made available in closer proximity to the site of a disaster, and more efficiently and at lower cost;

8. *Also stresses*, in this context, the importance of strengthening international cooperation, particularly through the effective use of multilateral mechanisms, in the timely provision of humanitarian assistance through all phases of a disaster, from relief and mitigation to development, including the provision of adequate resources;

9. *Welcomes* the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat as the focal point within the overall United Nations system for the promotion and coordination of disaster response among United Nations humanitarian organizations and other humanitarian partners;

10. *Also welcomes*, so as to increase further the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, the incorporation of experts from developing countries that are prone to natural disasters into the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination system, and also the work of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group in assisting such countries in strengthening urban search and rescue capacities and

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establishing mechanisms for improving their coordination of national and international response in the field, and recalls in this regard its resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 entitled “Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance”;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with States and relevant organizations, to continue to explore ways to strengthen the rapid response capacities of the international community to provide immediate humanitarian relief, building on existing arrangements and ongoing initiatives;

12. *Notes* the need to continue to improve the management and use of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities, including the Directory of Advanced Technologies for Disaster Response, which has the potential to support planning preparedness and response activities, and requests the Secretary-General to include information about the work of the Central Register in his report on the implementation of the present resolution;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General to develop more systematic links with Member States offering military assets for natural disaster response in order to identify the availability of such assets;

14. *Encourages* donors to consider the importance of ensuring that assistance in the case of higher-profile natural disasters does not come at the expense of those natural disasters that may be relatively lower-profile, bearing in mind that the allocation of resources should be driven by needs;

15. *Encourages* States that have not acceded to or ratified the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, which entered into force on 8 January 2005,⁹ to consider doing so;

16. *Encourages* the further use of space-based and ground-based remote-sensing technologies, as well as the sharing of geographical data, for the prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, where appropriate;

17. *Encourages* Member States, relevant United Nations organizations and international financial institutions to enhance the global capacity for sustainable post-disaster recovery in areas such as coordination with traditional and non-traditional partners, identification and dissemination of lessons learned, development of common tools and mechanisms for recovery needs assessment, strategy development and programming, and incorporation of risk reduction into all recovery processes, and welcomes the ongoing efforts to this end;

18. *Requests* the United Nations system to improve its coordination of disaster recovery efforts, from relief to development, inter alia, by strengthening institutional, coordination and strategic planning efforts in disaster recovery, in support of national authorities;

19. *Stresses* the importance of rapid access to funds to ensure a more predictable and timely United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies;

⁹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2296, No. 40906.

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to improve the international response to natural disasters, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session.

*63rd plenary meeting
15 December 2005*





General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 March 2006

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 73 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/60/L.38 and Add.1)]

60/124. Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto, and recalling other relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Council,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations,¹

Also taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the improvement of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund,²

Reaffirming the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Reiterating that independence means the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented,

Expressing deep concern at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact within recent years, and reaffirming the need for sustainable measures at all levels to reduce the vulnerability of societies to natural hazards, using an integrated, multi-hazard and participatory approach to addressing vulnerability, risk assessment, and disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery,

Reaffirming, in this regard, the Hyogo Declaration³ and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,⁴ as adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005,

¹ A/60/87-E/2005/78.

² A/60/432.

³ A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 1.

⁴ Ibid., resolution 2.

Noting with grave concern that violence, including sexual abuse and sexual and other violence against women, girls and boys, continues to be, in many emergency situations, deliberately directed against civilian populations,

Concerned about the need to mobilize adequate support, including financial resources, for emergency humanitarian assistance at all levels, including at the national, regional and international levels,

Recognizing the clear relationship between emergency, rehabilitation and development and that, in order to ensure a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and development, emergency assistance must be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development, and that emergency measures should be seen as a step towards long-term development,

Welcoming the ongoing efforts to strengthen international humanitarian response, including the emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations,

Emphasizing that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat should benefit from adequate and more predictable funding, while stressing the importance for the Office to continue to make efforts to broaden its donor base,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the outcome of the eighth humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council held during its substantive session of 2005;

2. *Calls upon* all Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflicts and in post-conflict situations, in countries in which humanitarian personnel are operating, in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law and national laws, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel and delivery of supplies and equipment in order to allow them to perform efficiently their task of assisting the affected civilian population, including refugees and internally displaced persons;

3. *Reaffirms* the obligation of all States and parties to an armed conflict to protect civilians in armed conflicts in accordance with international humanitarian law, and invites States to promote a culture of protection, taking into account the particular needs of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities;

4. *Calls upon* States to adopt preventive measures and effective responses to acts of violence committed against civilian populations and to ensure that those responsible are promptly brought to justice, as provided for by national law and obligations under international law;

5. *Also calls upon* States to elaborate and implement strategies to report on, prevent and punish all forms of violence against women, girls and boys, in particular sexual violence and abuse;

6. *Recognizes* the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement⁵ as an important international framework for the protection of internally displaced persons, and encourages Member States and humanitarian agencies to work together in endeavours to provide a more predictable response to the needs of internally

⁵ E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex.

displaced persons, and in that regard calls for international support, upon request, to capacity-building efforts of Governments;

7. *Emphasizes* the fundamentally civilian character of humanitarian assistance, reaffirms the leading role of civilian organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance, particularly in areas affected by conflicts, and affirms the need, in situations where military capacity and assets are used to support the implementation of humanitarian assistance, for their use to be in conformity with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles;

8. *Encourages* the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue his efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance, and calls upon relevant United Nations organizations and other humanitarian and development actors to work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to enhance the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance;

9. *Reiterates* the need for a more effective, efficient, coherent, coordinated and better performing United Nations country presence, with a strengthened role for the senior United Nations resident official responsible for the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance, including appropriate authority, resources and accountability;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to strengthen the support provided to United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators and to United Nations country teams, including through the provision of necessary training, the identification of resources, and improving the identification and selection of United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators;

11. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system and, as appropriate, other relevant humanitarian actors, to improve the humanitarian response to natural and man-made disasters and complex emergencies by strengthening the humanitarian response capacities at all levels, by strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance at the field level, including with national authorities of the affected State, as appropriate, and by enhancing transparency, performance and accountability;

12. *Calls upon* relevant United Nations organizations to continue to improve the transparency and reliability of humanitarian needs assessments and to engage in the improvement of the consolidated appeals process, inter alia, by further developing the process as an instrument for strategic planning and prioritization and by involving other relevant humanitarian organizations in the process, while reiterating that consolidated appeals are prepared in consultation with the affected State;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with States and relevant organizations, to further develop and improve, as required, mechanisms for the use of emergency stand-by capacities, including, where appropriate, regional humanitarian capacities, under the auspices of the United Nations, inter alia, through formal agreements with appropriate regional organizations, and to report on that issue to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session through the Economic and Social Council;

14. *Calls upon* donors to take further steps to improve their policies and practices with respect to humanitarian action, and in that regard welcomes the continued efforts under the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative;

15. *Decides* to upgrade the current Central Emergency Revolving Fund into the Central Emergency Response Fund by including a grant element based on voluntary contributions, to be replenished at regular intervals, so as to ensure a more predictable and timely response to humanitarian emergencies, with the objectives of promoting early action and response to reduce loss of life, enhancing response to time-critical requirements and strengthening core elements of humanitarian response in underfunded crises, based on demonstrable needs and on priorities identified in consultation with the affected State as appropriate;

16. *Decides also* that the Fund will continue to operate in accordance with resolution 46/182 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto;

17. *Affirms* its role to provide overall policy guidance on the use of the Fund to maximize its impact and to improve its functioning, and encourages the Economic and Social Council to discuss the implementation of the Fund;

18. *Takes note* that an advisory group will be established, as an independent body, to provide advice to the Secretary-General on the use and impact of the Fund, and that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee will discuss the use and impact of the Fund;

19. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General, on the basis of his report on the improvement of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund² and in consultations with all relevant stakeholders, to make the necessary managerial and administrative arrangements to facilitate the implementation of the grant element and set up appropriate reporting and accountability mechanisms to ensure that the funds allocated through the Fund are used in the most efficient, effective and transparent manner possible;

20. *Urges* all Member States and invites the private sector and all concerned individuals and institutions to consider making voluntary contributions to the Fund, welcomes the financial pledges already made, and emphasizes that contributions should be additional to current commitments to humanitarian programming and not to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development;

21. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the detailed use of the Fund;

22. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to commission an independent review of the Fund at the end of the second year of operation to assess, inter alia, both the grant and revolving elements of the Fund, its administration, criteria for resource allocation, actions and responses supported by it and its ability to meet its objectives, and to submit a report in that regard to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session;

23. *Emphasizes* the importance of the discussion of humanitarian policies and activities by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and that those discussions should be continuously revitalized by Member States;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2006, on progress made in strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

63rd plenary meeting
15 December 2005



Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/60/L.18 and Add.1)]

60/13. Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the South Asian earthquake disaster - Pakistan

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 57/152 of 16 December 2002, 57/256 of 20 December 2002, 58/25 of 5 December 2003, 58/214 and 58/215 of 23 December 2003, 59/212 of 20 December 2004, 59/231 and 59/233 of 22 December 2004 and 59/279 of 19 January 2005,

Expressing sincere condolences and deep sympathy to the victims, their families and the people of Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and other affected areas, who suffered huge losses of life and socio-economic and environmental damage from the massive earthquake that struck the South Asian region on 8 October 2005,

Deeply alarmed over the critical condition of millions of homeless and countless injured awaiting immediate response in desperation and pain, which is accentuated by extreme weather and difficult terrain,

Welcoming the assistance and contributions of the international community, including Governments, international organizations, civil society and the private sector, in the relief and rehabilitation efforts, which reflect the spirit of international solidarity and cooperation to address and meet the challenges of the disaster, and in this context also appreciating the role of the people and Government of Pakistan,

Welcoming also the launching of the South Asia earthquake 2005 flash appeal by the United Nations on 11 October 2005 and the continuous engagement by the Secretary-General to escalate the global relief efforts for the urgent and immediate needs of the affected people,

Welcoming further the convening by the United Nations of a high-level ministerial donors meeting in Geneva on 26 October 2005 to generate further relief assistance and support for recovery from the disaster,

Stressing the need to incorporate risk reduction approaches into development policies and recovery programmes, as set out in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015,¹

Recalling the need for continued commitment to assist the affected countries and their peoples, particularly the most vulnerable groups, to fully recover from the catastrophic and traumatic effects of the disaster, including in their medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, and welcoming measures announced by the Government of Pakistan and by the international agencies in this regard,

Emphasizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters and hazards in all phases, including prevention, preparedness, mitigation, recovery and reconstruction, as well as in strengthening the response capacity of affected countries,

1. *Expresses its sympathy* to the people affected by the earthquake in South Asia;
2. *Emphasizes* the need to give particular attention to helping the affected population, especially orphans and widows, in their physical and psychological trauma and to provide immediate medical assistance, in particular with regard to the vaccination of children and to long-term rehabilitation;
3. *Also emphasizes* the need for the international community to maintain its focus beyond the present emergency relief, in order to sustain the political will to support the medium- and long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and risk reduction efforts led by the Government of Pakistan and other affected States at all levels;
4. *Welcomes* the effective cooperation between the authorities of Pakistan and the relevant bodies in the United Nations system, donor countries, regional and international financial institutions, relevant international organizations and civil society in the coordination and delivery of emergency relief, and stresses the need to continue such cooperation and delivery throughout the ongoing relief operations and rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, in a manner that reduces vulnerability to future natural hazards;
5. *Encourages* the international community, particularly donor countries, international financial institutions and relevant international organizations, as well as the private sector and civil society, to deliver swiftly on their pledges and to continue to provide the necessary funds and assistance to support the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts;
6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to appoint a special envoy in order to, inter alia, sustain the political will of the international community to support medium- and long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and risk reduction efforts;
7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to explore ways to further strengthen the rapid response capacities for immediate humanitarian relief efforts of the international community, building on the existing arrangements and ongoing initiatives;
8. *Invites* the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, in collaboration with donor countries, other international and regional financial

¹ Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2).

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institutions and the United Nations, to mobilize members of the international community, including affected countries, to address the medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of the affected areas;

9. *Welcomes* the proposed convening of a reconstruction conference to generate assistance and commitments for long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction phases in the disaster-stricken areas, to be held in Islamabad on 19 November 2005;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance”, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 2006.

*52nd plenary meeting
14 November 2005*

United Nations

A/60/89-E/2005/79



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General Assembly Sixtieth session

Item 74 (a) of the preliminary list*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Economic and Social Council Substantive session of 2005

New York, 29 June-27 July 2005

Item 5 of the provisional agenda**

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

The transition from relief to development

Report of the Secretary-General⁺

Summary

The present report is submitted in response to General Assembly resolution 59/141 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/50, in which the Assembly and the Council requested the Secretary-General to report on the issue of transition from relief to development, with the aim of improving the international community's efforts to better respond to transition situations in support of the efforts by affected States. To this end, the report draws on case studies from countries undergoing both post-disaster recovery and transition from conflict to peace to discuss the specific challenges of national ownership, coordination and financing.

* A/60/50 and Corr.1.

** E/2005/100.

⁺ The report was delayed for technical reasons.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to the requests contained in General Assembly resolution 59/141 of 15 December 2004 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/50 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

II. Context

2. In the aftermath of disasters and emergencies, there is often a period between the emergency and development phases when humanitarian needs must be met and the long-term benefits of rehabilitation and reconstruction have yet to be fully realized. While in the past such transitions were largely regarded as a sequential progression from relief to development, it is now recognized that there are various aspects of transition processes that must be addressed simultaneously.

3. All transition situations are unique and therefore require flexible responses adapted to the specific context and circumstances of the country. However, all types of transition processes have one common feature: national ownership of the transition process, whether it be in response to natural disaster, economic transformation or conflict, is the key to successful and sustainable recovery and development efforts and to lasting peace.

4. In post-disaster transitions, recovery tends to be broad in scope, as disasters can affect several countries simultaneously. Post-disaster transitions also occur soon after the crisis phase, often beginning within weeks of the initial disaster and leaving little time for post-crisis planning. Post-disaster transitions also typically take place in the context of a functioning State. Therefore, they usually feature a relatively straightforward relationship between national and international actors and institutions. Nonetheless, disasters often wipe out critical infrastructure, government capacity and hard-won development gains, requiring that post-disaster transition phases also include sustained support for the immediate restoration of livelihoods and basic social services, as well as for preparedness measures and activities that reduce future disaster vulnerability. It is critical that disaster-recovery programming be developed together with affected Governments and communities and with an awareness of the existing socio-economic situation.

5. Recovery from drought poses a set of unique challenges. Although like most disasters the impact of drought depends on the interplay between a natural event and socio-economic policies, drought differs from most disasters in that it is slow in onset and may continue in cycles or for a prolonged period of time. If the effects of drought are left unchecked, the fight over scarce resources that could ensue could aggravate existing tensions and political instability and lead to violence. The United Nations approach to drought has therefore sought to simultaneously address humanitarian concerns, while working with Governments to identify and address the underlying social and environmental factors that may increase the impact of drought and increase food insecurity.

6. Post-conflict transition situations are complex and are characterized by the close interplay of political, security, human rights, humanitarian and development imperatives. Conflict-related emergencies rarely end neatly. Insecurity may persist to varying degrees, government structures may be incapacitated or destroyed, and the root causes of the conflict may not be adequately addressed by negotiated political solutions that have yet to take root, often causing conflicts to resurface. Post-conflict transition operations, in particular, involve a complex web of political, peacekeeping, human rights, humanitarian and development activities geared towards consolidating peace, supporting restoration of State and government institutions and reinforcing human security. Such activities may need to occur simultaneously, at varying levels of intensity, and would be constantly susceptible to both setbacks and opportunities. As with post-disaster transitions, however, it is critical that the desired goal of all these efforts, or the vision of the post-recovery end state, be developed by and with affected Governments, civil society and communities.

7. The key challenges in post-disaster, drought and post-conflict transitions will be further elaborated in the present report. Case studies that highlight lessons learned and best practices are provided for each challenge. In the case of the sections on post-disaster and post-conflict situations, a discussion is included of additional measures that should be taken or have been taken by the United Nations system and others to strengthen response. The report concludes with a series of implications for future action.

III. Post-disaster recovery

A. National and local ownership and participation

8. National ownership of and participation in the design and implementation of recovery programmes are essential not only to achieve the desired impact of recovery efforts and their sustainability, but also to strengthen capacities on the ground. The participation of local disaster-management experts and technicians will help to ensure that recovery programming considers the needs and capacities of the affected population. The involvement of national decision makers is critical to building a consensus around recovery priorities, roles, responsibilities and resources. To ensure that such ownership by national actors takes hold, external support must empower local actors and strengthen institutions through the transfer of technology and know-how and through public education. Such an approach should include assistance in mapping hazards and risks and the formulation and/or revision of risk-reduction measures. International investment is also needed at the local community, national and regional levels in preparedness, response capabilities and disaster mitigation, including advocacy and awareness campaigns, and the development of early warning capacities and training exercises.

9. In situations where local government capacity has been weakened by a disaster, targeted support to help the authorities coordinate the disaster response becomes vital. In Grenada, which suffered loss of life and material damage following the 2004 hurricane season, the United Nations has supported the Government in formulating a national reconstruction plan, which includes guidelines for the construction of hurricane-resistant housing, strengthening

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government capacity in public information and communications and disaster risk reduction. The Government, with the support of the United Nations, also established the Agency for Reconstruction and Development in December 2004 to assist in the social, economic and physical recovery of Grenada through the application of specialist expertise; effective collaboration with Government ministries, development partners and other stakeholders; and the transparent stewardship of local and international resources. It is essential that the very close relationship that has been established with the Agency be continued. Although faced with start-up challenges of its own, a strong technical entity such as the Agency can push ahead with a focused reconstruction programme and priorities, one of which must include the implementation of the coordination and reporting mechanism that has been developed and discussed.

10. Equally important to an effective and smooth transition is support to local and community structures. Local involvement in the recovery effort following the earthquake in December 2003 in the city of Bam, Islamic Republic of Iran, has been critical both for the smooth progress of the transition and as a mechanism for building and strengthening local capacity. Immediately following the earthquake, emergency response efforts were led by the Government and the Iranian Red Crescent, which has significant technical capacity in all aspects of disaster risk reduction and management. However, at the time, the strong institutional arrangements at the national level were not matched at the local and intermediate levels. In the recovery phase, the United Nations and its partners have promoted participatory approaches and decentralized planning and programming, involving direct consultation with the affected communities, and have supported the Government in adopting and implementing community-centred approaches. This has included the provision of support to local authorities in promoting, supervising and guiding planning and construction processes, in line with local codes and practices.

11. Similarly, early recovery efforts in the Indian Ocean region following the tsunami of December 2004 were driven by the need to respond urgently, and were focused on providing technical and financial support to government actors and institutions. With support from United Nations agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and civil society, decentralized capacities that promote participatory approaches to recovery are now being strengthened. National Governments are taking ownership and becoming involved in all recovery processes. In this way, it is hoped that sensitive issues, such as land rights or the special vulnerabilities of minorities and migrant populations, can be addressed.

12. Effective communication with local populations about recovery activities is another means of reducing confusion and distress in a post-disaster community and better involving them in the recovery process. Following the relief effort in Bam, the momentum created by promises to reconstruct the city quickly was transformed into a variety of proposals and schemes that raised local expectations and resulted in a growing sense of confusion and unrest. It was clear that a strategy was needed to address and respond to community expectations, to inform the affected population of their rights and to highlight both the potential benefits and limitations of the reconstruction process. The United Nations launched a community-based information management programme that now issues a biweekly newsletter and mobilizes volunteers for dissemination of information on reconstruction strategies and plans and on people's entitlements and needs. A similar newsletter is currently being produced in Sri Lanka. Community-based information management

programmes have also been crucial in addressing regional disparities to ensure that all regions benefit from the reconstruction efforts and are better off than they were before. Community mobilization and self-help form a cornerstone and a key organizing principle for demand-driven local recovery programmes, and strengthen the capacity of the community to play its role effectively.

B. Coordination

13. The primary responsibility for coordination in a post-disaster setting rests with the national authorities. Experience demonstrates, however, that national capacities are frequently overwhelmed by the volume and speed of response by a multiplicity of actors. External actors can facilitate the Government's coordination role by recognizing that their level of commitment to coordination and coherence has a direct impact on a Government's effectiveness, particularly in countries with less developed systems that require additional capacity strengthening.

14. The coordination challenges in any disaster recovery effort are often complex. Coordination of operations is labour intensive, in both traditional sectors, such as shelter and camp management, and in information management, resource mobilization and financial tracking. Coordination among local, national, regional and international response teams is essential, as the inevitable convergence of multiple-response actors can complicate, rather than strengthen, the overall recovery effort if field coordination structures are weak and roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined from the outset. Finally, because post-disaster transitions take place at an accelerated and sometimes uneven pace (both within and across countries), coordination and planning mechanisms must be in place and operational within a relatively short time and must be tailored to the country-specific context.

15. While the United Nations system has well-developed capacities for the coordination of response to disasters and humanitarian assistance, mechanisms for the coordination of post-disaster recovery activities need to be further strengthened. Progress has been made in ensuring greater capacity for recovery activities. Within 24 hours of the Indian Ocean tsunami, recovery advisers were deployed to support the Resident Coordinators. In addition, the Special Coordinator for Humanitarian Response was accompanied by a representative from the United Nations Development Group to strengthen the link between relief and development. Recovery teams were also at full capacity in affected countries within two weeks. Nevertheless, coordination gaps remain, and the tsunami response has highlighted the need to conduct assessments of early recovery needs, to set up predictable mechanisms for the deployment of technical experts to support recovery planning and to better coordinate post-crisis funding. Moreover, while the system of leadership accountability for emergency response is well defined at both the headquarters and field levels, similar systems for disaster recovery still require strengthening.

16. It is widely accepted that disaster recovery programmes that emphasize physical reconstruction and the restoration of basic services are insufficient to address the complete range of recovery needs. Rather, post-disaster recovery must contribute to improving the living conditions of the affected population through the revival of production, trade and services and the creation of income-generating and employment opportunities. Lessons emerging from the recovery effort in Bam

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suggest that shortcomings in the planning and coordination of recovery efforts led to key revitalization efforts being overlooked. More than one year after the tragedy, the reconstruction process is slow. Most of the city's inhabitants are still living in tents and provisional shelters and many lack access to basic medical care.

17. Coordination challenges are also apparent in those countries affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami. Although expert recovery teams were dispatched by the United Nations within two weeks of the crisis to compile information on disaster damage and recovery needs and to begin supporting national authorities in recovery planning, the pace of recovery since then has been relatively slow. This is due in part to an overall gap in recovery planning that has left key national entities and some United Nations country teams overstretched. In addition, there have been delays in the provision of recovery assistance in critical sectors, such as the construction of permanent housing and water and sanitation facilities, or the recovery or replacement of boats and reconstruction of commercial premises to jump start local economies. In some countries that have drawn up national reconstruction plans, there could have been better coordination of national and international recovery priorities among government actors, United Nations agencies and international financial institutions. While United Nations leadership accountability and reporting lines are clear in the disaster emergency phase, such structures are not as strong for the recovery period.

18. Senior coordination advisers for recovery have been deployed to the three most affected countries, namely, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Maldives, to support the role played by Resident Coordinators. In each case, the Resident Coordinator recognized the need for senior-level support to the United Nations country team in the development and coordination of a United Nations strategic plan that would respond to the priorities included within a national recovery plan while also providing support to established funding mechanisms in the countries. The senior coordination advisers for recovery have played that role.

C. Funding

19. Adequate and sustained support must be given to the post-disaster recovery and reconstruction effort as early as possible. The lack of an adequate and predictable funding base for disaster recovery widens sectoral and coordination gaps and impedes recovery planning. However, past experience suggests that while humanitarian assistance funding is readily available — and often abundant — during the phase of immediate response to a disaster, such support drops off once the initial response is complete and media and public interest has subsided. Such was the case after Hurricane Mitch in 1998 and the earthquake in Bam in December 2003, where only a small percentage of funds promised were ever paid out. Such patterns suggest that, if current practices continue, affected countries and the United Nations alike may have only a limited window of opportunity to raise disaster relief and recovery funds. Mechanisms for funding disaster relief may therefore need to include recovery efforts and to provide sufficient flexibility/fungibility to allow national authorities and external actors to determine the best use of available resources when making allocation decisions to humanitarian and recovery priorities.

20. Owing to the flexibility with which the flash appeal mechanism was used following the Indian Ocean tsunami, it was possible to raise resources for early

recovery in key sectors such as shelter, livelihood, microinfrastructure, fishing industries and the environment, which allowed recovery plans and programmes to be implemented without delay. This enabled timely relief and emergency interventions to help local populations get back on their feet. In Indonesia, rubble removal operations undertaken as “cash for work” reduced the psychological stress of the population while injecting cash into the local economy. The United Nations system, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank jointly conducted a full assessment of post-disaster recovery needs, and are providing support to the Governments of India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Maldives in exploring how to address those needs.

21. However, experience has shown that the flash appeal mechanism alone has not been the ideal vehicle for mobilizing resources for recovery purposes. India, which had response capacities in place and therefore did not participate in the flash appeal, has reported great difficulty in raising resources for recovery purposes. Alternative mechanisms are needed to fill this gap.

D. Investing in preparedness and risk reduction

22. Failure to invest in disaster risk reduction and preparedness and in post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation as integral components of sustainable development efforts puts already vulnerable countries at even greater risk. The integration and prioritization of disaster risk management into national development plans and budgets, as well as Government and international commitment to concrete preparedness activities, can effectively mitigate the impact of even large-scale hazards. Attention to risk reduction and prevention strategies can also curb vulnerability to disasters in the long term. Moreover, a focus on risk reduction in the recovery phase allows countries and communities to go beyond replacing damaged infrastructure and to address development deficits and bring living conditions to a level above pre-disaster standards.

23. For example, the worst human and economic losses sustained by Caribbean island States during the unusually intense hurricane season late in 2004 affected the most vulnerable segments of the population in Haiti and Grenada. Neither of these countries was prepared for the scale and intensity of the event. In the case of Haiti, the impact of the hurricane-related floods was further exacerbated by extreme environmental degradation brought on by ecologically harmful land use. In contrast, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic and Cuba recorded much lower levels of loss and damage.

24. Such disparity in the level of impact is directly related to government commitment to concrete preparedness and risk-reduction activities. More than 15 years ago, the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management in Jamaica began a programme to transfer skills to communities in the areas of search and rescue, first aid, contingency planning, shelter management and early warning. Community teams were formed and supported by the Government, the Jamaica Red Cross and local civil society. During the 2004 hurricane season, communities with those skills systematically responded better to events and were better able to assist themselves and response agencies with evacuation and shelter management and the distribution of relief and recovery supplies. After Hurricane Ivan, the Prime Minister of Jamaica called for the Caribbean region to establish a fund that countries

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could access for hurricane recovery and reconstruction and called for Caribbean countries to develop a common policy on natural hazard risk reduction and to integrate that policy into their national planning and development efforts. Jamaica is currently drafting a national hazard mitigation policy (2005).

25. To promote regional preparedness throughout the Caribbean, the United Nations set up a regional inter-agency standing committee and a relief, disaster and emergency task force in Panama in 2005. In addition to coordinating regional response and preparedness, the task force provides a platform for the exchange of information and consensus-building in determining the priority actions in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Comprehensive plans to put preparedness measures into place, including strengthening government capacity and working with local communities to change land use patterns that exacerbate the effects of hurricanes, need to be explored and implemented urgently on a regional basis. Along these lines, a lessons-learned workshop for eastern Caribbean countries was held in June 2005 in Jamaica, in the framework of the United Nations Disaster Management and Training Programme, to learn from the 2004 hurricane season. In addition, for the past several years, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies has been hosting, with national Societies, an annual pre-hurricane-season planning and preparedness workshop with hurricane-prone countries, the United Nations, donor agencies and non-governmental organizations. The most recent such meeting, held in June in Panama, led to the development of a memorandum of understanding among the Government of Panama, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on the pre-positioning of relief stocks at the Red Cross/Red Crescent base in Panama.

26. In the Indian Ocean region, both international and national organizations working in the tsunami recovery effort have aimed at balancing the need for rapid recovery while addressing the structural causes of risk and vulnerability. Such efforts have included public consultations in Indonesia, where experiences with prior disasters were analysed and integrated into new shelter strategies and environmental preservation. While it is generally accepted that it would have been almost impossible to be adequately prepared for an event of this magnitude and impact, the tsunami disaster prompted a new resolve to create a region-wide early warning system for tsunamis and other predictable hazards. Similarly, long-term preparedness strategies supported by the United Nations and the Government of India (following previous natural catastrophes in Gujarat and Orissa) proved critical in the early hours of the tsunami and demonstrated how preparedness at both the national and local levels could save lives. Since the tsunami, India and the international community have resolved to intensify and extend disaster risk-management programmes along the following lines: incorporation of disaster risk-management in all recovery and reconstruction efforts; conduct of comprehensive multi-hazard risk assessments; establishment of clear risk-reduction guidelines sector by sector; and the strengthening of emergency response capacities at all levels.

27. However, despite compelling evidence that risk-reduction efforts are linked to improved opportunities for sustainable development, obtaining funds for capacity-building and investment in reducing vulnerability and risk continues to be a challenge. That area continues to receive much lower levels of resources from the donor community compared to the funding available for humanitarian response and

conflict situations. Disaster-reduction efforts need to be increasingly promoted as a solid investment towards saving lives and reducing loss and as fundamental to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and sustainable development in general.

IV. Drought

28. The humanitarian crisis that continues to ravage southern Africa has challenged traditional response and assistance approaches. While the crisis first appeared on the humanitarian map as one precipitated by drought, closer analysis showed that the causal factors and drivers of the crisis were more complex and deeply rooted, and involved a number of factors in addition to climate change and inadequate rainfall. This realization demonstrated the need to rethink responses and to develop innovative and creative approaches to address the needs of the most vulnerable across the region. In short, it was recognized that while there was clearly a humanitarian crisis in southern Africa, traditional responses were not the answer.

29. Since the beginning of 2004, the work of the United Nations has been guided by the so-called “triple threat” approach: simultaneously tackling food insecurity, HIV/AIDS and weakened capacity for governance. This approach promoted a blurring of the lines between emergency relief and development assistance and contributed to providing a practical environment in which United Nations agencies work together collaboratively, using common, and even joint, programming initiatives to address the identified priorities.

30. The triple threat approach, developed under the leadership of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa and included in a paper prepared by the High-level Committee on Programmes, acknowledged that southern Africa required simultaneous humanitarian and development action to address the three priorities. Accordingly, the United Nations and its partners requested donors to support immediate actions to address immediate needs and immediate action to address long term needs. In a region where life expectancy and other human capacity and economic indicators have been in reverse for several years, largely due to the impact of HIV/AIDS, the United Nations has recognized that the conventional concept of “recovery” has little meaning. The region will continue to experience shocks from natural hazards, such as floods, droughts and cyclones. However, poverty and the levels of vulnerability across the region have meant that assistance is geared towards arresting increases in vulnerability.

31. A key lesson to understanding the approach in southern Africa can be drawn from the response and follow-up to the drought-induced food security crisis in 1992/93. Following the largely successful response, the humanitarian community vowed that this would never be allowed to happen again, believing that effective development assistance would ensure regional food security. However, a decade later, a regional crisis of immense proportions has happened again, this time with a much more complex set of issues and causes, many of which had been ignored in the conventional development response in the preceding years.

32. Relief, recovery, and development support are needed in this region simultaneously, allowing households and communities who find themselves on different rungs of the development ladder to meet their immediate needs while

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engaging in appropriate activities with a longer-term vision. Safety nets and social protection programmes are increasingly needed within long-term strategies, while appropriate rehabilitation and economic development activities should be considered during relief periods. The relief-development continuum has dissolved in the face of recurrent shocks, rampant poverty and the omnipresent impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

33. The inter-agency regional humanitarian strategic framework for southern Africa, which is developed through the United Nations Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Support Office for the Special Envoy and supported by the new United Nations Regional Director's team, includes new "recovery" perspectives shared jointly by the United Nations and the non-governmental organizations community. The framework provides a basis for short- and long-term responses in which humanitarian and development players take joint action, meeting immediate needs while working to prevent and mitigate vulnerability to future shocks and risks, build livelihood resilience and enhance economic and social growth.

Funding

34. The multifaceted nature of the crisis in southern Africa poses particular resourcing challenges. The depiction of the crisis as one that was simply driven by drought brought forward the use of the traditional emergency funding tool, the consolidated appeal. While regional and country-specific requirements were multisectoral, over 80 per cent of requirements were for food assistance activities. As analysis of the triple threat approach developed, the need for broader responses has become increasingly apparent, as has the need for more creative solutions to enable the most vulnerable to access food and necessary social services. The request for donors to support immediate actions to address immediate needs and immediate action to address long-term needs challenged the continued use of the consolidated appeal as the most appropriate (or accepted) mechanism for mobilizing resources, particularly in areas that support the critical social safety net provisions needed in many countries in the region.

35. While there is a palpable shift in the region by donors to assist responsible Governments to strengthen capacity for provision of social services through direct budgetary support, immediate outreach to support the millions of chronically vulnerable people in the region will remain insufficient for several years to come. Further shocks caused by inclement weather, such as the dry spell that has decimated harvests in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique this year, continue to require donors to keep unlocked resources for short-term emergency responses. Only through a flexible and informed approach by donors that addresses the complexity of needs in the region will it be possible to arrest the decline in life expectancy and other human capacity and economic indicators.

V. Post-conflict transitions

A. National ownership and capacity-building

36. National ownership of the transition process in post-conflict transition countries must be both a general principle and a priority objective guiding international assistance efforts. Without such a focus, the main goal in post-conflict

transition — consolidating a sustainable and just peace — is unlikely to be achieved. Without national ownership providing a vision of the sort of country for which the transition process is laying the groundwork, sustainable peace is unlikely. When transition processes are not rooted in their host societies, for example, they risk being derailed by lingering conflict and unmet expectations. Inadequate ownership also opens the door to parallel structures being developed outside the formal institutions called for by peace agreements, which may work at cross purposes with formal arrangements and contribute to tensions and instability.

37. As crucial as national ownership of transition processes may be, however, such ownership cannot and should not be assumed to exist or to spring into existence fully formed at the start of transition. Unlike post-disaster situations, the capacity of national actors to effectively and fully engage a transition process cannot be assumed after years of conflict. The trauma of conflict and the circumstances leading to it are likely to have eroded the capacities of national actors to guide and manage complex post-conflict transitions. De facto country-wide sovereignty can also not necessarily be assumed. Effective State control may not extend to all areas, or may be limited in those areas it does reach, and the legitimacy of transitional governmental bodies needs time to take root in post-conflict societies.

38. National ownership must be cultivated by all participants in the post-conflict transition process. In the short term, this will entail the creation of planning and coordination mechanisms that are led by and/or strongly engage national actors, involving them in both consultations and decision-making. In the mid- to longer term, reinforcing national ownership will also require a concerted effort by international actors to avoid unnecessarily substituting for national actors, as may have been required during the height of the conflict. International actors must also make a concerted effort to develop national capacities. For example, international actors should support Government efforts to reassume the key functions of the State in a manner consistent with human rights norms and obligations, including basic administration, security, law and order, and the provision of social services.

39. As crucial as it is to uphold the principle and pursue the objective of full national ownership, experience demonstrates that the fragile period immediately following the conclusion of peace agreements necessitates a realistic expectation of national capacities to manage the myriad efforts required for the success of transition. Successful post-conflict transition also requires the rapid launch of assistance programmes that will help to quickly stabilize and improve the situation in a country, including ongoing relief efforts, rapid scaling-up of delivery of basic social services, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, return programmes for internally displaced persons and refugees, and livelihoods and small-scale infrastructure programmes to revitalize rural economies and provide jobs. The speed with which such programmes need to be launched if they are to be successful will sometimes limit the degree to which they can build on existing national structures, particularly in conflicts that have drastically eroded national capacities, or in areas where the extension of State authority is still limited. This places a premium on the need for creative solutions involving civil society, decentralized approaches, and non-governmental actors, while building in commensurate capacity-development measures to accompany large-scale expansion of external assistance.

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40. Post-conflict transitions typically lead to new areas being accessible, which usually harbour pockets of extremely vulnerable populations. Humanitarian agencies will have to respond extremely quickly to address critical needs, and will continue in such instances to substitute for national authorities, rather than develop national capacities. Early in post-conflict transitions, therefore, it will be critical for humanitarian agencies to maintain their own capacity to flexibly address such needs. Doing so will entail upholding the well-established humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, without which humanitarian agencies are unable to operate effectively.

41. The exact balance of efforts to strengthen national ownership and other efforts critical to successful transition will depend on the particular transition. The specific nature of efforts to reinforce national ownership — be they planning and coordination mechanisms or capacity-development programmes — will also vary from one context to another. This extent of variability is illustrated by the responses to the post-conflict transitions in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Haiti.

42. In Sierra Leone, following the declaration of peace in January 2002, humanitarian and recovery assistance planning was integrated with national development plans and combined with building national capacity. Specifically, a National Commission of Rehabilitation, Resettlement and Reconstruction was created with technical and financial support from international donors. This Government body, later reorganized as the National Commission for Social Action, was the principal Government partner involved in the design and delivery of humanitarian response and the development of the national and district recovery strategies. Grants from the two Commissions supported community-based recovery and strengthened civil society, allowing relief activities to support long-term recovery from the outset.

43. The development of the National Recovery Strategy and the establishment of National and District Recovery Committees also helped to ensure national ownership and contributed to the development of national capacity. Despite its failings,¹ the National Recovery Strategy provided a framework that guided both local and international recovery interventions. The Committees, although hindered by minimal resources and severe capacity constraints, provided a vehicle for the extension of Government authority and functioned as a Government partner for community-based recovery interventions across all sectors at the local level and laid the foundations for district councils and Government decentralization.

44. In Afghanistan, internal governance structures were insufficient to take on full responsibility for post-crisis activities after the collapse of the Taliban regime in 2001. It was therefore a priority to reinvigorate the national capacity of Government ministries and other institutions as quickly as possible so that the decisions taken and their implementation were domestically driven. In part this was achieved by a “light footprint” approach to the design of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which was intended to prevent large numbers of expatriate staff from overwhelming what was supposed to be an Afghan-owned reconstruction process. In addition, joint strategic planning among international and national actors in Afghanistan was critical to enabling the Government to function. This was achieved through the creation of the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority and later the consultative groups, which facilitated substantive interaction among the Government, donors, international financial institutions, United Nations agencies

and non-governmental organizations in defining, financing and implementing priority programme areas and served as the primary mechanism for developing the national budget. The United Nations also seconded staff to several of the Afghan line ministries, including the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Rural Reconstruction and Development, to jump start critical Government programmes.

45. The transition in Haiti demonstrates the requirement to balance practical efforts to increase national ownership with the response to urgent emergency needs. Following the political crisis and the subsequent deployment of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), the country was struck by a series of hurricane-related floods late in 2004, requiring the immediate mobilization of the Government's and the United Nations in-country resources and capacities to respond to compound humanitarian needs. This crisis, combined with the fragility of Government institutions and ongoing security concerns, delayed the implementation of the Interim Cooperation Framework, which had been prepared by the Transitional Government in Haiti, in close cooperation with the international community, to identify priority transition areas² and link early transition planning with longer-term national strategies.

B. Coordination

46. As the prior examples demonstrate, effective coordination among international and national actors in post-conflict transitions is critical to ensuring ownership of the transition process within the Government and local communities. This requires inclusive processes that include line ministries, central banks, local government and community groups. Coordination structures and processes — from needs assessments to strategic planning to funding mechanisms — must be designed and implemented with, and in support of, national development plans and budgets. It also requires that the delivery of services supports, rather than duplicates, national efforts.

47. The coordination of transition efforts also requires that the various facets — political, peacekeeping, humanitarian, human rights, developmental — of the United Nations strategic and operational response at Headquarters and at the country level, must come together around a unified strategy and purpose. However, the developmental, humanitarian, human rights, peacekeeping and political parts of the United Nations and its partners do not always act in full harmony or with a shared understanding of context and events. Moreover, the United Nations sometimes struggles to strike the right balance between quick-impact projects and longer-term, institution-building processes. Effective and smooth transitions therefore require a single and consistent strategy that supports greater coherence between political and operational efforts based on common analysis and assessment of needs, identification of roles and priorities, clear and strong leadership, and coordination in support of national recovery. Ongoing discussions with regard to the Peacebuilding Commission and Peacebuilding Support Office, and those pertaining to the recommendations of the integrated missions study, are providing a platform to deliberate on these challenges.

48. United Nations partnerships with other international and national actors, including regional organizations, donors, international financial institutions, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and non-governmental

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organizations, are also critical to the transition process and need to be further developed throughout all stages of the transition process. Regional entities such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community, can facilitate the regional stability that supports country-level transition. Non-governmental organizations — both national and international — are often involved in capacity development and the delivery of critical social services to local authorities and civil society before, during and after transition. Their knowledge, experience and networks on the ground can contribute significantly to the dynamics of transition.

49. Again, the responses in Sierra Leone, Afghanistan and Haiti illustrate how the United Nations has attempted to tackle these coordination challenges. The establishment of an integrated mission in Sierra Leone facilitated coherent planning between the United Nations country team and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Facilitated by the creation of the post of Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations country team and UNAMSIL developed coherent transition planning in support of the national recovery process. The country team then worked closely with the Mission and the national authorities to prepare the peacebuilding and recovery strategy in order to allow for the phase-out of relief actors and to help United Nations agencies shift their operations from emergency to reconstruction activities. The country team also developed a transition support team to provide coordination support within the team and to support the Government and local authorities to take the lead during transition.

50. At a broader level, the consultative group for Sierra Leone provided an excellent forum for bringing together the Government and its partners (donors, the United Nations, international financial institutions and non-governmental organizations), and the results based framework for 2003-04 (based on the National Recovery Strategy) provided a useful tool for monitoring and assessing progress, which guided overall recovery interventions. In 2004, the development partnership committee was established. It now serves as the principal coordination forum in which the Government and stakeholders can hold a dialogue on strategic, policy and funding issues.

51. In Afghanistan, the United Nations has focused on and worked to set up effective and coherent coordination structures with both national and international partners. The United Nations country team worked together with the World Bank on the formulation of the Government's interim poverty reduction strategy to ensure that the programme cycles of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, the interim poverty reduction strategy and the World Bank's country assistance strategy are being aligned and will have the same three-year lifespan. That collaboration is part of a broader trend towards more joint planning and programmes, for example, the effort to collectively support the Government in pulling together a \$71.4 million drought appeal and the development of the reforestation project entitled "Green Afghanistan initiative", and underlines the need for clearly agreed planning processes that maximize the local expertise available within the United Nations country team.

52. The integration of United Nations agencies within the peacekeeping mission in Haiti has facilitated flexibility of response to both post-conflict and disaster elements of the transition process in that country. The structure of MINUSTAH was

designed to promote linkages between the peace and security and the development and humanitarian entities. The Mission is headed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who is assisted by two deputies in charge of civilian affairs and humanitarian/development affairs. The Deputy Special Representative for development and humanitarian affairs is also responsible for the functions of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator. Moreover, the incorporation of the priorities of the Interim Cooperation Framework in the Mission's mandate, and the explicit recognition that key programmes, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, are both security and development concerns, have enabled the United Nations in Haiti to respond to chronic humanitarian situations (the drought in the north) and exceptional emergencies (the hurricane-related floods at Gonaïves in September 2004), while providing transitional assistance. The combination of the functions of the Deputy Special Representative/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator in MINUSTAH has also facilitated links with the military and police so that operations in difficult neighbourhoods have been coupled with planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, humanitarian assistance and restoration of basic services where possible.

C. Funding

53. The adequate and timely funding of transitions is essential to meet enduring humanitarian, recovery and peace consolidation priorities while simultaneously focusing on building national and local capacity. Taking into account existing and future domestic revenue streams is a critical component in determining the overall funding portfolio. In the absence of adequate domestic resources during the early stages of transition, flexible funding is needed to cover a wide range of urgent priorities, including recurrent costs associated with the payment of Government salaries so that basic Government services, may be restored. Since transition programmes depend on the coherent implementation of a variety of activities, the pace of progress also depends on funding all component priorities as identified and agreed upon during joint planning and assessment processes. In order to manage funds from multiple sources and integrate them into national planning and budget structures, stronger tracking, alignment, harmonization and simplification of working instruments must continue to be pursued. New pooled funding mechanisms, such as the multi-donor trust funds established for Iraq, Afghanistan and now the Sudan, are providing useful lessons for funding priorities identified through post-conflict needs assessment exercises, but it is also critical to ensure that flexible funding is made available in the critical months preceding the finalization of the needs assessment exercise following the signing of the peace agreement, when critical early transition activities must be put in place to facilitate stabilization efforts.

54. The availability of a mechanism to disburse external funding immediately in Afghanistan was critical to enabling the Government to function. Four days after the Afghan Interim Administration took office, as stipulated by the Bonn Agreement, the Afghan Interim Authority Fund, administered by the United Nations Development Programme was established. The Fund provided an immediate mechanism through which \$72 million in donor funding could be channelled to salary payments for 240,000 civil servants, the repair of Government ministries and the purchase of basic office equipment and supplies. The Afghan Interim Authority

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Fund was succeeded by the World Bank-administered Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which aimed at channelling multilateral funding to support the national development plan, and by the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan, which provided a dedicated United Nations window to support security sector reform, including the payment of policemen's salaries and building the capacity of the police force.

55. To address continuing relief needs while advancing recovery and laying the foundations for sustainable development in Sierra Leone, the United Nations country team shifted the emphasis of the consolidated appeals process to the development of a transition appeal, which highlighted the need to address relief and recovery needs in parallel. At the same time, planning for transitional and longer-term development began at an early stage in 2002 with the formulation of a United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Sierra Leone (2004-07). The final transition appeal, in 2004, addressed residual relief needs and was designed to complement the first year of planned activities of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

56. In Haiti, however, the lack of a coordinated funding mechanism has hampered planning and response to urgent priorities, and has dissipated resources. The absence of a unique funding mechanism to support transition processes and programmes has made it difficult for the Government to plan ahead, track funds received and disbursed, or monitor the cost of programmes. Neither the Government nor MINUSTAH has had access to available, flexible funding that could be allocated in response to urgent priorities. Even the Government budget process is hampered by funding uncertainty. This has led to the postponement of the disarmament and rapid employment-generation programmes until a minimal amount of funding is confirmed. The receipt of funds is frequently the result of consultations among individual donors or partners and the Government, and decisions are sector- and even project-specific in many cases. This piecemeal approach, despite the existence of an agreed set of priorities contained in the Interim Cooperation Framework, means that considerable energy is devoted to project design and approval procedures, often for relatively small amounts of donor funding.

D. United Nations support to post-conflict recovery

57. A number of analytical and programming tools have been developed in the past year to facilitate the emergence of a national recovery and reconstruction plan that is based upon an internationally and nationally endorsed assessment of needs. The United Nations/World Bank post-conflict needs assessment methodology (or joint needs assessment) is a pivotal instrument underpinning such an exercise, which guides the complex and labour-intensive process carried out in partnership among multilateral, bilateral and regional actors, non-governmental organizations, civil society and representatives of national authorities. Such assessments are conducted in close collaboration with national Governments and stakeholders (including former parties to conflict, civil society, and non-governmental organizations) with a view to eliciting a national vision for the end state after the defined transition period, and shaping the recovery and reconstruction priorities and their financial implications. The United Nations/World Bank transitional results matrix is also being used to capture specific results, benchmarks, and costing implications associated with the post-conflict needs assessment, and serves as a monitoring and

accountability platform to support the dialogue between international and national actors, and between national authorities and the general public.

58. While the national plans and results matrices resulting from the needs assessment and results matrix exercises are technical documents representing the objective needs of the country, they also serve to underpin the political or peace process among national and international actors by providing a strong development platform on which to implement the national vision for peace and stability for the future. The assessments and the related national/donor coordination platforms for ongoing dialogue and monitoring have played an invaluable role in bringing together key partners around agreed priorities and requirements and provided a credible space in which to discuss progress, funding allocation, and performance of key partners against commitments.

59. Work is ongoing to establish clear linkages with other planning and appeal instruments. A variety of approaches has been adopted to help ensure that humanitarian needs continue to be met, despite the different planning time frames and actor profiles of the needs assessment and results matrix and the consolidated appeal process. There is also early experience with establishing forward linkages between needs assessment/results matrix planning and national poverty reduction strategies, as well as with United Nations Development Assistance Framework/common country assessment planning, all aimed to harmonize and make the best use of already available analysis and priority-setting exercises. The United Nations and the World Bank are also looking at the possible adaptation of the needs assessment/results matrix approach for natural disaster scenarios.

60. Experience with different funding mechanisms and, most recently, a variety of multi-donor trust fund models is providing a number of lessons for further review with regard to timing, scope and operational modalities to best support United Nations response in transition scenarios. Ongoing discussions with regard to the possible establishment of a standing peacebuilding fund could also be instructive in this regard. However, the continuing disconnect between relief and reconstruction funding modalities of many donor countries continues to be a challenge to United Nations efforts to ensure predictable and accessible resources for post-conflict response.

61. While United Nations coordination support for humanitarian response and coordination for long-term development are well established and functioning, United Nations coordination mechanisms in the transition space still suffer from significant capacity gaps. As the experience of the Indian Ocean tsunami has just taught us, the post-disaster support to the Resident Coordinator for recovery planning must be scaled up at an early stage. As recent needs assessment exercises have demonstrated in post-conflict settings, humanitarian response is still in full swing when the window of opportunity for peace opens and the United Nations system, through the Resident Coordinator, is called upon to engage in broad-based transition and recovery planning. However, the institutional and financial capacity to meet the support needs of the Humanitarian Coordinator in humanitarian response far outpaces the institutional and financial capacity to support the Resident Coordinator. This imbalance must be addressed if we are to meet effectively the complex of challenges facing us in the transition period.

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VI. Implications for future action

62. The transition from relief to development following both violent conflict and disasters associated with natural hazards is complex. In post-conflict societies, poverty pervades, Government and institutional capacity remains fragile, refugees and internally displaced persons need assistance to return home, corruption may persist, unemployment is high, and there is often a continued absence of adequate social services in many areas of the country. Recovery from a major disaster is as much about rebuilding — and where possible improving — lives as it is about restoring infrastructure. Managing recovery in any transition context requires investment of funds and effort in building national capacity, empowering communities and exploiting the synergies among development, humanitarian and other actors.

63. It is critical that, in the future, disaster recovery efforts continue to focus on promoting national and local ownership of and participation in the recovery phase and support national and local capacity across a range of disaster-management activities, including response systems, preparedness measures and risk mitigation and reduction. In support of those efforts, the United Nations should continue to improve recovery service delivery and accountability by strengthening leadership and coordination support structures in the field and by improving institutional accountability at Headquarters. This may include strengthening the resident coordinator system to take on a more directive role during the transition phase and strengthening the United Nations country teams to ensure that the necessary support is provided at the right time, in a predictable manner and in the most cost-effective way through the transition period.

64. Recognizing, on the basis of past experience, that the window of opportunity to raise disaster-related funds has been short-lived and has not led to predictable or adequate funding for the recovery phase, it is critical to ensure that response to needs identified in existing resource mobilization mechanisms, such as flash and consolidated appeals, includes support for early recovery needs and transition coordination, and support Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams to issue transitional appeals for needs not captured in these emergency appeal instruments.

65. Recognizing also that humanitarian needs continue well into the post-conflict recovery and reconstruction period but that existing humanitarian appeals do not cover the full range of early transition activities required to ensure stabilization and re-establishment of basic State infrastructure before full needs assessments can be completed, it is essential to fully fund early recovery needs identified in the consolidated appeal process, and to support Resident Coordinators and United Nations country teams in issuing early transitional appeals, where appropriate, for needs not covered by the consolidated appeal process.

Notes

¹ A detailed evaluation of the national recovery process can be found at <http://www.saloneinfosys.org/encyclopedia2004/nrsAssRptDec03.pdf>.

² The areas identified are strengthening political governance and promoting national dialogue; strengthening economic governance and institutional development; promoting economic recovery; and improving access to basic services.

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**Strengthening of the coordination of
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of the United Nations, including special
economic assistance**

**Economic and Social Council
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New York, 29 June-27 July 2005

Item 5 of the provisional agenda**

**Special economic,
humanitarian and disaster
relief assistance**

Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General***

Summary

The present report addresses the theme of “strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance, including capacity and organizational aspects”. It examines some of the key humanitarian developments and challenges, particularly capacity gaps experienced in both complex emergencies and disasters during the past year. The report also analyses the implementation and impact of Economic and Social Council resolutions 2002/32, 2003/5 and 2004/50 with a view to strengthening the policy guidance such resolutions provide to the international community on humanitarian issues and activities. Finally, the report briefly discusses the roles of and complementarity among relevant United Nations entities in the area of multidimensional missions and follows up this and other issues with a set of observations and recommendations from the Secretary-General to both the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly for further strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

* A/60/50 and Corr.1.

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*** The report was delayed for technical reasons.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared in compliance with General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. Moreover, it is submitted in compliance with the requests contained in General Assembly resolution 59/141 of 15 December 2004 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/50 of 23 July 2004 on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

II. Humanitarian developments

2. The level and scale of violence witnessed during the past few years in Afghanistan, Iraq, Darfur (the Sudan) and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is evidence that threats to human security are prevalent and continue to take an unprecedented toll on human life. That an earthquake in the Indian Ocean could trigger simultaneous emergencies in 12 separate countries and cause the largest single loss of life in places as far away as Sweden confirms that the impact of humanitarian crises is more far-reaching than ever before. Such large-scale conflicts and disasters have tested humanitarian response capacity to the limits and have challenged the ability of the humanitarian system to guarantee that such a response is effectively and appropriately applied. The expectation that larger and more visible crises will require greater capacity, quality and accountability in humanitarian response requires that the United Nations system examine — and strengthen — its current systems, tools and competencies. And the recognition that threats to human security are global and interconnected requires that humanitarian crises be tackled with common actions and joint resolve.

A. Overview

3. The Consolidated Humanitarian Appeal for 2005 reported that 26 million persons in 20 crises worldwide need US\$ 4.5 billion in humanitarian assistance. Though this represents a decrease in the overall number of humanitarian crises during the past year, the financial requirements to address these crises are 25 per cent higher (\$3.4 billion) — a testament that the last 12 months have witnessed a series of particularly large and destructive humanitarian crises.

4. The massive earthquake that took place off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, on 26 December 2004 and the resulting tsunami unleashed a series of major disasters across more than 12 nations, killing more than 240,000 persons and displacing well over a million. The hurricanes that struck the Caribbean in the fall of 2004 were the strongest storms in a decade, wreaking havoc on numerous small island developing States, many of which were unprepared for the level of devastation such storms would bring. Despite considerable early warnings, a swarm of desert locusts infested 10 different west and north African countries and decimated millions of hectares of crops in the summer of 2004. Thirty-five epidemics broke out worldwide, including polio, meningitis and tropical ulcers in the Central African Republic and an intense outbreak of the Marburg virus in Angola. The spectre of the

avian flu threatens parts of Asia with possible dire humanitarian consequences. Though the effects of disasters are difficult to measure, using preliminary figures compiled by the Collaborating Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, it is estimated that in 2004 alone there were 360 disasters affecting more than 145 million persons and causing more than \$103 billion in material damage.

5. Ongoing and indiscriminate fighting continues to escalate throughout the Darfur states, resulting in looting, burning of villages and killings, and includes a high incidence of violence against women and girls and deliberate attacks against aid workers. Such insecurity has displaced more than 2.4 million persons and continues to restrict the delivery of humanitarian aid — as of April 2005, 17 per cent of the region remained inaccessible to humanitarian actors, though humanitarian needs remain high. The World Food Programme estimates that 3.25 million persons in Darfur require humanitarian assistance in 2005; this is likely to increase as populations suffer the effects of drought. Access will be further complicated by the coming rainy season that will make it very difficult for aid agencies to deliver food over the region's inadequate roads. Additionally, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that since the end of 2002, the number of Sudanese refugees in Chad increased from 13,000 to 225,000, raising tensions between refugee and host communities as they compete for water, firewood and grazing land.

6. Remnants of civil strife and disagreements over the distribution of tsunami aid in Sri Lanka, rising tensions between the Government and Maoist insurgents in Nepal and failed peace negotiations, disarmament programmes and prevailing insecurity in West Africa, are undermining humanitarian efforts to assist civilian populations in many areas, pitching these countries towards humanitarian crises on a larger scale. Zimbabwe is this year suffering the worst food shortages in three years as a result of drought, acute shortages of agricultural inputs and a controlled price structure. Official sources indicate that maize production is below 500,000 tonnes, less than one third of the annual requirements of 1.8 million tonnes; the Government has provisionally indicated that 2.4 million of the most vulnerable people are currently in need of food aid.

7. In several areas of the world, refugees have been able to find a solution to their plight. According to UNHCR, the global number of refugees, excluding 4.1 million Palestinians assisted by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, is an estimated 9.3 million in 2004 — the lowest level since 1980. An estimated 1.5 million refugees worldwide were able to return to Afghanistan (940,000), Angola (90,000), Burundi (90,000), Iraq (194,000) and Liberia (57,000). However, almost 400,000 asylum requests were registered in 50, mostly industrialized, countries in Asia, Europe and North America in 2004.

8. Of continued concern is the number of internally displaced persons, which far outnumber recognized refugees: today 25 million persons remain displaced by war and human rights abuses in about 49 countries; from 70 to 80 per cent of them are women and children. An additional 25 million persons have been displaced by natural disasters. These numbers have remained virtually unchanged since 2000.

B. A case for Africa

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9. Prospects for peace in nine African countries, including the resolution of the long-standing crisis in Angola and Sierra Leone, and the promise of the formation of the Transitional Federal Government in Somalia, present potential opportunities to make progress on the humanitarian front. In addition, several regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the South African Development Community and its New Partnership for African Development initiative, are making great strides in promoting humanitarian assistance, peace, security and sustainable development in a number of countries across the region.

10. However, high levels of humanitarian needs persist, the challenges involved in addressing such needs remain significant and attempts to exploit such opportunities and effectively engage regional, subregional and national institutions to address these needs have not worked. If the humanitarian system is serious about ending suffering in Africa, it must be more systematic in the way it approaches humanitarian crises there. This includes taking focused and coordinated steps to identify the level of need, to build, re-establish and employ indigenous early warning, preparedness and response capacity and to commit to funding such initiatives in an equitable and predictable way.

11. Today, many parts of Africa are dominated by several crises of protection and displacement, where acute insecurity and increased violence against civilians in many areas are preventing humanitarian agencies from delivering basic services to vulnerable populations. In Darfur, the escalation of fighting, high levels of sexual and gender-based violence and the deliberate targeting and killing of humanitarian staff have dramatically reduced the ability of the humanitarian community to provide assistance and address protection concerns throughout the crisis. In northern Uganda, an increase in violence and brutal killings, abductions, rapes and attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army is preventing humanitarian agencies from expanding basic services to 1.4 million internally displaced persons. In addition, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that about 20,000 children have been abducted since 1986, serving as soldiers, porters and sex slaves, and 35,000 children continue to travel by night to avoid abduction. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the World Health Organization estimates that nearly 40,000 women and men, girls and boys have become victims of sexual and gender-based violence, compounding the human impact of a conflict that has killed more than 3.8 million civilians since 1998. In Togo, violence following the outcome of the presidential elections has triggered refugee movements (34,000 persons) to Benin and Ghana. The number of internally displaced persons is unknown.

12. The African Union has been instrumental in enhancing the protection of civilians in Darfur, as it has provided protection in displacement camps and along routes used for the collection of firewood and water and has usefully ensured a proper balance of female police officers to assist in cases of sexual violence. Substantially increasing the levels of deployment of the African Union would go a long way to improving protection to civilians in Darfur. Such practices should be replicated in other contexts.

13. Successive seasons of drought in the Horn of Africa and in southern Africa have led to loss of assets and livestock and to severe food insecurity, requiring acute

and coordinated interventions to address the underlying problems in these regions. In Eritrea alone, close to 60 per cent of the population requires food assistance and the maternal malnutrition rate of 53 per cent is among the highest in the world. In southern Africa, where some areas received as little as 10 per cent of normal rainfall between mid-January and mid-March, reports of crop failures are already becoming more and more disturbing; Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and parts of Mozambique seem worst affected. The AIDS epidemic there has only compounded humanitarian needs and increased vulnerability to drought cycles: UNICEF estimates that 4 million children orphaned by HIV/AIDS live with little access to the basics for survival; the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations estimates that countries affected by the AIDS pandemic could lose 13 to 26 per cent of their agricultural labour force by the year 2020.

14. Broad-based efforts, such as under Ethiopia's Coalition for Food and Livelihood Security, have begun to address response to drought and climate fluctuations through innovative insurance mechanisms. In southern Africa, high degrees of collaboration across the United Nations and with other stakeholders, including national Governments, donors and the Southern African Development Community non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been instrumental in preventing increases in acute malnutrition and deaths arising from hunger. However, overall levels of vulnerability are increasing in both these areas in the absence of urgent and acute interventions, requiring that coordinated and sustained engagement through these initiatives continues.

15. The locust invasion in the summer of 2004, while preventable, attests to the fact that the critical capacity that once existed in Africa has been lost or eroded. The magnitude of the locust swarm that descended upon the Sahel region of Africa overwhelmed local response capability, as many of the affected countries had not faced locust problems for over 15 years. Although the United Nations had long promoted the development of the Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES) to address such a situation, the programme in west and north-west Africa is still not operational because of the lack of donor support. Though efforts are under way to contain future locust infestations, the desert swarms will most likely form again in north-west Africa at the beginning of the summer of 2005. It is therefore essential to expand the early warning capacities and build and maintain operational capacity on the ground to reduce the scale and impact of future swarms.

16. Despite both high levels of need alongside promising opportunities, funding levels for the United Nations consolidated appeals as of May 2005 demonstrate that donors still approach humanitarian crises with insufficient resources and an uneven hand. Of the 14 appeals for Africa, 8 have received less than 20 per cent of requirements so far. And with the exception of a small flash appeal for Angola, none have received more than 40 per cent. These funding imbalances are neither new nor aberrant: an analysis of the financial tracking system for the past three years suggests that resources that pay for prominent crises (Afghanistan, Iraq, the Indian Ocean tsunami) are indeed diverted from other areas and that promises to replenish aid budgets depleted by large-scale crises are not generally kept. These concerns also apply to the chronic, uneven funding of certain neglected sectors. Such funding levels and patterns are unacceptable if Africa is to be a global humanitarian priority, as stated by so many on so many occasions. What is needed is a "new deal" for humanitarian assistance in which the donors, for their part, develop less restrictive mechanisms for the disbursements of humanitarian assistance in exchange for

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humanitarian organizations agreeing to operate against agreed benchmarks as to the scale, speed and intensity of response.

III. Strengthening humanitarian capacity

17. Recent events have demonstrated that the humanitarian community is capable of launching a massive response, when called upon. However, it has become equally apparent that the quality of such a response cannot always be guaranteed: humanitarian response does not always meet the basic needs of affected populations in a timely way, response varies considerably from crisis to crisis and current capacity levels are not always sufficient to meet the demands of major emergencies occurring at the same time. While some of the factors affecting response are specific to individual crises — such as the lack of access and obstruction of aid — some of the key challenges seem to be systemic in nature.

18. The ongoing crisis in the Darfur region of the Sudan demonstrated early on the difficulties of mobilizing capacity in a complex environment and continues to underscore some fundamental weaknesses in the capacity of the humanitarian response system. For example, when the humanitarian community was authorized to respond to the crisis in Darfur, a rapid and robust response was not entirely forthcoming. Bureaucratic measures taken by the Government and the escalation of fighting by both rebel groups and Government forces delayed the early deployment of humanitarian staff. However, even when the situation stabilized, the humanitarian system was unable to quickly mobilize substantial amounts of emergency funds or field appropriately skilled and seasoned staff. And while, over time, the humanitarian community has made progress in addressing the mandate and gaps and technical weaknesses in certain sectors — water and sanitation, shelter, protection and internally displaced persons camp management — coverage in these areas remains uneven.

19. The tsunami response also highlighted some key areas where response capacity could be strengthened. For example, the leadership and performance of the resident coordinators, who acted as humanitarian coordinators, varied from country to country. Some critical common services were slow to mobilize and pre-existing standby arrangements with Governments, notably the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams system and the International Humanitarian Partnership, while useful, might have benefited from better coordination and a broader range of staff and expertise. Well-known sectoral weaknesses became evident almost immediately and coordination, particularly in the health sector, was patchy. Coordination among NGOs and between NGOs and the United Nations was poor. And in recent months, as the response has shifted from relief to recovery and rehabilitation, it is clear that there is a need to improve the system's ability to focus on social and economic rehabilitation alongside infrastructure projects.

20. These and other crises also demonstrate that the humanitarian system has not been entirely successful at tapping into the often significant capacity that does exist, particularly at regional and national levels. National and local leadership of the relief and recovery effort following the December 2003 earthquake in Bam, Iran, was critical to immediate life-saving efforts as well as the smooth progress to the recovery phase. Similarly, countries such as Jamaica and Cuba were able to minimize the damage caused by the 2004 hurricane season because of effective

national and community programmes that allowed them to initiate evacuation, the provision of shelter and the management of relief supplies. The African Union has been vital to establishing the conditions necessary for the quick and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance in many parts of Africa. On the other hand, systems put in place to prevent mass locust infestation in north-western Africa have not been maintained.

A. Challenges

21. While the acute, complex and concurrent crises in Darfur, in the Indian Ocean region and elsewhere have brought to light the limitations of the current system, they also offer critical insight and lessons for how performance and service delivery might be improved.

Coordination capacity

22. Cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders at the field level is crucial to ensuring that the system-wide capacity works effectively. Lack of sectoral coordination (both within and between sectors) can lead to gaps or overlap in coverage in some areas. Weaknesses in the coordination of military assets, logistics teams and standby arrangements often mean that critical assets and resources are not always used efficiently. Inconsistent planning between relief and recovery teams may undermine the credibility established by effective response and is critical to sustaining the well-being of the population. Coordination among local, national, regional and international response teams is essential, as the inevitable convergence of multiple response actors often complicates — rather than contributes to — the overall relief and recovery effort if roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined.

23. Such weaknesses in coordination capacity require establishing more routine and formalized approaches to sector coordination among United Nations agencies and partners and improving civil-military liaison to make the best and most appropriate use of what are critical assets. System-wide efforts should also be made to establish a broader common logistics and operational support infrastructure. Strategic planning is also critical to fitting early response efforts into overall relief priorities, risk reduction, resource mobilization and long-term planning. And creating “bottom-up” coordination approaches and structures that pro-actively involve and strengthen key local players from the outset will help ensure coherence and effectiveness throughout all phases of the recovery effort.

24. When the humanitarian effects of a crisis are beyond local capabilities to resolve, or in the case of natural disasters, when international help is requested, it is the United Nations country team of agencies, funds and programmes, that, under the leadership of the humanitarian coordinator is tasked with identifying, in collaboration with operational partners, the opportunities and constraints to effective humanitarian action. However, delays and gaps in response suggest a need to strengthen field coordination structures, including a more broadly based humanitarian country team, strengthening the leadership of the humanitarian coordinator and resident coordinator, and ensuring that sufficient and flexible resources are immediately available to support field structures adequately. Coordination would also be improved through the development of international

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targets for the timeliness of response, the speed of disbursement and the predictability of support.

Surge capacity

25. Speed of deployment in emergencies and disasters is essential in ensuring effective coordination and timely service delivery. Though the humanitarian system's rapid response capacity was well demonstrated during the tsunami crisis, adequate deployment of appropriate staff and material resources to the Darfur crisis was less swift. Moreover, while common services — logistics, communication and information technology, and mine action — have become mission-critical to the movement of staff, resources, the identification and analysis of needs, and the delivery of assistance, such services need to be strengthened with additional, experienced staff, skilled in a variety of technical areas, capable of leading field operations and able to deploy at short notice. Finally, the provision of rapid financial analysis and close to real-time financial tracking is critical to enhancing the timing of the funding and, as a result, the quality of the response.

26. Improving humanitarian capacity therefore requires improved mechanisms and standby arrangements that can rapidly mobilize technical expertise. Efforts have been made on the part of the United Nations system to strengthen common services, improve emergency response rosters and make rapid deployment mechanisms more nimble. Several United Nations agencies have also responded swiftly to minimize the impact of landmines on civilian populations and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

27. However, strengthening humanitarian response capacity also requires that the humanitarian community more easily draw upon the national expertise of countries that have rapid response experience. The United Nations has collaborated with Governments to establish standby arrangements for rapid staff deployment for assessments and for emergency staffing; certain Governments have also initiated standing arrangements for the rapid deployment of staff to augment the surge capacities of United Nations agencies. Such arrangements should be strengthened further to work within — rather than in parallel with — United Nations rapid response mechanisms.

Sectoral capacity

28. Significant capacity gaps exist in water and sanitation, shelter and camp management, and protection, and such weaknesses are consistent across both disasters and emergencies. In some instances, such failings are attributable to gaps in mandate. In other cases, the humanitarian response system lacked the presence, skills and experience to perform required functions. In all cases, such weaknesses have delayed response, prevented adequate coverage and reduced the system's ability to ensure equity in the distribution of aid. There is therefore a need to reinvest in developing and maintaining systemic capacity for humanitarian response by increasing and strengthening professional staffing in key sectors, by improving common logistics and communications services and by forming and supporting strategic partnerships that tap into the large response capacity of NGOs and draw on the existing expertise of local and regional organizations. Because the protection of civilians is a responsibility that lies squarely with States, enhancing the protection of civilians requires that Member States commit to preventing and addressing the

implications of such violence — in the retraining of the national army and police to create a security sector trained in human rights law, in the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, in the development of programmes to support women's economic empowerment and in the provision of access to medical and psychological services to victims and survivors of sexual violence. In support of these efforts, the humanitarian system must work to fill protection gaps by improving expertise, agreeing to attendant roles and responsibilities and increasing the capacity of regional organizations to act as protection forces.

Financial capacity

29. The way humanitarian crises are funded affects the system's ability to respond promptly, effectively and in a principled and impartial manner. Moreover, timely, adequate and predictable funding improves the Organization's ability further to develop and maintain response capacity where it is currently inadequate. There are many situations where crises develop or escalate rapidly, where a rapid deployment of staff in critical sectors is required or where the needs in underreported countries or sectors may go unnoticed but require substantial amounts of support. In a sudden-onset disaster, flash appeals may be too late in coming and current emergency response mechanisms, such as the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and the Emergency Response Fund, were developed more than a decade ago and may have become inadequate to the scale and speed today's crises require.

30. At the global level, improving financial capacity means (a) enabling an immediate response (e.g. providing start-up funds before pledges become liquid and providing funds when unanticipated developments lead to an increased need for humanitarian activities), (b) introducing a mechanism to ensure equitable funding of crises and of sectors to ensure funding for neglected emergencies and (c) providing funds to build up capacity to address gaps (e.g. protection, camp management).

National and local capacity

31. Building national and local preparedness and response capacity is key to a more effective response effort; engaging national and local actors in the response phase ensures that relief efforts contribute to long-term recovery. In the case of large-scale natural disasters, national and local response teams are often the most effective at carrying out rapid assessments and coordinating the initial response because they can more easily overcome obstacles that beset their international counterparts. In the context of complex emergencies, national ownership and leadership in the post-conflict phase is critical to the consolidation of peace and to building consensus around development priorities, roles, responsibilities and resources. In both emergencies and disasters, partnering with community members will facilitate long-term sustainability.

32. All too often, national and local institutions lack adequate capacity to address such humanitarian crises. When building the capacity of the humanitarian system, attention should be given to mobilizing and supporting existing capacities, knowledge and institutions through the transfer of technology and know-how and through public education. Donors and affected Governments should commit to investing much more in disaster preparedness.

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B. Ways forward

33. The United Nations humanitarian response system was designed well over a decade ago and was reformed more than seven years ago. In many areas, it has stood the test of time. However, the complexity of the environment in which we now work, combined with the experiences of the past few years, dictate that we update our systems and strategies and upgrade our mechanisms and tools so that what was developed in the 1990s will be more effective in today's environment.

Humanitarian response review

34. One way forward is to examine the system's core competencies. In light of the high current levels of humanitarian demand, it is evident that there is a critical need to identify those factors that have hindered the speed and effectiveness of humanitarian response, including in the area of protection, and ensure that appropriate steps are taken to improve the timeliness and impact of humanitarian actions.

35. There are also a number of new proposals and initiatives for strengthening humanitarian capacity that might have a far-reaching effect on the humanitarian effort on a worldwide scale. Such proposals should be examined as critical opportunities to strengthen global humanitarian response capacity in a few key areas and should be evaluated in the context of how that may contribute to and improve the emergency response system of the United Nations overall.

36. To this end, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, based on his mandate in resolution 46/182, initiated an independent in-depth system-wide review of humanitarian response capacities. The review will analyse the overall humanitarian response capacities as well as the potential resources available to meet future demands for assistance and protection. The focus of the review will give attention primarily to the capacities of the United Nations, international NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. This should help achieve a common understanding of both the current response capacity and available expertise and of how the humanitarian system can effectively mobilize and deploy them. In addition, it will identify possible gaps in expertise and resources and recommend measures that need to be taken to address the shortcomings. The results of the review should be available in the summer of 2005.

New partnerships

37. Recent events have also demonstrated key areas where capacity can be strengthened through partnerships. Improved partnerships between humanitarian and development actors would improve the handover from the immediate response to recovery programmes. Partnerships within the system may be necessary to overcome those gaps in assistance — such as protection and camp management in situations involving internally displaced persons — that do not enjoy leadership from any one agency. Partnerships with Governments can serve to help build their own capacity to manage and mitigate humanitarian crises, as well as enhance rapid response capacity and expertise of international structures by providing human, technical and material resources. Partnerships and formal engagement with regional organizations would help boost the system's ability to perform key tasks that are

often beyond the ability of humanitarian agency staff to provide but that benefit the delivery of assistance overall (e.g. security).

38. Whereas up to now the role of the private sector in providing humanitarian assistance has been limited, the tsunami crisis opened up opportunities for this sector to play an important role in the humanitarian field. Increased private sector engagement in humanitarian operations raises coordination questions that should be further evaluated.

IV. Follow-up to humanitarian resolutions and the “organizational aspects” of intergovernmental dialogue

39. The effectiveness of humanitarian work, however, is not simply a matter of capacity; it also depends on the relevance of Member State dialogue, the focus and strength of intergovernmental resolutions and the ability of the United Nations system to “operationalize” such resolutions in terms of activities on the ground.

40. The recognition of this fact prompted Member States during the humanitarian affairs segment of the 2004 session of the Economic and Social Council to request a progress report on three years of Council resolutions on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (resolutions 2002/32, 2003/5, 2004/50) to monitor follow-up and to better understand where and how resolutions may have had an impact on the humanitarian policy and practice of the United Nations. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in paragraph 4 of its resolution 59/141, emphasized the importance of the discussion of humanitarian policies and activities in the Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council and that those discussions be further revitalized by Member States.

A. Follow-up to humanitarian resolutions of the Economic and Social Council

41. General Assembly resolution 46/182 stipulated that the Secretary-General update Member States annually on humanitarian assistance through the Economic and Social Council. The humanitarian affairs segment of the Council was subsequently established by the Secretary General’s reform of 1997 to “give guidance on overall humanitarian issues and coordination” (see A/51/950, para. 193) with a view to improving the management and coherence of United Nations system humanitarian activities. Since then, the humanitarian affairs segment has served as a central discussion forum on thematic humanitarian issues, resulting in two agreed conclusions (1998/1 and 1991/1), two chairman’s summaries and three resolutions (2002/32, 2003/5 and 2004/50). During the past three years, these resolutions have broadly focused on the following themes:

- Coordination and response to emergencies and disasters
- Resource mobilization and humanitarian financing
- Transition from relief to development
- Protection and internal displacement
- Sexual exploitation and gender-based violence
- Disaster preparedness and risk reduction
- Gender mainstreaming
- National capacity-building and participation
- Safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

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A detailed list of actions taken up in relation to humanitarian resolutions during the past three years can be found in the matrix that has been submitted as a conference room paper as a supplement to the present report (A/60/CRP.1).

B. Impact of humanitarian resolutions

42. The implementation of humanitarian resolutions, however, is only relevant if the actions that result from them lead to concrete improvements in the coordination or delivery of humanitarian assistance at headquarters or on the ground. Though such “impact” is hard to measure, as policy or programming progress is often driven (or constrained) by a variety of factors, sources and inputs, it is possible to evaluate whether and how the discussions and resolutions of the Economic and Social Council have influenced humanitarian policy and practice by analysing the Council’s approach to the following thematic issues.

Humanitarian coordination

43. As articulated in resolution 46/182, the coordination of actions and actors in the often confusing aftermath of a natural disaster or the management of the multiplicity of needs in a complex emergency is critical to the overall effectiveness of response. In the context of the transition from relief to development in both post-disaster and post-conflict situations, coordination is also essential to shifting ownership from international to national actors, to ensuring that stop-gap processes are phased out in favour of enduring structures and to guaranteeing that resources are systematically mobilized and equitably applied to meet a range of needs. In past recommendations, the Secretary-General has therefore encouraged States to recognize the need for strengthened coordination mechanisms and management.

44. Economic and Social Council support to strengthening humanitarian coordination, however, remains uneven. While Member States have consistently reaffirmed the lead role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator in humanitarian response, humanitarian resolutions have stopped short of strengthening the resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator system that extends such leadership to the field. Annual affirmations in the resolutions of the United Nations coordinating role in disaster response have been met instead with the creation of regional initiatives to develop parallel disaster response and coordination structures outside the United Nations system. Economic and Social Council resolutions, however, have rightly emphasized the importance of building regional, national and local capacity to both effectively prepare for, manage and mitigate disasters and to lead the coordination of post-conflict and post-disaster phases. While NGOs have been consistently good at building local and national humanitarian response capacity in a variety of contexts, the United Nations must do much more and in a more systematic manner.

45. As the thematic cornerstone of the Council’s humanitarian affairs segment, strengthening the coordination of humanitarian response in the context of disasters and complex emergencies is of primary and central concern. Such concern should be met with more focused intergovernmental attention in the form of support to those coordination mechanisms and structures that enhance the overall performance of the humanitarian system.

Resource mobilization and humanitarian financing

46. Despite generous pledges from donors in response to major crises during the past three years, funding for humanitarian assistance continues to be low, delayed and unevenly applied. The reasons for this are various, but are due, in part, to inconsistencies in the identification and prioritization of needs, the tracking and analysis of aid flows and the way such funds are sourced and disbursed.

47. While such problems had been diagnosed by the United Nations system and by donors, raising such concerns to the Economic and Social Council has contributed to policy progress in this area in substantial ways. Council debates and resolutions helped to reframe the funding agenda by successfully linking humanitarian financing with the effectiveness of assistance. The Council's endorsement of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative has helped to broaden the debate outside donor circles, offered policy directives that have encouraged behavioural shifts and prompted discussions within donor countries and among donor groups that have led to improvements, notably to a higher rate of conversion of pledges to cash-in-hand.

48. Economic and Social Council resolutions have also lent critical intergovernmental weight to specific, technical actions towards improving both funding levels and the conditions under which such funding is sourced, allocated and managed. Economic and Social Council attention has helped launch internal processes to find common definitions of humanitarian assistance and to strengthen the analysis and reporting mechanisms for documenting, comparing and presenting needs assessments across emergencies. Council resolutions calling for the strengthening of the consolidated appeals process has helped to support United Nations-donor initiatives to improve the reporting of financial contributions and strengthen the presentation and analysis of funding patterns found therein. Improvements in the financial tracking system continue today with help from PriceWaterhouseCoopers, which has donated 8,000 man-hours to both a forensic analysis of current humanitarian aid flows for the tsunami crisis and to provide technical expertise to the system as a whole.

49. However, Economic and Social Council resolutions have had only a marginal impact on funding patterns in the areas of neglected emergencies, underresourced sectors and funding gaps, particularly for post-disaster recovery. It is in these areas that more support from Member States is needed.

Transition

50. During the past few years, countries emerging from crisis and recovering from natural disasters have required that the Council's humanitarian affairs segment focus not only on addressing enduring life saving needs, but also on identifying ways to help Governments restore authority and the rule of law, rebuild basic infrastructure and build back the livelihoods in what are fragile "transitional" phases.

51. Though the issue of the transition from relief to development had been on the intergovernmental agenda since the early 1990s, progress on it had lost momentum, as discussions tended to focus on United Nations processes, tools and internal concerns. Renewed attention to the issue in the Economic and Social Council during the past three years, which coincided with the need to support work in Afghanistan, has allowed the United Nations to revitalize the transitions discussion by promoting better coordination in transition environments, including with the international

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financial institutions, and to shift the debate, refocusing transition priorities to the development of policy and processes aimed to support State ownership and leadership and, in the case of post-disaster transitions, the need to avoid reinforcing risk.

52. Though many positive initiatives have been launched to improve coordination in transitions, the humanitarian affairs segment has not managed to engage the international financial institutions successfully in getting them to relate more coherently to the United Nations humanitarian and development partners. However, significant post-conflict and post-disaster activities are ongoing in many areas of the world and require material, financial and policy support. It remains unclear what direction the humanitarian affairs segment should take with regard to transition.

Protection and internal displacement

53. Civilian victims of conflict are often forced from their homes, denied access to life-saving food, medicine and shelter and may become the primary target of attacks motivated by ethnic or religious hatred, political infighting or the ruthless pursuit of economic interests. Civilians affected by disasters have lost — often in an instant — not only their homes and belongings, but also their social networks and means of economic survival. Protecting and assisting civilian victims of conflict and disasters is therefore critical to restoring the human capital and capacity of a country. Though the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians rests with States, international support is often required, with the consent of national Governments or when the State cannot protect its citizens alone. With an estimated 50 million persons internally displaced by conflicts and disasters worldwide, protecting and assisting internally displaced persons is particularly important to stabilizing affected countries and restoring economic and social life.

54. Despite the fact that Member States have condemned certain armed groups — notably the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone and the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda — for egregious acts of violence against civilians, both protection and internal displacement remain contentious topics in the Economic and Social Council. Fears of “humanitarian intervention” elsewhere in the United Nations have overshadowed the protection debate.

55. Fundamental to the issue of protection is access, and this is where humanitarian resolutions have had a role to play. By reaffirming the responsibility of all parties to conflict to ensure the safe and unhindered access of the affected community to humanitarian assistance, and by reminding neighbouring States of their responsibility to facilitate the transit of such assistance, the Economic and Social Council has acted as a valuable advocacy tool on behalf of the humanitarian community. While the Council has been instrumental in raising awareness, it has been unable to “operationalize” such principles in the form of actions on the ground. Access continues to be routinely denied by Governments and armed groups in some crises and the Council has been unable to address critical protection needs, such as management of internally displaced persons' camps and securing communities from the threat of sexual violence. Such issues need to be taken as seriously as material relief and require a less contentious intergovernmental approach.

Gender-based violence, including sexual exploitation and abuse

56. Sexual and gender-based violence continues to be used as a weapon of war as women, girls — and some men and boys — are beaten, raped and humiliated as a means of asserting power, breaking community ties and degrading human dignity. The prevailing culture of impunity in many situations further reinforces these developments. Survivors and victims of such attacks often suffer from serious health consequences and rejection by the community; economic exclusion and social constraints often dissuade victims from seeking or receiving help. Sexual exploitation and abuse of civilians by peacekeeping or humanitarian personnel in crises is also an issue of grave concern, but one where allegations of such conduct have prompted action by the United Nations and the humanitarian community.

57. The Economic and Social Council has consistently raised these issues, although with varying impact. Though the Council called upon States to adopt preventive measures and effective responses to sexual violence and to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice, such a directive has not translated into either preventive or punitive measures on the part of States. The role the Council has played on the issue of sexual exploitation on the part of United Nations humanitarian and military staff, however, has been a positive one, reinforcing the specific actions already under way and lending support and momentum to important policy processes. For example, when efforts were under way to implement the standards developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, it was important to have the strong language in Council resolutions when developing the Secretary-General's bulletin on special measures against sexual exploitation and abuse and when following up with the United Nations system and with NGOs on adopting standards developed by the Standing Committee as part of their own codes of conduct.

58. The use of sexual and gender-based violence as a weapon of war is a worrying, enduring problem that should remain firmly on the intergovernmental humanitarian agenda. Ending the culture of impunity that allows such violence to occur should be consistently reinforced by Member States. There is also a need for the more determined engagement of Government with civil society and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to help societies mitigate the effects of such violence, including in the field of health education. Keeping the issue of sexual exploitation of humanitarian staff on the agenda of the Economic and Social Council will continue to be important in continually reinforcing ongoing efforts being undertaken by the system.

Disaster response and risk reduction

59. The intensity, frequency and geographic scale of today's disasters require extraordinary levels of coordination to manage the proliferation of relief actors and actions and attend to a wide range of needs and circumstances. Effective management of disasters also requires consideration of risk and vulnerability and investment in risk reduction activities as part of response, recovery and development plans.

60. Economic and Social Council resolutions have been instrumental in promoting specific operational initiatives to improve the speed and effectiveness of international disaster assistance by calling for the strengthening of international urban search and rescue and, together with the efforts of such other organizations as

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the International Telecommunication Union and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), by consistently encouraging States to ratify or accede to the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations. These efforts proved successful, as membership in the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group has broadened and the Tampere Convention entered into force in January 2005. The Council has also supported the work being led by IFRC on the development of “guiding principles and practice on international disaster response”.

61. The Economic and Social Council has also been instrumental in lending strategic policy support to humanitarian issues taken up in the General Assembly. While disaster reduction is an issue also taken up in the Assembly each fall, the Council has been able to reinforce risk reduction policy messages by asking the Assembly to give priority to integrating disaster risk reduction strategies into relevant legal, policy and planning instruments. This has been done mainly through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, reinforced by the Hyogo Framework for Action, agreed upon at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Japan in January 2005.

Observations

62. The foregoing analysis of the role of the Economic and Social Council on a variety of humanitarian policy issues suggests that policy progress in some areas is easier than in others. Most importantly, it suggests that the Council has a role to play when its reporting, discussions and resolutions are clear in their intent and focus. Below are some general observations about the role of the Council and its impact on humanitarian coordination and assistance based on its performance during the past three years.

Broad policy dialogue

63. The value of the Economic and Social Council with respect to humanitarian assistance and coordination continues to be its inclusiveness as an annual platform that brings together United Nations agencies, NGOs and donor and recipient countries on issues that constrain humanitarian work. Though the Council does not serve to identify policy problems and seldom initiates policy initiatives, it has had a role to play in broadening policy debates when such issues require more broadly reflective perspectives, in reframing policy agendas when issues have been derailed and in bringing policy coherence to those areas that have fallen prey to internal debate. The codification of such discussions in the form of Council resolutions helps then to put intergovernmental weight behind critical policy priorities and activities, formalizing, endorsing and reinforcing actions already under way.

Progress and follow-up

64. The Economic and Social Council has also served as a means for tracking progress on humanitarian policy issues. Through annual reports of the Secretary-General, the United Nations system and its humanitarian partners report back to Member States on actions taken throughout the year, highlighting emerging challenges and trends. Through the adoption of humanitarian resolutions, Member States collectively endorse the policy priorities for the coming year. While such an exercise has intrinsic value, the process might be improved by a more strategic

focus of issues of concern in the reporting and in the resolutions, a more consistent approach to the way humanitarian discussions are introduced and shaped and a clearer division of labour between the work done in the Council and in the General Assembly to avoid overlap in reporting and resolution requirements. Though the foregoing examples demonstrate that it is easier to make policy progress in some areas than in others, where requested actions in resolutions are more specific, they work better. Moreover, the Council's effectiveness as a monitoring tool is contingent on its ability to promote accountability among all parts of the humanitarian system, including Member States, though the foregoing examples suggest it has been less successful in this regard. The Council would therefore benefit from broader Member State participation, particularly from those countries that are partners in or recipients of humanitarian assistance.

Promoting respect for humanitarian principles and law

65. Where Economic and Social Council resolutions have been less successful is in their ability to promote respect for humanitarian principles. While the Council's humanitarian resolutions routinely reaffirm humanitarian principles, the responsibilities of States with regard to international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law and key humanitarian guidelines and norms, the Council has failed to generate broad respect for such principles or promote compliance with them in terms of actions on the ground. Reinforcing the normative base is an important component of strengthening the humanitarian agenda that may require attention from a broader constituency than the Council can provide.

C. "Organizational aspects" of intergovernmental dialogue

66. The September summit meeting of Member States provides an important opportunity for clarifying, in particular, the respective roles that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council should play with respect to humanitarian action and coordination. Such discussions might benefit from the following observations gleaned from experience with intergovernmental debates on humanitarian issues.

Making more strategic use of the Economic and Social Council would strengthen the humanitarian policy agenda

67. As demonstrated above, the Economic and Social Council is an important policy mechanism that would benefit from a more strategic vision and approach. Such an improved approach might (a) better define the role of the Economic and Social Council vis-à-vis that of the General Assembly and the Security Council with regard to humanitarian issues, (b) clearly and systematically identify and address gaps in the system and improve, rather than constrain, humanitarian action and (c) promote broad ownership of and accountability to issues of common concern. In particular, proposals to differentiate the work of the Economic and Social Council as a specialist technical development/humanitarian body from the substantive normative work of the Assembly would help in this regard.

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The point of departure must always be what happens on the ground

68. Economic and Social Council discussions and resolutions are most effective when they are driven by issues and challenges arising from the field. The requests in Council resolutions that achieved the greatest impact were those that were rooted in and driven by field events and that had enough traction at the operational/agency and field levels to be brought forward. In this regard, concrete progress has been made in areas such as sexual exploitation and abuse, where critical thinking on a field imperative was formalized by the Council and then put to practical use. Similarly, the Council helped reinvigorate much-needed discussions on transitions, allowing the United Nations system, together with affected States, to “operationalize” some of the policy ideas into programming tools at the disposal of the entire system.

Put humanity first

69. It is in the name of our collective concern for the principle of “humanity” that the United Nations system — including its intergovernmental bodies — can make positive progress towards achieving humanitarian goals. However, this can only be achieved by reaffirming the role of the United Nations humanitarian community as acting on behalf of the needs of the vulnerable, and not the politics of States. Intergovernmental debates on humanitarian issues would be best served by a more broadly reflective agenda that allows States to move beyond self-interested positions and give in-depth consideration to those issues and events that challenge the Organization’s ability effectively and responsibly to reduce pain and suffering on a worldwide scale.

V. Multidimensional missions

70. The past two years have seen an increase in the size, scale and scope of multidimensional peacekeeping operations. These developments have also resulted in the need to clarify relationships between the humanitarian, development, political and military elements of missions to better ensure that integration promotes coherence of approach when the various elements of the mission are mutually supportive and reinforcing.

71. Many humanitarian partners remain concerned that the nature and design of “integrated missions” have, in some cases, had an adverse impact on humanitarian operations. Specific concerns exist about the confusion of roles between military and humanitarian actors where quick-impact projects and “hearts and minds” campaigns take place alongside humanitarian programmes. Many non-United Nations humanitarian partner organizations have also been opposed to humanitarian coordination being fully integrated into peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions, fearing that this will have an adverse impact on their ability to assist those in need in accordance with humanitarian principles.

72. A recent independent study commissioned by the expanded Core Group of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs entitled, *Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations*, identified a number of ways that the United Nations could better harness its resources to respond more efficiently and comprehensively in peacekeeping and peacebuilding situations and offered the following conclusions:

- In many circumstances, especially where there is no clear-cut distinction between active conflict and post-conflict, humanitarian actors may need uninterrupted access to all areas and communications with all actors. Therefore, mission mandates need to recognize humanitarian principles and mission design must be sufficiently flexible to ensure that the humanitarian operating environment is protected and allow for the incorporation of relevant aspects of United Nations country team capacities into operational plans.
- Humanitarian principles could be more actively safeguarded by enabling the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General responsible for humanitarian and development activities to review quick-impact projects and hearts and minds activities to ensure that they did not conflict with humanitarian activities.
- In general terms, the study recognizes the need for an agreed definition of integrated missions to better define when and how multidimensional peacekeeping operations should be applied.
- The planning and design processes are critical to effective harmonious integration and need to draw more effectively on the experience of the pre-existing United Nations country team.
- The human rights system of the United Nations is also often called upon to play the dual roles of supporting transitional processes as well as monitoring and reporting on overall human rights developments. Mission structures must also be sufficiently flexible to enable human rights actors to meet their principled and mandate-based obligations while simultaneously supporting transitional processes.
- The study also recognizes that multidimensional peacekeeping operations operate in rapidly changing political environments. For this reason, it is important to ensure regular review of both mission mandates and the appropriateness of mission structures to deliver on the agreed objectives. The regular review of major peacekeeping operations is a proposed function for the Peacebuilding Commission.

VI. Update on the use of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and emergency cash grants

73. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) is a cash-flow mechanism under the authority of the Under-Secretary-General/Emergency Relief Coordinator and administered by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to bridge the gap between needs and available funding throughout a crisis. Funded by donors, CERF monies are released to United Nations operational agencies at the outset of a crisis and sometimes during later phases to assist agencies with cash-flow problems before donor contributions become available. The mechanism requires that agencies pay back the loan within one year. Disbursement is usually within four to five days and loans are normally repaid within six months.

74. The Fund, which was created by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/182, was originally intended for use during the initial phase of complex emergencies. Its use was later expanded by the Assembly in its resolution 56/107 to

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include disaster response, to address new requirements in the context of protracted emergencies and to support emergency staff safety arrangements for United Nations and associated personnel. Since its establishment in 1992, 18 United Nations agencies have accessed the fund 201 times and borrowed more than \$318 million, of which \$306.7 million has been reimbursed. Since June 2004, \$20.9 million has been borrowed and \$9.4 million reimbursed, primarily to respond to the crisis in the Sudan.

75. In the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster, the United Nations can provide emergency cash grants to countries affected by natural disasters. These grants are particularly effective because they can be used rapidly for the local purchase and delivery of life-saving relief supplies. Humanitarian crises during the past several years demonstrated that the \$50,000 ceiling, which was authorized by the General Assembly in its resolution 38/202 of 20 December 1983, was insufficient to be effective in the absence of alternative means of immediate relief. In light of this observation, Member States, through Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/50, recommended that the General Assembly authorize the increase of this ceiling. Taking their lead from the Council, Member States, in Assembly resolution 59/141, decided to raise the limit of an emergency cash grant to \$100,000 per country, per disaster, within the existing resources available from the regular budget.

Expanded CERF (e-CERF)

76. Though CERF and the emergency cash grant system remain important standby resource mechanisms in times of severe emergencies, consistent and timely response to humanitarian emergencies and disasters requires more robust financial mechanisms that can ensure adequate, predictable and flexible funding to enable an immediate response, provide funding for neglected emergencies and address sectoral gaps.

77. Expanding the scope and use of the current CERF will address the problems of slow and inequitable response. An expanded CERF (e-CERF) would build on the existing revolving fund mechanism to include a loan capacity and a grant component, both of which could be used for (a) immediate need (e.g. sudden onset natural disaster or conflict), (b) unanticipated costs, or (c) funding for neglected emergencies. More stringent criteria would be established for approval of grants vs. loans and a detailed mechanism for approval should be elaborated and approved by the General Assembly. A funding conference will be held for the e-CERF annually or every two years.

VII. Recommendations

Strengthen humanitarian response capacity by broadening the capacity base and improving expertise and performance benchmarks

78. There is significant deployable capacity within the system. However, such capacity is unpredictable, thin and relies on too small a core. In the event of a major crisis, the humanitarian system is often unable to pull together the right combination of expertise within the right time frame and, when doing so, will rely on the same group of people. Deployable capacity does — or did — exist, however, in countries where there are high levels of established humanitarian need, such as those in

Africa. Strengthening the capacity of the humanitarian system requires both expanding the mechanisms that can ensure appropriate and predictable deployment and tapping into existing skills and expertise to “thicken” its deployable base.

79. Significant capacity gaps exist in the areas of water and sanitation, shelter and camp management and protection. Such patterns of performance are consistent across both disasters and emergencies and are caused by a variety of factors, including limited deployable expertise and lack of predictable funding. Identifying the requisite skills and developing and funding a “preparedness capacity” in the areas of water and sanitation, health and, particularly, camp management, in crises, would help ensure better coverage in these sectors. Sectoral performance will also be improved by establishing clearer performance targets and indicators, such as were established to positive effect in the Sudan by the United Nations country team responding to the Sudan real-time evaluation.

- Expand and sustain essential common humanitarian services so that they can be predictably deployed and with the right combination of skills.
- Systematically engage to build and re-establish regional, national and local humanitarian response capacities so that the humanitarian system has immediate access to deployable resources in areas where humanitarian needs are demonstrably high, particularly in Africa.
- Identify and/or develop specialist technical expertise for major crises in water and sanitation, shelter and camp management and protection, and request the humanitarian response review to recommend the best mechanisms for achieving this objective.
- Establish finance mechanisms at the country level that ensure that critical gaps are immediately addressed.
- In sudden-onset disasters, establish performance benchmarks for the first four weeks. In complex crises, establish benchmarks from the outset of response.

Improve coordination by making more efficient use of the resources we have

80. The tsunami crisis demonstrated that there are considerable assets within the humanitarian system that would benefit from improved standby and coordination mechanisms and many proposals and initiatives have been put forth in this regard. However, such assets would be more efficiently used — and the humanitarian benefits would be potentially greater — if they are deployed under or coordinated with the United Nations and not run under their own steam. The United Nations should improve its ability to make the best use of humanitarian capacity at different levels, including regional capacity, by working out procedures where they can be deployed in a consistent manner to the benefit of affected populations. In addition, clearer and more formal coordination procedures and agreements with the military are essential.

- Establish improved mechanisms for the deployment of regional standby capacities under the leadership of the United Nations, such as through more formal agreements with regional organizations and the development of standard operating procedures for their deployment and coordination processes.

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- Strengthen the procedures for the use and coordination of military assets and develop more systematic links with major providers.
- Strengthen support to resident/humanitarian coordinators and to United Nations country teams.

Strengthen financial mechanisms by expanding the use of CERF

81. The current configuration of CERF as a revolving fund remains a useful — but limited — financial instrument for humanitarian response. Though in the past it has provided temporary liquidity to humanitarian agencies, its current configuration does not allow it adequately to fill rapidly rising needs in the initial phases of an emergency, before an appeal is launched, and contributes to delays in initial response.

- Expand CERF (e-CERF) to include a grant facility component based on voluntary contributions as an advance of funds normally contributed through the consolidated appeals process, managed under the authority of the Secretary-General, the primary purposes of which are:
 - Developing and sustaining international, regional and national preparedness and standby capacity
 - Facilitating rapid deployment costs
 - Covering unanticipated increased need for essential humanitarian services
 - Addressing core needs in underfunded emergencies.

Preserve humanitarian space in integrated missions

82. The need to observe humanitarian principles in peacebuilding missions should be recognized in all mission mandates.

- Develop better mission guidelines and terms of reference so that the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General responsible for humanitarian and development activities has a clear responsibility for maintaining oversight over all quick-impact projects and hearts and minds activities that could have an impact on humanitarian action.
- As long as there is a humanitarian function, the official responsible for humanitarian coordination and his or her support office should reflect the interests of the wider humanitarian community; this may require that the coordination office is located separately from the main mission office to facilitate access for humanitarian actors.
- The humanitarian elements of the United Nations need to be more consistently engaged at the earliest stages of mission planning and design. This will require the establishment of a dedicated capacity drawn from United Nations humanitarian actors to work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/25, in which the Assembly requested a report on the progress made in improving international response to natural disasters. The report also updates the activities of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, in response to General Assembly resolution 57/150 and other subsequent Assembly decisions on this subject.

The report highlights some of the key activities undertaken to respond to natural disasters during the reporting period with particular emphasis on disaster response, recovery and transition efforts and global initiatives to reduce risk.

* The report was delayed for technical reasons.

I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/25, in which the General Assembly requested a report on progress made on improving international response to natural disasters.
2. The report also includes an update of the activities of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), in response to General Assembly resolution 57/150.
3. A number of issues relevant to the report are also addressed in the reports of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/59/93-E/2004/74) and on the implementation of the international strategy for disaster reduction (A/59/228).

II. The year in review

4. The large number and scale of natural disasters are having an increasing human and financial impact, resulting in massive loss of life and property worldwide. It is often those communities most prone to natural hazards that are least able to cope with their effects, resulting in long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences. In 2003 and 2004, it is estimated that natural disasters claimed the lives of 75,000 people, affected more than 284 million people and caused more than \$65 billion worth of material damage. Overall trends indicate that the frequency of natural disasters and the number of people affected have increased sharply during the past 30 years, but that interventions, such as early warning and food aid, have maintained the death toll at a relatively steady level.
5. On 26 December 2003, a devastating earthquake struck the city of Bam in the Islamic Republic of Iran, destroying 85 per cent of the city, killing more than 26,000 people and injuring more than 30,000 others. Two months later, on 24 February 2004, an earthquake occurred close to the port city Al Hoceima, Morocco, killing more than 600, injuring 900 and displacing 15,000 people.
6. Intense monsoons in July 2004 led to serious flooding in South Asia, killing more than 2,000 people, affecting more than 50 million people and causing severe damage to public infrastructure, including roads and railways. South-East Nepal was the hardest hit, with an estimated 130,000 people affected and roughly 38,000 families displaced. In Bangladesh, more than 33 million people have been affected and about 5 million people are in urgent need of food, as well as other relief items. Flooding in the Dominican Republic and Haiti in November 2003 and May 2004 killed more than 1,059 people and affected 6,226 families. Severe flooding in Argentina and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia caused infrastructural damage to roads and bridges, as well as to agricultural facilities. In Peru, severe cold and snowstorms in July 2004 killed 90 and affected 337,467 people. A heat wave in Europe in the summer of 2003 reportedly led to more than 20,000 deaths. To these examples can be added hundreds of smaller-scale disasters, many of which go unreported and therefore are not included in global disaster statistics.
7. Erratic and inadequate rainfall in the Horn of Africa perpetuates drought conditions in the region. Although international efforts to address and fund structural obstacles to food security averted a major famine from the drought that

began in 2002, food shortages continue to threaten millions with hunger. Malnutrition and extreme poverty have caused mass population movements in search of safer and more fertile ground. The United Nations 2004 Humanitarian Appeal estimates that almost 2 million people in Eritrea, 5 million people in Ethiopia and 1.3 million people in Somalia are in need of immediate emergency aid. In Kenya, the recent combination of endemic drought, premature ending of the long rains and blight on existing grain stores has put approximately 2.3 million people in immediate need of food assistance.

8. Although the situation in Southern Africa has improved considerably since the devastating drought and food crisis of 2002-2003, the situation remains precarious in many parts of the region due to the lethal mix of erratic weather patterns, high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates, restrictive land reform policies and weak governance. Poor harvests — notably in Lesotho, southern Malawi and Swaziland — combined with depleted productive capacity continue to erode previous nutritional gains and undermine prospects of sustainable livelihoods for millions of vulnerable people. Careful monitoring of food security in the region is critical, in the light of increasingly restrictive government policies and practices that are limiting humanitarian food aid, access to vulnerable populations and the collection of credible information on needs, vulnerabilities and capacities.

9. West Africa is currently facing a worsening locust crisis, which is causing significant crop damage. The worst affected country is currently Mauritania, while the situation is also deteriorating in Mali and the Niger. Locust swarms have also been reported in Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad and Senegal. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has warned that the locust situation could further deteriorate in the next few weeks, with new swarms starting to form in September, seriously threatening crops that will be ready for harvest.

10. Epidemics and newly-emerging infections continue to threaten the health of people around the world. Globalization, climate change, the growth of mega-cities and an explosive increase in international travel are increasing the potential for rapid spread of infection. Deforestation and urban sprawl bring humans and animals in closer contact and allow new epidemics to emerge. Many of these epidemics, such as cholera and meningitis, recurrently challenge health systems in countries with limited resources, which are already strained by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Other epidemics, such as influenza and dengue, have an increasing potential to create new pandemics. The return of yellow fever threatens large cities in the developing world, while the emergence and rapid spread of drug-resistant tuberculosis and malaria increase treatment costs dramatically. Travel, trade and tourism are all affected by emerging and epidemic disease threats.

11. As such events attest, the growing number of hazards and their increasingly damaging effects on vulnerable populations are cause for great global concern. A number of trends suggest that the situation is likely to get worse. Short-sighted policies and unsustainable development practices, such as uncontrolled urbanization and deforestation, continue, and the Earth's climate is very likely to change, owing to increases in concentration of atmospheric greenhouse gases caused mostly by burning fossil fuels. Authoritative predictions point to rising temperatures and sea levels and to greater intensity and incidence of extreme weather events, such as storms, floods, droughts and heat waves. Adverse socio-economic impacts are likely to result, including changes in agricultural production patterns that, in turn, will

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have implications for livelihoods and migration patterns. Growing competition for the exploitation and the control of natural resources is often a factor in the outbreak or continuation of armed conflict.

12. Most worrying is the fact that developing countries are disproportionately affected. Natural hazards themselves — earthquakes, volcanoes, hurricanes and cyclones — do not necessarily lead to disasters themselves. Rather, hazards become disasters when they impact the people and the assets that are susceptible to their destructive effects. This is often due to unhelpful international and local policies and practices, such as inappropriate land use and poor building construction, which exacerbate vulnerability and erosion of the natural resource base. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report, issued in 2004, *Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development*, concluded that natural hazards of similar intensities produce more devastation in lower income countries. For example, countries classified as having low human development account for more than 53 per cent of total recorded deaths, despite representing only 11 per cent of the world's hazard-exposed populations. In other words, it is the poor and vulnerable who are most prone to environmental degradation and natural hazards, and who are likely to suffer the consequences, through death and displacement and the systematic loss of development gains. Mitigating the adverse effects of disasters is therefore inextricably linked to promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

13. What is therefore required to both improve humanitarian assistance to disasters and accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals is a comprehensive two-pronged approach that puts energy and resources into preparedness for catastrophic events, while simultaneously investing in mitigation and development processes that aim to reduce risk. Building the capacity of Member States and regional organizations in disaster management and supporting national and regional risk reduction activities are also critical to ensuring that such approaches endure.

III. Update of activities: from relief to development

A. Emergency management and response coordination

14. The timely and effective response of Governments and the international community to natural disasters continued to be critical to saving lives and mitigating the immediate effects of emergencies.

15. From September 2003 to the end of August 2004, the United Nations assisted countries and regions affected by more than 50 natural disasters, in response to 20 international appeals launched by Member States. Efforts to coordinate the response of the United Nations system to natural disasters have included the launch of four United Nations inter-agency flash appeals — for the Bam earthquake, the Madagascar cyclone, the Bangladesh floods and the Kenya drought.

16. Since September 2003, United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC), a network of 180 disaster management professionals from 57 countries, coordinated the response to 10 disasters, including floods in the Sudan, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Bangladesh, earthquakes in the Islamic Republic of

Iran, Morocco and Colombia, and typhoons in Micronesia (twice) and Vanuatu. Such efforts were supported by the World Food Programme (WFP), which worked in coordination with Governments to provide more than 30 million people in response to natural disasters in Southern Africa, the Horn of Africa, Mauritania, Madagascar, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Haiti, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and East Timor, and by the United Nations Children's Fund, which supported national emergency efforts to restore essential services and infrastructure in the areas of health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education and child protection.

17. Increasingly, the United Nations is trying to expand the participation of Member States in its disaster response networks and to foster a regional approach to natural disaster response, particularly among low-income countries. During the past year, UNDAC was able to expand its network by adding emergency managers from the Asia-Pacific region to the network, and will be holding an induction course for its new African emergency manager members in Addis Ababa in November 2004.

18. The World Health Organization (WHO) offers assistance to affected States by procuring medicines and medical supplies; rehabilitating health facilities and training health staff; ensuring routine immunization; strengthening disease surveillance systems; enabling control and response to communicable disease outbreaks; collaborating for environmental health and water and sanitation interventions; conducting health assessments and providing technical advice; facilitating health sector coordination; providing guidance for responding to the health needs of women and HIV/AIDS prevention in emergency settings; contributing to crisis-preparedness work and post-crisis recovery through medical screening of ex-combatants; and fundraising to assist Member States address the urgent health needs of the affected populations, as well as to pave the way to recovery of the health sector.

B. Drought response

19. Droughts pose unique response challenges, as they are often slow in onset, long and recurring in duration and often involve an interplay between natural and man-made causes. In addition, drought may compound conflict and can contribute to the onset of a complex emergency by triggering a fight over scarce resources, aggravating existing instability and further threatening those in power. The combined effects of these chronic shocks contribute to a deteriorating humanitarian condition, the breakdown of economic, political and social systems and the slow erosion of development gains. Response, therefore, demands an overall strategy that addresses emergency food needs, chronic food insecurity and famine response measures, including food assistance, health interventions and livestock vaccination.

20. The elements described above are all at play in the Horn of Africa, where the prolonged effects of chronic drought, flooding and insecurity have disrupted farming patterns and have caused erratic population movements, have eroded food security and livelihood capacities, have caused widespread malnutrition and have impeded recovery. In 2004, the United Nations, together with its non-governmental organization and Government partners, has tried to meet the needs of acutely vulnerable groups by issuing consolidated humanitarian appeals for \$147 million in humanitarian assistance to Eritrea, \$85 million to Ethiopia and \$111 million to

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Somalia, and to maintain food distribution throughout the region while mitigating the nutrition and health effects of water and food shortages. The alarming situation in Kenya led to the issuance of a flash appeal on 10 August 2004, which will, if necessary, be followed by a consolidated appeal for 2005. A total of \$97 million was appealed for in order to respond to the acute needs of up to 2.3 million people hit by severe drought, crop failure, contaminated maize stocks and resulting abnormally high grain prices. Joint initiatives between the international community, donors and affected Governments, such as the Kenya Food Security Meeting, the New Coalition for Food and Livelihood Security in Ethiopia, the safety net programme in Eritrea and the Famine and Food Security Initiative in the Horn of Africa, aim to find longer-term solutions by ending the cycle of famine and improving long-term food and livelihoods security.

21. In Southern Africa, following an enormous humanitarian effort during 2002 and 2003, which helped to significantly reduce the impact of massive food shortages and prevent further deterioration of vulnerable communities, the United Nations, in collaboration with NGO partners and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), prepared a plan to address critical needs in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, requesting \$419 million, primarily for food and emergency agricultural assistance and for support for social services such as health and education, and water and sanitation. The plan follows the approach outlined by the plan of the United Nations Special Envoy for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa, which calls for actions that address the emergency needs of vulnerable populations while simultaneously taking action to address long-term regional needs.

22. In addition, WFP is currently exploring the feasibility of acute hunger insurance as a financial tool to help mitigate the effects of extreme weather variations in drought-prone areas. As a first step, WFP is developing a weather index for Ethiopia that is designed to identify different levels of risk for weather variations, identify the population that needs to be safeguarded against hunger and calculate the cost of this protection for each risk level. Using this model, WFP, in partnership with the World Bank and the private insurance sector, intends to develop a formal mechanism that will build this risk — and its associated costs — into agency and donor country plans as an insurance policy for vulnerable populations against extreme weather conditions. This will allow for a reserve of “on call” contingency funds to cover deepening levels of vulnerability in the case of extreme weather conditions.

C. Local and regional capacity-building

23. By virtue of their immediate proximity to disasters and their knowledge of local infrastructure, national and local response teams will always be an important first line of defence against the destructive impact of natural disasters. Moreover, it is increasingly recognized by the Governments of disaster-prone countries, donors and international response agencies that building local capacity to prepare against and mitigate disasters is critical to reducing risk.

24. To address this, several capacity-building programmes to strengthen response preparedness were initiated in 2003-2004 in different regions and countries worldwide. To improve local response capacity, UNDAC teams were also sent to Colombia and the Philippines as part of regional INSARAG training exercises to

introduce new on-site coordination methodologies to disaster-prone countries and to train national authorities in international response coordination. UNDP provided regional training on risk reduction methods to reduce the effects of climate change in the Caribbean, established a framework for risk reduction in Colombia and supported the integration of risk reduction measures into the national housing strategy in Cuba. In Africa, UNDP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) conducted a comparative analysis of urban risk in major urban centres and began to develop appropriate actions for reducing this risk. In addition, UNDP supported the development of institutional and legislative systems for risk reduction in Albania, conducted flood risk preparedness exercises in Tajikistan and supported the strengthening of an external disaster reduction knowledge network for Central Asia. WHO promoted the topic of disaster mitigation in health facilities in Central America in the form of revised construction codes and norms for building health facilities. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) provided training workshops and information support to improve early warning systems in numerous countries.

25. At the regional level, the international network of United Nations regional disaster response advisers focused on strengthening regional mechanisms to address all phases of disaster management. For example, in September 2003, the regional disaster response advisers for the Americas conducted contingency planning workshops with country teams and local entities in Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Panama, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, and formed a regional group for risk and disaster management which came together to discuss common issues, such as civil-military assistance in disaster response in Latin America.

26. In Asia, the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre and regional disaster response advisers for Asia jointly organized a regional conference in Kobe, Japan, in December 2003, inviting Governments, NGOs, international organizations, the media and scientific and academic institutions to share best practices and initiatives in the region and facilitated disaster management training and workshops for United Nations country teams and Governments in Cambodia and Myanmar.

27. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat regional office in South Africa is working in support of resident coordinators to improve regional and country ability to respond to disasters that address the unique vulnerabilities that prevail in Southern Africa. For example, with the Office's support, the SADC vulnerability assessment committees have begun an assessment of regional and national vulnerabilities to drought, including specific links with the HIV/AIDS crisis.

D. Risk reduction and mitigation

28. "Disaster risk reduction" describes measures taken in advance to curb disaster losses, through reducing exposure and susceptibility of populations to natural hazards and enhancing their coping and adaptive capacity. There is increasing recognition of the importance of risk reduction in disaster-prone countries, prompting numerous global efforts to reduce risk, particularly under the umbrella of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

29. The Strategy is guided by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, whose members include United Nations agencies, regional organizations and civil

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society organizations, and it plays a key role in advocacy and coordination. In addition, a specific tripartite collaboration arrangement is maintained between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNDP and the Strategy secretariat in order to strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations in reducing disaster risk and vulnerability and incorporating risk-reduction strategies into all phases of disaster management.

30. Strengthening early warning and risk assessment systems is a priority, as global disaster trends suggest that improved early warning systems, including prediction and alert systems, educational programmes and designated evacuation routes and safe havens, have been instrumental in reducing disaster-related casualties during the past 30 years. In October 2003, the Strategy held the Second International Conference on Early Warning to emphasize the need to better target early warning systems to disaster-prone countries and to better translate early warnings into early action. As a result of the conference, a platform to promote early warning has been set up in Bonn, Germany, under the Strategy secretariat. It will build links among the many early warning programmes of United Nations agencies, such as WMO weather programmes and the FAO Global Information and Early Warning System on food insecurity, with a view to facilitating joint efforts for improved services to Member States and the development of an inter-agency humanitarian early warning web platform, to be led by WFP, to facilitate access to and use of early warning information by the larger humanitarian community.

31. To improve risk assessment models, UN-Habitat and UNDP, in collaboration with the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre and the Organization of American States (OAS), have taken the lead in the development of an inventory of risk analysis and vulnerability assessment tools, particularly for local and urban applications. The first phase of the project will be completed in 2004. In addition, UNDP has begun the development of a global disaster risk index, which measures the relative vulnerability of countries to three key natural hazards (earthquakes, tropical cyclones and floods), identifies development factors that contribute to increased risk levels and demonstrates how countries with similar levels of exposure to natural hazards often experience widely differing impacts. In addition, FAO has developed emergency needs assessment guidelines. This livelihoods-based approach to assessment contributes to the objectives of supporting disaster mitigation and preparedness as it increases the understanding of the roles played by social groups, stakeholders and local institutions in the different phases of disaster risk management, as well as coping capacities of rural populations.

32. There is also growing recognition of the need to integrate disaster risk reduction into development processes as a means of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The report *Reducing Disaster Risk: A Challenge for Development*, launched by UNDP, with the support of UNEP and the Strategy secretariat, concludes that while exposure to some hazards is inevitable, susceptibility to their disastrous effects is not automatic, and that good development practices can intervene to avoid the translation of physical exposure into disastrous events.

33. Such conclusions have prompted initiatives to integrate risk reduction into development practices. For example, in 2004, a partnership was formed between the Strategy, the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development secretariat, UNDP and the World Bank to develop the African Regional Strategy for

Disaster Risk Reduction. This approach was endorsed by the African heads of State in Addis Ababa in July 2004. To ensure that disaster risk management is a key consideration within sustainable agriculture and rural development policies and programmes, FAO has decided to further strengthen its policy advisory and technical activities in countries that are especially prone to natural hazards.

34. As a measure to reduce risk, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, together with the United Nations Environment Programme, is addressing environmental considerations that are central to effective disaster mitigation and response. A major step forward has been the launch of a new global environmental emergencies partnership, which supports risk-reduction efforts through practical initiatives that strengthen collaboration and information-sharing between international, national and regional environmental emergency stakeholders.

IV. Improving the effectiveness and the efficiency of international urban search and rescue assistance

35. The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group is an intergovernmental network under the United Nations umbrella responsible for urban search and rescue and related disaster response issues. Its purpose is to provide a platform for information exchange, to define standards for international urban search and rescue assistance and to develop a methodology for international cooperation and coordination in earthquake response. The INSARAG network includes earthquake-prone countries as well as traditional providers of international assistance.

36. During the reporting period, INSARAG was particularly instrumental in responding to the earthquakes in Bam, Islamic Republic of Iran, in December 2003 and in Al Hoceima, Morocco, in February 2004, when international search and rescue teams worked in support of the affected Governments and national and local response teams to rescue people trapped under collapsed urban structures. The response was followed by "lessons learned" meetings organized by the INSARAG secretariat (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), which brought together the affected Governments and international, national and local response teams to evaluate the earthquake response and to make recommendations for inclusion in the INSARAG guidelines, which are currently being revised accordingly.

37. To improve local response capacity, UNDAC teams were also sent to Colombia and the Philippines as part of regional INSARAG training exercises to introduce new on-site coordination methodologies to disaster-prone countries and to train national authorities in international response coordination. INSARAG also organized regional meetings in Kobe, Japan (November 2003), Tunis (April 2004), Lima (August 2004) and Singapore (September 2004) to discuss regional cooperation, with an emphasis on national capacity-building for emergency response preparedness.

38. In addition, the INSARAG secretariat, supported by the Governments of the Republic of Korea and Singapore, organized meetings of all international urban search and rescue team leaders worldwide in Seoul (November 2003) and Singapore (September 2004) to enable the emergency response practitioners to discuss technical and operational collapsed structure rescue issues in order to improve

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performance standards of international urban search and rescue teams and their coordination on site in an emergency. In order to expand its activities, INSARAG established an INSARAG sub-office in Tunis in April 2004 and conducted an INSARAG familiarization module for Central and Southern European countries in Hungary in February 2004 and for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries in Indonesia in May 2004.

V. Emerging issues and challenges

39. Despite much progress during the past year, there remain fundamental challenges to improving preparedness, response and risk-reduction efforts. In this regard, donor and disaster-prone Governments, together with the United Nations system and its partners, can collectively play a critical role in addressing these issues, improving the management of disasters and ultimately saving lives.

A. Strengthening emergency response

1. Improving response coordination

40. An ongoing challenge for international disaster response networks, such as UNDAC and INSARAG, is how to more effectively coordinate relief personnel and assets in a sudden-onset emergency. Scores of local, national and international relief teams converge on the scene, and Governments supply relief supplies and assets, often without a clear sense of what kind of aid is most needed and where. Rather than contribute to the overall relief effort, the presence of so many actors from different countries with a variety of levels of training and expertise often leads to confusion and duplication of effort and becomes more a burden than an asset.

41. A particular concern that has arisen is the over-deployment of international search and rescue teams in the aftermath of an earthquake. Because such deployment is often dictated by bilateral agreements between countries, it is difficult for international coordination networks to limit the use of such teams. INSARAG had some success during the Bam earthquake in limiting the number of search and rescue teams by informally sharing information through a virtual on-site operations coordination centre (www.reliefweb.int/virtualosocc/login.asp). However, a more formal mechanism is needed to ensure that coordination mechanisms are in place to advise Governments on the timing and the use of their search and rescue assistance.

2. Resolving administrative bottlenecks

42. Safe, immediate and unhindered access to disaster sites and affected communities is critical to a timely and effective response, particularly in sudden-onset disasters such as earthquakes, where the difference between life and death can literally be measured in a couple of hours. This was demonstrated in the aftermath of both the Bam and Al Hoceima earthquakes, when the Governments of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Morocco waived visa requirements so that international search and rescue teams could gain access to the disaster site quickly. Resolving such administrative issues ahead of such an emergency would further reduce confusion, shorten response time and ease operations.

43. In its resolution 57/150, the General Assembly urged Member States to simplify or reduce administrative procedures related to the entry, deployment and exit of international urban search and rescue teams with their supplies and equipment. At present, only the Government of New Zealand has clear guidelines on this issue. It is important that disaster-prone countries follow suit and establish measures and guidelines that facilitate secure and quick access to disaster sites by relief teams when disasters strike.

3. Incorporating risk reduction into response

44. Responses to disasters and recovery projects can themselves prolong or create new risk, such as relocating flood victims to areas with inadequate facilities, over-emphasizing food assistance at the expense of other needs or creating aid dependencies that work against populations re-establishing their own livelihoods. Conversely, disasters can open up unique opportunities for systemic, institutional and practical changes that can reduce risk and lead to sustainable development.

45. It is therefore critical that risk reduction concerns are taken into consideration in the preparedness and response phases of a disaster. Better guidelines and tools to do so need to be developed and disseminated. At the international level, this includes better preparedness efforts on the part of the United Nations country teams through (a) improved early warning and contingency planning; (b) pre-determined roles and responsibilities among relief agencies, civil society groups, regional disaster response advisers and Governments; (c) advance identification of potential areas and types of vulnerability; (d) opening up communication channels to facilitate information and data exchange; and (e) prepositioning funding and supplies and determining the terms and mechanisms for their quick release.

46. Also critical to risk reduction is ensuring that vulnerable countries and regions can respond speedily to sudden-onset disasters in their proximity. This entails building and supporting a sustainable local capacity for both preparedness and response through material and technical support and through training. Such efforts would also improve overall response by promoting a stronger national role in international and regional response coordination when dozens of assistance groups rush to the field.

47. Disasters are often of a regional scale, requiring regionally based efforts to reduce risk. Regular flooding of the Zambezi and Okavango river basins systematically destroys crops, homes and livelihoods in most of central Africa. Drought conditions throughout Southern Africa have had far-reaching effects on food security, health, nutrition and livelihoods. Mudslides in Central America, prompted by hurricane Mitch, consumed parts of the Pan-American Highway, rendering one of the most important commercial routes of the region impassable. Regional consultation, cooperation and planning, combined with political and financial commitments, can do much to promote a coherent approach to risk reduction, streamline donor assistance and create a framework for sharing costs, information and infrastructure towards building disaster-resilient communities region-wide.

B. Funding

1. Strengthening emergency funding

48. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has benefited from individual arrangements with the Governments of Norway, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands and the Government of Ireland to provide reserve funds in the Office's Trust Fund for Disaster Relief. This arrangement has enabled the Office to respond immediately to the most pressing needs of disaster victims. In view of this positive experience, the Office hopes to interest additional donors in this scheme.

49. In addition, in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster, the Office can provide from its regular budget emergency cash grants of up to \$50,000 to affected countries. These grants are particularly effective because they can rapidly be used for the local purchase and delivery of life-saving relief supplies. The cash grant is also crucial because it can help buy time by bridging the immediate funding gap, pending the response of the international donor community. This emergency cash grant has its origin in General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI). While the total amount of the grant has been expanded to \$1.5 million in funds from the United Nations regular biennial budget, the ceiling of \$50,000 has not been changed since 1983.

50. However, natural disaster response experiences, most recently those derived from the Bam earthquake, demonstrate that the maximum of \$50,000 emergency cash grant is not sufficient and frequently is far below what would be effective in the absence of alternative means of immediate relief. It is therefore necessary to raise the cash grant ceiling to the more appropriate level of \$100,000 per disaster in the affected country, within the existing resources available in the regular budget. This issue was already taken up and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2004/_____.

2. Funding risk reduction

51. Funding for natural disasters tends to be focused on the immediate, high-profile response phase, rather than on preparedness, mitigation and other risk-reduction activities. However, investing in long-term disaster-reduction efforts is potentially a more cost-effective means of saving lives, as it preserves developmental and financial investments that otherwise might be lost. Such trends suggest that a new approach is needed to both raise overall awareness of and funding levels for natural disasters and to channel a larger proportion of these funds to risk reduction efforts. For example, during this period, UNDP provided more than 40 emergency cash grants to countries affected by natural disasters. These cash grants were used to support the coordination function of the resident coordinator system, to jump-start the early recovery planning process and to integrate risk reduction concerns into recovery efforts from a very early stage.

C. Information management

52. Access to timely, reliable and accurate information is critical to improving emergency response, maximizing resources and minimizing risk and human suffering. Equally critical is the preparation, coordination and broad sharing of

baseline data, including national and subnational demographic data, vulnerability assessments and early warning analysis.

53. While there are several subnational, national and global initiatives that compile, compare and analyse disaster-related data, in most cases they have been developed independently, using different criteria and formats, with different purposes in mind. While individually useful, inconsistencies, data gaps and ambiguity of terminology make comparisons and use of the different data sets difficult. This can lead to much confusion in the perception and the evaluation of a disaster situation, and poses a severe obstacle to planning, decision-making and fundraising, potentially at the expense of lives.

54. As a means of improving the quality, coverage and accuracy of disaster data and assessing future risk at multiple levels, a sub-working group within the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction is working to standardize, aggregate and link disaster-related data from different sources by reviewing and identifying disaster datasets and methodologies, by developing standards for defining, identifying and recording natural and man-made disasters, such as the global unique disaster identifier, and by developing indicators and indexes for global risk assessment.

55. What is needed at this stage to further improve disaster-related data is an effort to aggregate local, national and global disaster data into a widely accessible global disaster database. This would greatly improve international, regional and national disaster managers to accurately document and analyse the losses associated with natural hazards worldwide. In addition, more resources should be dedicated to the analysis of information on disasters and their immediate and longer-term impacts, such as more hazard-specific analysis of risk and an overall assessment of the cost-effectiveness of risk reduction. Such analysis could be used as a means of informing the investment and the policy priorities of international and national assistance organizations, donors and affected States.

D. Improving post-disaster transition

56. Disaster response tends to be dominated by relief interventions in the acute emergency phase, often to the exclusion of inputs needed to support an appropriate recovery. National Government services and physical infrastructure have often been eroded or destroyed, individual assets have been depleted and social support systems are under stress. People who have been displaced by disasters want to return home or to establish themselves in new communities. In addition to being an important stage in community rehabilitation, the early recovery phase presents an important opportunity for implementing risk reduction measures in high-risk countries, such as environmentally friendly land-use policies, appropriate building standards, construction, preparedness training and support for national structures, with potential long-term benefits.

57. The international community, led by the United Nations system, can help support such transitions. However, there remains a resources and planning gap between disaster relief and recovery phases, and awareness of the potentials of transition as an opportunity for development among Governments, multilateral financial institutions and donors remains low.

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1. Bridging the funding gap

58. Most resources mobilized for natural disaster situations are tagged for either emergency assistance or long-term reconstruction and are not easily applied to transition purposes. Moreover, there are no formal fundraising mechanisms dedicated to raising transition funds.

59. To bridge this funding gap, the international community should explore the relative merits of developing a new funding mechanism for disaster recovery or integrating natural disaster recovery requirements into long-term donor assistance strategies and plans.

2. Addressing the planning gap

60. Transition planning would gain from clarifying what transition actually entails, as well as from bridging this institutional gap through closer cooperation among humanitarian and development partners on recovery issues, greater synchronization of geographic and sectoral planning and fund-raising tools, more coherent needs assessments and prioritization and a focus on programmes and projects that reduce vulnerability.

61. Moreover, unlike in post-conflict situations, national authorities are often in the best position to take the lead in carrying out post-disaster recovery and reconstruction activities. The international community, led by the United Nations system, must support national structures to be able to carry out reconstruction activities, particularly in regions susceptible to recurring disasters.

3. Using the recovery phase as an opportunity for risk reduction

62. The post-crisis phase following a natural disaster is a critical period for initiating risk reduction efforts. The tragedy of human and financial loss is still fresh in the minds of the media, the international community and local populations, and the will of Government to prevent future catastrophes is likely to be strong. It is important to take advantage of this period to enact institutional and practical change in the name of reducing future risk.

63. For example, the early stages of post-crisis rehabilitation are critical for introducing new approaches to urban governance and planning, such as building codes, construction standards and zoning and urban expansion. For example, following the devastating earthquake in Bam, UN-Habitat, in cooperation with UNDP and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, prepared a reconstruction strategy for shelter and local government capacity-building. In Haiti, UN-Habitat provided support and substantive input on human settlements issues, as part of the two-year recovery framework following the July 2004 floods.

64. If efforts are made to (a) support local and national recovery processes at an early stage, (b) consider risk and vulnerability reduction in all recovery activities, and (c) enhance the relationships between, and build on, the comparative advantages of development and humanitarian actors, it may be possible to close the gap between relief and development, pre-empt the resumption of activities that contribute to risk, prevent the re-emergence of disaster risk and transform crisis into opportunities for sustained development.

E. Tackling the hard questions

65. To date, the debate on risk reduction has tended to focus on humanitarian and development solutions, neglecting the equally important political angle of the risk reduction agenda. As a result, many fundamental risk-reduction issues are not being pursued because they often entail addressing deep structural issues or policy measures that are politically difficult to achieve. For example, land-reform policies that promote individual ownership and investment in methods that improve fertility and prevent soil erosion, such as planting trees or terracing, would reduce the risk of famine in drought-affected countries. However, it is in solving such political obstacles that risk reduction has the most to gain. If risk reduction is to remain a global priority, political challenges cannot be ignored.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

66. Current trends in urbanization, environmental degradation and climate change imply that natural and man-made emergencies will continue to increase in their regularity and intensity. Without focused efforts to improve preparedness and response and address risk and vulnerability, the effects of disasters on people and human settlements will become more deadly and costly, trapping millions of people in vicious cycles of poverty and marginalization. The situation calls for more concerted and comprehensive approaches to disaster management that aim to recognize and build national and regional capacity and to emphasize risk reduction as a core principle.

67. While progress has been made in building and coordinating action for risk reduction, it is being achieved against a backdrop of growing exposure and vulnerability to risk. In particular, there remains a significant lack of systematic policies and practices that support local and national response and risk reduction capacities. These require institutional and financial commitment to ensure that disaster risk reduction is more explicitly integrated into development planning and the will to ensure that the more difficult political and structural elements of risk reduction policies are seriously addressed.

68. Such issues will be important considerations at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005. The Conference will draw attention to the fact that the prevalence of disasters continues to grow and remains a major obstacle to sustainable development and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It will also focus on developing practical recommendations to assist countries and the international community in the implementation of improved risk reduction and disaster management. Information on preparatory activities for the Conference can be accessed at www.unisdr.org/wcdr.

69. In the light of these conclusions, the following recommendations for strengthening international assistance to natural disasters merit consideration:

Disaster response

(a) Member States in disaster-prone countries are encouraged to develop national policies and mechanisms for the coordination of search and rescue teams in the event of an earthquake, bearing in mind the INSARAG guidelines and the provisions contained in General Assembly resolution 57/150;

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(b) Member States are invited to strengthen cooperation with UNDAC as a valuable tool to maximize international expertise and resources, in order to respond to sudden-onset emergencies and to support the expansion of UNDAC membership, particularly in Africa and among disaster-prone countries;

(c) The United Nations should strengthen the network of regional disaster response advisers and disaster reduction advisers to assist in developing coordinated and complementary regional capacity-building for disaster preparedness, response, mitigation and risk reduction;

(d) The United Nations should strengthen emergency preparedness to anticipate, plan for and mitigate the humanitarian impact of crises through both strengthened emergency preparedness and response capacities by individual agencies and actors and the optimization of those capacities through inter-agency mechanisms such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Sub-Working Group on Preparedness and Contingency Planning;

Building local and regional disaster management capacity

(e) The United Nations, together with its international partners, should strengthen efforts to identify more practical ways to channel resources to and strengthen support for local and national disaster management capacities in disaster-prone countries;

(f) The United Nations should encourage and forge partnerships among regional organizations, including through the network of regional disaster-response advisers, to build regional response and risk reduction capacity;

Information management

(g) The United Nations should address knowledge gaps in disaster management and risk reduction by identifying ways of improving systems and networks for the collection and the analysis of information on disasters, vulnerability and risk and to help inform decision-making;

Risk reduction and sustainable development

(h) Humanitarian and development agencies, together with Member States, should consider concrete ways of factoring risk reduction into areas of development and recovery, particularly in post-disaster recovery;

(i) Member States are encouraged to incorporate risk reduction into development planning and priorities towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals;

Disaster funding

(j) Donors are encouraged to increase overall funding to disaster management, and in particular, should consider channelling a larger proportion of disaster funds into risk-reduction efforts, including response preparedness initiatives;

(k) The United Nations should strengthen support for emergency disaster funding, including by raising the ceiling of the emergency cash grant system from

\$50,000 to \$100,000 per disaster in an affected country, within the existing resources currently available in the regular budget;

(l) United Nations humanitarian and development agencies should aim for greater coherence in planning and fundraising tools in support of post-disaster crisis recovery, transition and development;

Monitoring and evaluation

(m) The United Nations should further study the international architecture for disaster risk management to improve the response of the international community to preparedness, to natural disasters and to integrating risk assessment and risk-reduction approaches into development programming;

(n) The United Nations system should support research on key issues in disaster risk reduction, such as research on approaches to cost-benefit analysis and options for minimizing hazards and vulnerability;

World Conference on Disaster Reduction

(o) Member States are encouraged to provide ongoing support for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction and to ensure that the opportunity is used to reaffirm and strengthen the implementation of disaster-reduction policy and practices.



Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 39 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/59/L.26/Rev.1 and Add.1)]

59/212. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, the annex to which contains the guiding principles for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, as well as all its resolutions on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development, and recalling the resolutions of the humanitarian segments of the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the importance of the principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Emphasizing that the affected State has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory and in the facilitation of the work of humanitarian organizations in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters,

Emphasizing also the importance of integrating risk reduction into all phases of disaster management, development planning and post-disaster recovery,

Emphasizing further, in this context, the important role of development organizations in supporting national efforts to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters,

Emphasizing the responsibility of all States to undertake disaster preparedness, response and mitigation efforts in order to minimize the impact of natural disasters, while recognizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of affected countries which may have limited capacities to fulfil this requirement,

Welcoming the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,

Stressing that national authorities need to enhance the resilience of populations to disasters through, inter alia, implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction so as to reduce risks to people, their livelihoods, the social and economic infrastructure and environmental resources,

Taking into account the outcome of the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn, Germany, from 16 to 18 October 2003, under the auspices of the United Nations,

Welcoming the efforts undertaken in preparation for the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, and underlining the importance of this conference in the promotion of new efforts in the field of disaster risk reduction,

Noting the critical role played by local resources, as well as by existing in-country capacities, in natural disaster response and risk management,

Recognizing the significant role played by national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, as part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in disaster preparedness and risk reduction, disaster response, rehabilitation and development,

Emphasizing the importance of raising awareness among developing countries of the capacities existing at the national, regional and international levels that could be deployed to assist them,

Noting the lack of progress made in finalizing the establishment of the Directory of Advanced Technologies for Disaster Response as a new part of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities¹ as requested in its resolution 58/25 of 5 December 2003,

Emphasizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters in all their phases, including prevention, preparedness, mitigation and recovery and reconstruction, and of strengthening the response capacity of affected countries,

Recognizing that efforts to achieve economic growth, sustainable development and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, can be adversely affected by natural disasters, and noting the positive contribution that those efforts can make in strengthening the resilience of populations to such disasters,

Welcoming the efforts of Member States, with facilitation by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and in cooperation with the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of international urban search and rescue assistance, and, in this context noting its resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 entitled "Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance",

Encouraging, in this regard, efforts aimed at strengthening the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and its regional groups, particularly through the participation in their activities of representatives of a larger number of countries,

Mindful of the effects that shortfalls in resources can have on the preparedness for and response to natural disasters, and underscoring, in this regard, the need to gain a more precise understanding of the impact of levels of funding on natural disaster response,

¹ Available from <http://ocha.unog.ch/cr/>.

Underlining the need for further improvement in information and analyses available regarding needs, responses and funding related to natural disasters,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General entitled “International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development”² and “Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”,³

2. *Expresses its deep concern* at the high number and the scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact, resulting in massive losses of life and property worldwide, in particular in vulnerable societies lacking adequate capacity to mitigate effectively the long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences of natural disasters;

3. *Calls upon* all States to adopt, where required, and to continue to implement effectively necessary legislative and other appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and integrate disaster risk reduction strategies into development planning, inter alia, by disaster prevention, including appropriate land-use and building regulations, as well as disaster preparedness and capacity-building in disaster response and mitigation, and requests the international community to continue to assist developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition, bearing in mind their vulnerability to natural hazards, in this regard;

4. *Stresses*, in this context, the importance of strengthening international cooperation, particularly through the effective use of multilateral mechanisms, in the provision of humanitarian assistance through all phases of a disaster, from relief and mitigation to development, including the provision of adequate resources;

5. *Also stresses* that humanitarian assistance for natural disasters should be provided in accordance with and with due respect for the guiding principles contained in the annex to resolution 46/182 and should be determined on the basis of the human dimension and needs arising out of the particular natural disasters;

6. *Recognizes* that economic growth and sustainable development contribute to improving the capacity of States to mitigate, respond to and prepare for natural disasters;

7. *Reaffirms* that disaster risk analysis and vulnerability reduction form an integral part of humanitarian assistance, poverty eradication and sustainable development strategies and need to be considered in the development plans of all vulnerable countries and communities, including, where appropriate, in plans relating to post-disaster recovery and the transition from relief to development, and affirms that within such preventive strategies, disaster preparedness and early warning systems must be further strengthened at the country and regional levels, inter alia, through better coordination among relevant United Nations bodies and cooperation with Governments of affected countries and regional and other relevant organizations with the aim of maximizing the effectiveness of natural disaster response and reducing the impact of natural disasters, particularly in developing countries;

² A/59/374.

³ A/59/93-E/2004/74.

8. *Emphasizes* the importance of the outcome of the Twenty-eighth International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva from 2 to 6 December 2003;

9. *Also emphasizes* the importance of enhanced international cooperation, including through the United Nations and regional organizations, to assist developing countries in their efforts to build local and national capacities and to effectively and efficiently predict, prepare for and respond to natural disasters;

10. *Stresses* the need for partnerships among Governments, organizations of the United Nations system, relevant humanitarian organizations and specialized companies to promote training to strengthen preparedness for and response to natural disasters;

11. *Calls upon* States, the United Nations and other relevant actors, as appropriate, to assist in addressing knowledge gaps in disaster management and risk reduction by identifying ways of improving systems and networks for the collection and analysis of information on disasters, vulnerability and risk to facilitate informed decision-making;

12. *Stresses* the need to promote the access to and transfer of technology and knowledge related to early warning systems and to mitigation programmes to developing countries affected by natural disasters;

13. *Encourages* the further use of space-based and ground-based remote-sensing technologies for the prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, where appropriate;

14. *Also encourages* in such operations the sharing of geographical data, including remotely sensed images and geographic information system and global positioning system data, among Governments, space agencies and relevant international humanitarian and development organizations, as appropriate, and notes in that context initiatives such as those undertaken by the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters and the Global Disaster Information Network;

15. *Stresses* that particular international cooperation efforts should be undertaken to enhance and broaden further the utilization of national and local capacities, including within the framework of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, and, where appropriate, of regional and subregional capacities of developing countries for disaster preparedness and response, which may be made available in closer proximity to the site of a disaster, more efficiently and at lower cost;

16. *Recognizes*, in this regard, that the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination system continues to be a valuable tool by which disaster management expertise is made available by Member States to respond to the sudden onset of emergencies;

17. *Urges* Member States, with the support of relevant bodies of the United Nations system, to strengthen efforts to identify practical ways to channel resources to and strengthen support for national disaster management capacities in disaster-prone countries;

18. *Welcomes* the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat as the focal point within the overall United Nations system for the promotion and coordination of disaster responses among United Nations humanitarian agencies and other humanitarian partners;

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19. *Takes note with interest* of the initiatives taken by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme for the establishment of regional positions of disaster response advisers and disaster reduction advisers to assist developing countries in capacity-building for disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response in a coordinated and complementary manner;

20. *Encourages* further cooperation between the United Nations system and regional organizations in order to increase the capacity of these organizations to respond to natural disasters;

21. *Encourages* States that have not acceded to or ratified the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, adopted at Tampere, Finland, on 18 June 1998, to consider doing so;

22. *Reiterates its request* that the Secretary-General, in collaboration with the relevant organizations and partners, finalize the establishment of, and then update periodically, the Directory of Advanced Technologies for Disaster Response as a new part of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities;¹

23. *Encourages* donors to consider the importance of ensuring that assistance in the case of higher-profile natural disasters does not come at the expense of those that may have a relatively lower profile, bearing in mind that the allocation of resources should be driven by needs, as well as the importance of making efforts to increase the level of assistance for disaster reduction and preparedness programmes and for disaster response and mitigation activities;

24. *Requests* the Secretary-General to examine ways to further improve the assessment of needs and responses and to enhance the availability of data regarding funding in response to natural disasters and to consider concrete recommendations to improve the international response to natural disasters, as necessary, based on his examination, keeping in mind also the need to address any geographical and sectoral imbalances and shortfalls in such responses, where they exist, as well as the more effective use of national emergency response agencies, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

*74th plenary meeting
20 December 2004*



General Assembly

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Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 39 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/59/L.49 and Add.1)]

59/141. Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto, other relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Council,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,¹

Reaffirming the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Recognizing that independence, meaning the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented, is also an important guiding principle for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Gravely concerned that violence, including sexual abuse and sexual and other violence against women, girls and boys, continues to be, in many emergency situations, deliberately directed against civilian populations,

Gravely concerned also about the lack of access by humanitarian personnel to victims of humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations, in many regions of the world,

Reaffirming the responsibility first and foremost of States to take care of the victims of humanitarian emergencies within their own borders, while recognizing that the magnitude and duration of many emergencies may be beyond the response capacity of many affected countries,

Reaffirming also that States whose populations are in need of humanitarian assistance are called upon to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations and that States in proximity to humanitarian emergencies are urged to facilitate, to the extent possible, the transit of humanitarian assistance,

¹ A/59/93-E/2004/74.

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Concerned about the need to mobilize adequate support, including financial resources, for emergency humanitarian assistance at all levels, including at national, regional and international levels,

Emphasizing that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat should benefit from adequate and more predictable funding, while stressing the importance for the Office to continue to make efforts to broaden its donor base,

Reiterating that contributions for humanitarian assistance should be provided in a way that is not to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development,

Recognizing the importance of humanitarian assistance in ensuring the effective transition from conflict to peace and the positive effect it may have in preventing the recurrence of armed conflict, and that humanitarian assistance must be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development,

Noting with grave concern the growing intensity and recurrence of natural disasters, and reaffirming the importance of sustainable measures to reduce the vulnerability of societies to natural hazards using an integrated, multi-hazard and participatory approach to addressing vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the outcome of the seventh humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council, during its substantive session of 2004;

2. *Encourages* the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue his efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance, and calls upon relevant United Nations organizations as well as other humanitarian and development actors to work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat in enhancing the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance;

3. *Recognizes* the importance of secure and predictable funding to the coordinated, appropriate and timely delivery of humanitarian assistance, stresses the need to increase in an incremental way, in the normal course of the budget process, the share of the budget of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs borne by the regular budget of the United Nations, and requests the Secretary-General to give this matter full consideration;

4. *Emphasizes* the importance of the discussion of humanitarian policies and activities in the General Assembly and in the Economic and Social Council and that these discussions should be further revitalized by Member States;

5. *Calls upon* Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, other relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations to cooperate with the Secretary-General and the Emergency Relief Coordinator to ensure timely implementation of and follow-up to resolutions of the General Assembly and resolutions of the Economic and Social Council adopted at the humanitarian affairs segment of its substantive sessions;

6. *Strongly encourages* the United Nations to address more systematically protection of civilians and other humanitarian issues with regional organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates, inter alia, through dialogue;

7. *Decides* to raise the maximum limit of an emergency cash grant to 100,000 United States dollars per country in the case of any one disaster, within existing resources available from the regular budget of the United Nations;

8. *Encourages* the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, in close collaboration with the United Nations Development Group Office, to improve further the training and capacity of humanitarian and resident coordinators so that they can respond to the full range of humanitarian issues and those related to transition from relief to development in a given context, including protection and assistance needs;

9. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to ensure that the design and implementation of United Nations integrated missions take into account the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality as well as independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance;

10. *Welcomes* the ongoing work within the United Nations on the complex issue of transition from relief to development, and takes note of the request by the Economic and Social Council to the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the issue for further consideration by the Council and the General Assembly;

11. *Emphasizes* the fundamentally civilian character of humanitarian assistance, reaffirms the leading role of civilian organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance, particularly in areas affected by conflicts, and affirms the need, in situations where military capacity and assets are used to support the implementation of humanitarian assistance, for their use to be in conformity with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles;

12. *Recalls* the 2003 “Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies”,² as well as the 1994 “Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief”,³ and stresses the value of their use and of the development by the United Nations in consultation with States and other relevant actors of further guidance on civil-military relations in the context of humanitarian activities and transition situations;

13. *Strongly condemns* all acts of violence committed against civilian populations in situations of humanitarian crisis, especially against women, girls and boys, including sexual violence and abuse, and reiterates that such acts can constitute serious violations or grave breaches of international humanitarian law and constitute, in defined circumstances, a crime against humanity and/or a war crime;

14. *Calls upon* States to adopt preventive measures and effective responses to acts of violence committed against civilian populations as well as to ensure that those responsible are promptly brought to justice, as provided for by national law and obligations under international law;

15. *Reaffirms* the obligation of all States and parties to an armed conflict to protect civilians in armed conflicts in accordance with international humanitarian law, and invites States to promote a culture of protection, taking into account the particular needs of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities;

² Available from www.reliefweb.int.

³ Department of Humanitarian Affairs publication, DHA/94/95.

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16. *Encourages* Member States with internally displaced persons to develop or strengthen, as appropriate, national laws, policies and minimum standards on internal displacement, inter alia, taking into account the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,⁴ and to continue to work with humanitarian agencies in endeavours to provide a more predictable response to the needs of internally displaced persons, and in this regard calls for international support, upon request, to the capacity-building efforts of Governments;

17. *Strongly condemns* all forms of violence to which humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel are increasingly subjected, as well as any act or failure to act, contrary to international law that obstructs or prevents humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel from discharging their humanitarian functions;

18. *Calls upon* all Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflicts and in post-conflict situations, in countries in which humanitarian personnel are operating, in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law and national laws, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel as well as supplies and equipment in order to allow them to perform efficiently their task of assisting the affected civilian population, including refugees and internally displaced persons;

19. *Expresses concern* about the continued occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises, emphasizes that the highest standards of conduct and accountability are required of all personnel serving in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, and requests the Secretary-General to report on measures to follow up, inter alia, the Plan of Action on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee⁵ and the application of the bulletin of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse;⁶

20. *Takes note with interest* of the progress being made by donors to improve their policies and practices of good donorship, including under the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, and calls upon donors to take further steps to improve their policies and practices with respect to humanitarian assistance;

21. *Calls upon* relevant United Nations organizations to continue to improve transparency and reliability of humanitarian needs assessments;

22. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue to improve his reporting on emergency humanitarian assistance, including with respect to natural disasters;

23. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2005, on progress made in strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

*72nd plenary meeting
15 December 2004*

⁴ E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex.

⁵ See A/57/465, annex I.

⁶ ST/SGB/2003/13.

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Fifty-eighth session

Agenda item 40 (a)

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/152, as well as subsequent decisions of the General Assembly on this subject matter. It highlights some of the key activities undertaken to respond to natural disasters during the reporting period and reflects some of the initiatives undertaken to strengthen disaster management efforts at the national and regional levels. It also provides information on the funding trends for natural disaster response.

* The report was delayed due to difficulties encountered in the compilation and subsequent clarification of statistics on natural disasters.

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 57/152 of 16 December 2002. A number of issues relevant to the report are also addressed in the reports of the Secretary-General on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/58/89-E/2003/85) and on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (A/58/277).

II. Natural disaster response

2. The response of affected Governments and the international community to natural disasters and environmental emergencies continues to be crucial to the recovery and long-term development of affected communities. During the reporting period, there has been progress in a number of areas related to disaster management, particularly in relation to capacity-building and policy development at the local, national, regional and international levels. This progress provides a good framework for guiding the future inter-agency response to natural disasters. Other factors, such as the adequacy of financial and in kind contributions to relief and recovery and efforts to alleviate the immediate effects of natural disasters, are also critical to the success of joint disaster response efforts.

3. The frequency and the magnitude of natural disasters have increased over the past decade, resulting in negative environmental consequences that have had a severe impact on populations. In 2002, over 500 loss events were recorded, resulting in economic losses estimated at \$55 billion — a significant increase from the \$35 billion for 2001.¹ This increase in economic losses must be viewed with reference to the types and locations of disasters. For example, almost \$20 billion of that \$55 billion represents the economic losses incurred due to the floods across Europe in 2002.² Other losses were due to climatic events in the United States and winter storms that struck Western and Central Europe towards the end of 2002. In these cases the response and reconstruction activities were to a great extent financed domestically or with the support of regional organizations, where appropriate.

4. In many disaster-prone countries in the developing world, economic losses incurred due to natural disasters are often less costly because infrastructure costs, including property value, can be lower than in the industrialized world. However, the economic losses that occur must be considered substantial, relative to the weak economic circumstances of many vulnerable countries. In addition, developing countries suffer from a higher rate of deaths due to natural disasters: in 2002, of the estimated 11,000 deaths due to natural disasters, over 9,000 occurred in developing countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.³

5. The Financial Tracking System maintained by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs shows that global humanitarian aid for natural disasters has fluctuated over the last decade, with annual contributions ranging from \$77 million in 1993 to \$1.1 billion in 1998, the year of hurricane Mitch. In 1999 some \$296 million was contributed in response to natural disasters. In 2000 this figure rose to \$420 million, decreasing to \$332 million in 2001 and \$238 million in 2002.⁴ It is of note that the vast majority of the funds disbursed for natural disasters during the last decade were provided to developing countries.

6. However, these figures cannot be a realistic reflection of the overall costs of the response, as they do not always include in kind contributions, nor the value of the response provided locally. National authorities, the affected communities, civil society and local actors carry the initial burden of responding to the vast majority of natural hazards using local resources. Inadequate preparedness, response and reduction capacities in disaster-prone areas will also result in much more loss of life, especially when disaster management efforts are constrained by capacity limitations. Supporting the preparedness and response efforts of national and regional actors is therefore crucial. The United Nations system will work to promote disaster reduction efforts as a solid investment towards saving lives, reducing losses and sustaining human development.

III. Strengthening natural disaster preparedness and response capacities

7. The actions undertaken immediately after the occurrence of a natural disaster are likely to have the most quantifiable impact on the living conditions of the affected population. A number of agencies are working to better integrate their activities to ensure that all the needs of affected populations are addressed. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system contributed a coordinated humanitarian response in several ways during the reporting period. Focusing on supporting the immediate response, eight UNDAC emergency response missions were deployed in 2003 in response to natural disasters in Algeria, Argentina, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka and the Sudan. These UNDAC missions made use of emergency managers from the various countries and from the United Nations system.

8. The World Food Programme (WFP) recognizes natural disasters as a major contributor to food insecurity. In 2002, WFP assisted 44 million people suffering from acute crises, the majority of whom were victims of natural disasters, including drought, floods, earthquakes and hurricanes. In close cooperation with humanitarian partners, the United Nations Children's Fund supported the response of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the earthquake in Qazvin, Hamedan and Zanjan provinces with the provision of water and sanitation supplies and psychological assistance for children. Shelter, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, as well as education and child protection support, were provided in response to the floods and drought that occurred in various parts of the Sudan. These are only some of the areas that need to be dealt with in response to natural disasters.

9. The need to support the capacities of regional, national and local disaster response actors is crucial, especially considering that the immediate response in times of disaster is often a local one. In recognition of the need to utilize personnel familiar with vulnerable regions and to strengthen response capacities at the local and regional levels, the UNDAC system was extended to Asia, where two UNDAC induction courses, sponsored by the Governments of India and Japan, were conducted. Disaster-prone countries in Africa will also need to become part of the UNDAC system, and to this end the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is negotiating a memorandum of understanding with the Economic Community of West African States that includes a provision to that effect. Member States are invited to support this initiative.

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10. Member States have recognized that an immediate response to the sudden onset of a natural disaster is crucial and sought to support the international efforts in this regard by adopting General Assembly resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002, "Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance". The resolution urges Member States to facilitate the deployment of international urban search and rescue teams in the case of emergencies involving collapsed structures, especially earthquakes, in accordance with the guidelines of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). It further calls on Member States to facilitate procedures related to the entry and transit of search and rescue staff and their equipment. These provisions were successfully put into practice in the response to earthquakes in Turkey and Algeria in March 2003, which included the dispatch of UNDAC teams to assist the affected Governments.

11. The coherence and timeliness of response can also benefit from a better awareness of and guidance from existing international and national instruments applicable to natural disaster situations. In this regard, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has conducted a series of consultations with members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and Governments on the current state of international laws relating to disaster response. The resulting legal study identifies more than 300 separate treaties and other legal documents containing elements of international disaster response law. Field studies in three regions have examined the impacts of the various laws on the effectiveness of disaster response and the coordination of humanitarian assistance. The findings of these studies will be presented to Governments and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in December 2003, to be followed by reports to the United Nations system in 2004.

12. To support planning preparedness and response activities, humanitarian actors involved in rapid response to natural disasters may also benefit from the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities, which provides information on specialized personnel and teams of technical specialists and on relief supplies, equipment and services that may be available within the system for use on short notice as well as information from Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Work has also begun on the directory of advanced technologies for disaster response, to be established as a new part of the Central Register. Through close collaboration with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, experts on disaster reduction will also be included in the Central Register.

13. The regional disaster advisers outpost by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in disaster-prone regions are enhancing the joint planning and programming among these three agencies, and their collaboration in the area of disaster management has increased considerably and will help to increase further the effectiveness of United Nations-supported capacity-building programmes in the field. Workshops and other training initiatives have supported capacity-building initiatives in the Pacific region, the Americas, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia. In these regions, closer links are being built with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and UNDP, which are promoting coherent approaches aimed at integrating the central aspects of their respective regional efforts. The United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme,

managed by UNDP, helps to build national and regional capacities for disaster management through national and regional workshops in disaster-prone countries.

14. Other initiatives being carried out to strengthen regional disaster management capacities involve the regional offices of the World Health Organization (WHO), especially the Regional Office for the Americas/Pan American Health Organization, which has emphasized the link between natural disasters and development and is focusing not only on capacity-building at the local and national levels but also on assisting the health sector in contingency planning and on promoting the enforcement of stringent construction standards for hospitals so that they can resist natural hazards. WHO is also working with national authorities to strengthen their position, to institutionalize disaster management in all areas of the health sector and to sensitize the agencies and authorities involved in preparedness to be more efficient in case they need to respond. The multi-hazard, multisectoral approach seems to have been successful in some countries, especially countries of Latin America and the Caribbean that are capable of doing a credible rapid needs assessment and damage analysis after natural disasters without any assistance from the international community.

15. The United Nations Regional Inter-Agency Support Office in southern Africa works closely with the Southern African Development Community and has been providing support to address the situation in southern Africa, while seeking to ensure the cohesion and complementarity of disaster management efforts at the regional level. The inter-agency nature of the Support Office encourages joint programming and also allows the United Nations and its partners to draw from a wide range of expertise to support the various aspects of the regional crises.

16. Apart from regional support, there is also a clear need for the United Nations to continue to support local actors that are at the forefront of the response. Evaluations of the Gujarat earthquake in 2001 have shown that when dealing with the immediate effects of the disaster, the fastest, most efficient and best-targeted response was delivered by a local organization, the Self-Employed Women's Association, which was able to rely on local capacities directly involving beneficiaries.⁵

17. In this particular case, it seems apparent that a local response had the biggest immediate impact on the affected population for a number of reasons, including the fact that such organizations are present at and immediately following the occurrence of a catastrophe. Local organizations can also rely on their membership in the community to more quickly assess and address humanitarian needs. The Gujarat experience does not necessarily constitute a recipe for success. The actions and contributions of national Governments and regional organizations in collaboration with the international community are also necessary and need to be well coordinated. The well-functioning role of Government is an essential determinant of timely and effective assistance.

18. The May 2003 earthquake in Algeria killed 2,266 people and injured over 10,000 others. Swift action by the Algerian Government, including the establishment of a crisis unit by national authorities, facilitated the coordination efforts. The contributions provided by the international community were also crucial in supporting local response efforts. IFRC reported that its appeal for the Algeria earthquake elicited 120 per cent of the amount requested.

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19. Other initiatives aimed at improving response capacities at the national level have proved successful. Some elements of these initiatives may be useful for other situations. The Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team in Tajikistan brings together representatives of United Nations agencies, of international organizations and donors working in the field of disaster preparedness and response and of the Tajik Ministry of Emergency Situations. It meets on a routine basis to coordinate activities in the spheres of disaster preparedness, contingency planning and response mechanisms.

Response to environmental emergencies

20. In the area of environmental disasters, it is crucial to ensure that the response is timely and efficient. To strengthen such efforts, the joint Environmental Emergencies Section of the United Nations Environment Programme and of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is focusing on upgrading the humanitarian community's capacity to respond rapidly to industrial accidents and environmental consequences of natural disasters. This process is guided by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, which launched a global partnership to promote an integrated approach to prevention of preparedness for and response to environmental emergencies in support of sustainable development.

IV. Relief to development

21. The actions of Governments and civil society, with support from the international community, have produced compelling evidence that show how appropriate interventions in disaster reduction can lead to a measurable reduction in disaster occurrence and losses. The enormous losses incurred in recent large disasters could have been reduced had such approaches been comprehensively factored into development processes in the past. The mainstreaming of disaster reduction into development and post-disaster recovery is therefore an essential component of sustainable human development. It is a challenge that requires the participation of all the key stakeholders at the local, national, regional and international levels.

22. Capacity-building programmes were initiated in various countries worldwide to promote the integration of disaster reduction into development concerns. In 2002-2003, UNDP participated in over 18 disaster recovery initiatives worldwide and successfully utilized the small window of opportunity following a disaster to effectively integrate risk reduction concerns into recovery efforts. UNDP has supported sustainable recovery frameworks and programming in 16 countries. During the reporting period UNDP provided relief grants for over 38 disaster situations worldwide to support the coordination functions of the Resident Coordinator during those situations and participated in UNDAC assessment missions.

23. In the window of opportunity following the March 2002 earthquake in Afghanistan's Hindu Kush Mountains, support was provided for training the informal construction sectors in earthquake-resistant techniques and for community-based organizations in the area of disaster preparedness. This programme will continue in 2003.

24. The lack of capacity to reduce the impact of natural hazards remains a major burden for developing countries, in particular least developed countries. Disaster risk accumulates rapidly with increasing hazard impacts. The prevalence of unplanned human settlements in hazard-prone areas and poor land-use and development practices, including in urban areas, contribute to disaster risks. This continues to characterize development in many least developed countries and can lead to greater physical, social and economic vulnerability.

25. To further mainstream disaster reduction into post-disaster recovery, UNDP supported sustainable recovery frameworks and programming in 12 countries. Joint recovery missions with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and/or planning missions have been sent to, inter alia, the Goma volcano, the Golestan floods in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Mauritania. Following the requests by the General Assembly to strengthen operational activities and capacity-building in natural disaster mitigation, prevention and preparedness, UNDP has contributed to increased capacities for disaster reduction in 33 countries worldwide, including through early warning systems, the strengthening of national disaster offices, risk reduction tools and strategies and support for legislative systems. In some cases, risk reduction strategies and platforms have been created. In others, national and subregional networks have facilitated a lessons-learned type of process.

26. The *World Vulnerability Report*, to be launched in November 2003, is expected to contribute to increased awareness of the importance of reducing disaster risk. The report will include a global multiple risk index, highlight contemporary trends in the evolution of natural disaster risk and vulnerability patterns and advocate the role of relevant policies and strategies for reducing disaster risks.

27. The importance of integrating risk reduction into development planning and post-disaster recovery is also expected to be highlighted during the 10-year review of the Yokohama Strategy and should be discussed during the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction, to be held in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005, under the auspices of the United Nations and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

V. Conclusions and recommendations

28. To successfully reduce the impact of natural disasters on affected communities, it is crucial for the international community to collaborate with vulnerable countries and regions to ensure that optimum use is made of the available disaster management tools and initiatives. Recent natural disasters, such as the earthquakes in Turkey and Algeria in May 2003, have demonstrated the importance of timely, efficient and coordinated responses from affected Governments, in cooperation with the international community and the tools at its disposal, in particular the INSARAG guidelines. Member States in disaster-prone regions are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the INSARAG guidelines in order to ensure a coordinated, rapid response of international urban search and rescue teams in the event of the sudden onset of a disaster.

29. The UNDAC system continues to be a valuable tool by which disaster management expertise is made available by Member States to respond to the sudden onset of emergencies. The membership has been further expanded and

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is now deploying an increasing number of personnel from disaster-prone regions. However, there continues to be a need to expand the UNDAC membership to Africa, and donors are invited to support ongoing efforts in order to expand the availability of the teams and their coverage of disasters globally.

30. There is also a need to gain a more precise understanding of the impact of levels of funding on natural disaster response. Although there exist figures that reflect the contributions to natural disaster response, it is not clear if adequate support is being provided to address capacity-building and post-disaster recovery needs. Several entities compile statistics relating to natural disasters, dealing with issues such as economic losses, disaster occurrences, number of fatalities and contributions made to support natural disaster response. Currently, disaster data is collated for a variety of purposes, and, thus, the information can be inconsistent. Although this could be partly a result of the lack of an agreed definition of what constitutes a natural disaster, it nevertheless complicates efforts to compile consistent statistical information on natural disasters. This hinders the development of a definitive analysis of the impact of natural disasters. Member States may therefore wish to explore this matter and work with the humanitarian community to ensure that information on natural disasters is streamlined.

Notes

¹ See *topics: Natural Catastrophes 2002*, published by the Munich Re Group; available at www.munichre.com.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See *World Disasters Report 2003*, published by IFRC; available at www.ifrc.org.



General Assembly

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Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 40 (d)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/58/L.43 and Add.1)]

58/118. Participation of volunteers, “White Helmets”, in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 50/19 of 28 November 1995, 52/171 of 16 December 1997, 54/98 of 8 December 1999 and 56/102 of 14 December 2001,

Reaffirming also its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 47/168 of 22 December 1992, 48/57 of 14 December 1993, 49/139 A and B of 20 December 1994, 50/57 of 12 December 1995 and 51/194 of 17 December 1996 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 of 28 July 1995 and 1996/33 of 25 July 1996,

Emphasizing the need to address the strategic planning gap between relief and development activities in the context of humanitarian emergencies, taking into account the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,¹

Recognizing that the international community, in addressing the growing magnitude and complexity of man-made and natural disasters and chronic situations characterized by hunger, malnutrition and poverty, must rely not only on the formulation of a well-coordinated global response within the framework of the United Nations but also on the promotion of a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development,

Recalling once again that prevention, preparedness and contingency planning for emergencies on a global level depend, for the most part, on the strengthening of local and national response capacities as well as on the availability of financial resources, both domestic and international,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General,² prepared in pursuance of its resolution 56/102 on the participation of volunteers, “White Helmets”, in the

¹ See resolution 55/2.

² A/58/320.

activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development;

2. *Recognizes* the value of domestic and regional actions aimed at making pre-identified, standby and trained national volunteer corps such as the White Helmets available to the United Nations system, through the United Nations Volunteers and other agencies, and in accordance with accepted United Nations procedures and practices, in order to provide specialized human and technical resources for emergency relief and rehabilitation;

3. *Expresses its satisfaction* for the progress of the White Helmets initiative as a singular voluntary international effort to provide the United Nations system with voluntary expertise to respond, in a quick and coordinated manner, to United Nations appeals concerning humanitarian relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, while preserving the non-political, neutral and impartial character of humanitarian action;

4. *Encourages* Member States to identify their respective national focal points for the White Helmets in order to continue to provide the United Nations system with an accessible global network of rapid response facilities in case of humanitarian emergencies;

5. *Recognizes with appreciation* the progress made by the States members of the Common Market of the South and its associated partners in strengthening and broadening the regional role of the White Helmets initiative, and encourages Member States in other regional associations to make similar joint efforts;

6. *Encourages* operational partners of the United Nations system, in particular United Nations Volunteers and the United Nations Development Programme, to draw upon the voluntary expertise of the White Helmets, as appropriate, including in their response to chronic situations characterized by hunger, malnutrition and poverty;

7. *Recognizes* that the White Helmets initiative can play an important role in the promotion, diffusion and fulfilment of the decisions achieved in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,¹ and invites Member States in a position to do so to consider means to ensure the integration of the White Helmets initiative into their programme activities and to make the commensurate financial resources available through the special financing window of the Special Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Volunteers, or in coordination with it;

8. *Invites* the Secretary-General, on the basis of the experience acquired, to consider further the potential use of White Helmets as a resource for preventing and mitigating the effects of post-conflict humanitarian emergencies and, in this context, to maintain adequate support for the White Helmets liaison functions, taking into account the ongoing reforms process;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take into consideration the ten years that will have passed since the adoption of its resolution 49/139 B, the first resolution on the White Helmets initiative, and, in view of the success of coordinated actions carried out since then with, inter alia, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Volunteers, to consider their impact and to analyse possible steps and modalities to enhance the integration of the White Helmets initiative within the work of the United Nations system, suggesting

appropriate mechanisms and areas, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session.

*75th plenary meeting
17 December 2003*





General Assembly

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Fifty-eighth session
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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/58/L.39 and Add.1)]

58/114. Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto, other relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Council,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,¹

Taking note also of the report of the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of actions described in the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change”,²

Reaffirming the principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Recognizing that independence, meaning the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented, is also an important guiding principle for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Gravely concerned about the acts of violence against humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel, in particular deliberate attacks, which are in violation of international humanitarian law or other international law that may be applicable,

Gravely concerned also about the lack of access by humanitarian personnel to victims of humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations, in many regions of the world,

Reaffirming the responsibility first and foremost of States to take care of the victims of humanitarian emergencies within their own borders, while recognizing that the magnitude and duration of many emergencies may be beyond the response capacity of many affected countries,

¹ A/58/89-E/2003/85.

² A/58/351.

Concerned about the need to mobilize adequate levels of financing for emergency humanitarian assistance,

Emphasizing that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat should benefit from adequate and more predictable funding, while stressing the importance for the Office to continue to make efforts to broaden its donor base,

Recognizing the importance of humanitarian assistance in ensuring the effective transition from conflict to peace and in preventing the recurrence of armed conflict, and that humanitarian assistance must be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development,

Recognizing also the importance of adequate assistance in the transition from relief to development,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the outcome of the sixth humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council, during its substantive session of 2003;
2. *Welcomes* the appointment of the new Emergency Relief Coordinator, encourages the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to continue its efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, including through the Consolidated Appeal Process, and calls upon relevant United Nations organizations as well as other humanitarian and development actors to work with the Office in enhancing the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance;
3. *Stresses* the need to increase in an incremental way, in the normal course of the budget process, the share of the budget of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs borne by the United Nations regular budget;
4. *Emphasizes* the importance of the discussion of humanitarian policies and activities in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council;
5. *Calls upon* relevant organizations of the United Nations system, other relevant international organizations, Governments and non-governmental organizations to cooperate with the Secretary-General and the Emergency Relief Coordinator to ensure timely implementation of and follow-up to resolutions of the Economic and Social Council adopted at the humanitarian affairs segment of its substantive session;
6. *Encourages* the Economic and Social Council to consider the issue of the transition from relief to development in an integrated manner, through a possible joint meeting of the humanitarian and operational segments, during its substantive session in the near future, in view of the importance of getting humanitarian and development organizations, including international and regional financial institutions and non-governmental organizations, to discuss and review more fully the implications of the transition from relief to development in their programming, and invites the Council to take into account, inter alia, the work in progress by the United Nations system to clarify its role in post-conflict transition situations as well as other relevant information in its consideration;
7. *Strongly condemns* all forms of violence to which humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel are increasingly subjected, as well as any act or failure to act, contrary to international law, which obstructs or prevents humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel from discharging their humanitarian functions;
8. *Urges* all States to take necessary measures to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and United Nations and its associated personnel;

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9. *Reaffirms* the leading role of civilian organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance, particularly in areas affected by conflicts, affirms the need, in situations where military capacity and assets are used to support the implementation of humanitarian assistance, for their use to be in conformity with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles, and in this regard takes note of the 2003 “Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies”,³ as well as of the 1994 “Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief”;⁴

10. *Calls upon* all Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflicts and in post-conflict situations, in countries in which humanitarian personnel are operating, in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law and national laws, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel as well as supplies and equipment in order to allow them to perform efficiently their task of assisting the affected civilian population, including refugees and internally displaced persons;

11. *Encourages* Member States with internally displaced persons to develop or strengthen, as appropriate, national laws, policies and minimum standards on internal displacement, *inter alia*, taking into account the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,⁵ and to continue to work with humanitarian agencies in endeavours to provide a more predictable response to the needs of internally displaced persons, and in this regard calls for international support, upon request, to capacity-building efforts of Governments;

12. *Reaffirms* the obligation of all States and parties to an armed conflict to protect civilians in armed conflicts in accordance with international humanitarian law, and invites States to promote a culture of protection, taking into account the particular needs of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities;

13. *Welcomes* the continued efforts to address the issue of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in the context of humanitarian crises, and notes with interest the bulletin of the Secretary-General on special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse;⁶

14. *Encourages* the donor community to improve its response to humanitarian emergencies through policies and practices of good donorship, together with mechanisms for their review, and welcomes steps taken in this direction;

15. *Calls upon* relevant United Nations organizations to improve and increase consistency in the way in which humanitarian needs are assessed;

³ See www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf.

⁴ Department of Humanitarian Affairs, document DHA/94/95.

⁵ E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex.

⁶ ST/SGB/2003/13.

A/RES/58/114

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2004, on progress made in strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, including the implementation of and follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/5 of 15 July 2003.

*75th plenary meeting
17 December 2003*

III



Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 40 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/58/L.34 and Add.1)]

58/25. International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, the annex to which contains the guiding principles for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, as well as all its resolutions on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development, and recalling the resolutions of the humanitarian segments of the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the importance of the principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Emphasizing that the affected State has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory, and in the facilitation of the work of humanitarian organizations in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters,

Emphasizing also the importance of integrating risk reduction into development planning and post-disaster recovery,

Emphasizing further, in this context, the important role of development organizations in supporting national efforts to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters,

Emphasizing the responsibility of all States to undertake disaster preparedness, response and mitigation efforts in order to minimize the impact of natural disasters, while recognizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of affected countries which may have limited capacities to fulfil this requirement,

Welcoming the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction,

Stressing that national authorities need to enhance the resilience of populations to disasters through, inter alia, implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction so as to reduce risks to people, their livelihoods, the social and economic infrastructure and environmental resources,

Taking into account the outcome of the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn, Germany, from 16 to 18 October 2003, under the auspices of the United Nations,

Noting the critical role played by local resources, as well as by existing in-country capacities, in natural disaster response,

Recognizing the significant role played by national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in disaster preparedness and risk reduction, disaster response, rehabilitation and development,

Emphasizing the importance of raising awareness among developing countries of the capacities existing at the national, regional and international levels that could be deployed to assist them,

Emphasizing also the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters in all their phases, including prevention, preparedness, mitigation and recovery and reconstruction, and of strengthening the response capacity of affected countries,

Welcoming the efforts of Member States, with facilitation by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, and in cooperation with the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of international urban search and rescue assistance, and in this context noting its resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 entitled "Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance",

Encouraging, in this regard, efforts aiming at the strengthening of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and its regional groups, particularly through the participation in its activities of representatives of a larger number of countries,

Mindful of the effects that shortfalls in resources can have on the preparedness for and response to natural disasters, and underscoring, in this regard, the need to gain a more precise understanding of the impact of levels of funding on natural disaster response,

Underlining the need for further improvement in information and analyses available regarding needs, responses and funding related to natural disasters,

1. *Takes note* of the reports of the Secretary-General entitled "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development"¹ and "Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations";²

2. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact, resulting in massive losses of life and property worldwide, in particular in vulnerable societies lacking adequate capacity to mitigate effectively the long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences of natural disasters;

3. *Calls upon* all States to adopt, where required, and to continue to implement effectively necessary legislative and other appropriate measures to

¹ A/58/434.

² A/58/89-E/2003/85.

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mitigate the effects of natural disasters, inter alia, by disaster prevention, including appropriate land use and building regulations, as well as disaster preparedness and capacity-building in disaster response and mitigation, and requests the international community to continue to assist developing countries in this regard;

4. *Stresses*, in this context, the importance of strengthening international cooperation, particularly through the effective use of multilateral mechanisms, in the provision of humanitarian assistance through all phases of a disaster, from relief and mitigation to development, including the provision of adequate resources;

5. *Also stresses* that humanitarian assistance for natural disasters should be provided in accordance with and with due respect for the guiding principles contained in the annex to resolution 46/182 and should be determined on the basis of the human dimension and needs arising out of the particular natural disasters;

6. *Recognizes* that economic growth and sustainable development contribute to improving the capacity of States to mitigate, respond to and prepare for natural disasters;

7. *Reaffirms* that disaster risk analysis and vulnerability reduction form an integral part of humanitarian assistance, poverty eradication and sustainable development strategies and need to be considered in the development plans of all vulnerable countries and communities, including, where appropriate, in plans relating to the transition from relief to development, and affirms that within such preventive strategies, disaster preparedness and early warning systems must be further strengthened at the country and regional levels, inter alia, through better coordination among relevant United Nations bodies and cooperation with Governments of affected countries and regional and other relevant organizations with the aim of maximizing the effectiveness of natural disaster response and reducing the impact of natural disasters, particularly in developing countries;

8. *Emphasizes* the importance of establishing or updating, as appropriate, national disaster preparedness plans, as agreed upon at the twenty-seventh International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, held in Geneva in 1999;

9. *Also emphasizes* the importance of enhanced international cooperation, including through the United Nations and regional organizations, to assist developing countries in their efforts to build capacities and to predict, prepare for and respond to natural disasters;

10. *Stresses* the need for partnerships among Governments, organizations of the United Nations system, relevant humanitarian organizations and specialized companies to promote training to strengthen preparedness for and response to natural disasters;

11. *Also stresses* the need to promote the access to and transfer of technology related to early warning systems and to mitigation programmes to developing countries affected by natural disasters;

12. *Encourages* the further use of space-based and ground-based remote-sensing technologies for the prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, where appropriate;

13. *Also encourages* in such operations the sharing of geographical data, including remotely sensed images and geographic information system and global positioning system data, among Governments, space agencies and relevant international humanitarian organizations, as appropriate, and also notes in that

context initiatives such as those undertaken by the International Charter on Space and Major Disasters and the Global Disaster Information Network;

14. *Stresses* that particular international cooperation efforts should be undertaken to enhance and broaden further the utilization of national and local capacities and, where appropriate, regional and subregional capacities of developing countries for disaster preparedness and response, which may be made available in closer proximity to the site of a disaster, more efficiently and at lower cost;

15. *Recognizes*, in this regard, that the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination system continues to be a valuable tool by which disaster management expertise is made available by Member States to respond to the sudden onset of emergencies;

16. *Welcomes* the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat as the focal point within the overall United Nations system for the promotion and coordination of disaster responses among United Nations humanitarian agencies and other humanitarian partners;

17. *Takes note with interest* of the initiatives taken by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme for the establishment of regional positions of disaster response advisers and disaster reduction advisers to assist developing countries in capacity-building for disaster prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response in a coordinated and complementary manner;

18. *Encourages* further cooperation between the United Nations system and regional organizations in order to increase the capacity of these organizations to respond to natural disasters;

19. *Encourages* States that have not acceded to or ratified the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, adopted at Tampere, Finland, on 18 June 1998, to consider doing so;

20. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in collaboration with relevant organizations and partners, to finalize establishment of, and then update periodically, the Directory of Advanced Technologies for Disaster Response as a new part of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities;³

21. *Encourages* donors to consider the importance of ensuring that assistance in the case of higher-profile natural disasters does not come at the expense of those that may have a relatively lower profile, bearing in mind that the allocation of resources should be driven by needs, as well as the importance of making efforts to increase the level of assistance for disaster reduction and preparedness programmes and for disaster response and mitigation activities;

22. *Requests* the Secretary-General to examine ways to further improve the assessment of needs and responses and to enhance the availability of data regarding funding in response to natural disasters and to consider concrete recommendations to improve the international response to natural disasters, as necessary, based on his examination, keeping in mind also the need to address any geographical and sectoral imbalances and shortfalls in such responses, where they exist, as well as the more

³ www.reliefweb.int/ocha_ol/programs/response/register.html.

effective use of national emergency response agencies, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

*69th plenary meeting
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United Nations

A/58/89-E/2003/85



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III

General Assembly Fifty-eighth session

Item 41 (a) of the preliminary list*

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Economic and Social Council Substantive session of 2003

Geneva, 30 June-25 July 2003

Item 5 of the provisional agenda**

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report addresses the theme of “Strengthening of the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance, with particular attention to humanitarian financing and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and the transition from relief to development”.

The report examines some of the key humanitarian developments and challenges of the past year. Some of the issues addressed relate to the protection of civilians, internally displaced persons, contingency planning, natural disasters and HIV/AIDS in the context of emergencies. The report then provides a detailed analysis of the two main themes of the report and addresses the major challenges faced in the context of the transition from relief to development and humanitarian financing.

* A/58/50/Rev.1 and Corr.1.

** E/2003/100.

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Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to the requests contained in Assembly resolution 57/153 of 16 December 2002 and Council resolution 2002/32 of 26 July 2002 on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

I. Humanitarian situation, 2002-2003

Humanitarian developments and challenges

2. Developments in the humanitarian environment during the past year have been mixed. There are positive indications — albeit to varying degrees — that long-standing conflicts in Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Sierra Leone and the Sudan might be moving towards resolution. However, there has also been a re-emergence of conflict in Liberia and an outbreak of civil war in Côte d'Ivoire, further complicating the situation in West Africa. In other parts of the world, including Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, protracted conflicts continue to deepen the humanitarian suffering of civilians. Most recently, the attention of the world has been focused on the war in Iraq, where the importance of promoting principled interaction with the occupying Power has presented a key challenge to humanitarian coordination.

3. There has been an aggravation of the ravages of drought and food shortages in the Horn of Africa and southern Africa by human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), a development that has challenged the humanitarian aid community to rethink its approach to humanitarian emergencies exacerbated by the epidemic. In the area of natural disasters, improvements in operational tools need to be reinforced by greater cooperation between the international community and national and regional response actors so as to ensure better synergies in disaster management.

4. The humanitarian community continues to focus its response to these diverse crises around ensuring that assistance and protection are provided to affected populations in accordance with the humanitarian principles of independence, neutrality and impartiality. The ultimate goal is to ensure that durable solutions are found, thus setting the stage for sustainable development. This requires collaborative partnerships among the humanitarian community, Governments and local actors. The contribution of regional organizations to humanitarian assistance efforts is becoming increasingly important.

5. Ensuring that humanitarian staff are able to operate in safe and secure environments is one of the more prominent operational prerequisites of the successful delivery of humanitarian assistance. Secure humanitarian access needs to be coupled with adequate, flexible and predictable resources in order to ensure that humanitarian aid is timely, adequate and effective. Reliable information, heightened advocacy efforts and effective contingency planning, taking into account the

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regional effects of crises, are also needed to support effective humanitarian assistance.

6. In the context of these humanitarian developments and challenges, a number of issues, such as the transition from relief to development, humanitarian financing, protection of civilians, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and HIV/AIDS in the context of emergencies, would benefit from the attention of Member States. These and other key issues are discussed in the body of this report.

1. Protection of civilians

7. The protection of civilians in armed conflict continues to be a priority issue across the United Nations system. To a large extent, humanitarian crises are in fact crises of protection. Effective implementation of the principles of protection and international human rights and humanitarian standards requires strengthened coordination on a wide range of issues, including the proliferation of small arms and landmines, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants, security, law and order, sexual exploitation of women and children in conflict, the rights and special needs of refugees and internally displaced persons and the restorative justice issues of impunity and property rights.

8. Pivotal to the protection of civilians in a number of current complex emergencies is the need to obtain unhindered and sustained access to populations in need. In both Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, access to populations in need is severely limited, especially in areas controlled by rebels. (Currently, less than 30 per cent of Liberian territory is accessible to humanitarian workers.) In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, closures and curfews imposed by Israel in response to suicide bombings and other attacks continue to impact adversely on humanitarian access and the protection of civilians more generally. Despite assurances received from Israeli authorities, access remained difficult for humanitarian agencies. The humanitarian situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has continued to deteriorate since the mission of the Secretary-General's Personal Humanitarian Envoy in August 2002. Restrictions on movement, the concomitant loss of access to services for the satisfaction of basic needs and the destruction of houses and other infrastructure serve to increase levels of civilian suffering. In the Republic of Chechnya of the Russian Federation, the main focus has been on upholding the principle of voluntary return, especially for the 15,000 internally displaced persons still in camps in Ingushetia, on the need to allow access to registration for civilians who have sought refuge in Ingushetia, and on the need to protect civilians caught in the midst of the conflict in Chechnya itself.

9. In longer-term conflicts, the protection-of-civilians agenda offers the formula of collective framework agreements between the parties to the conflict and the international humanitarian community as a way of allowing safe and sustained access to those in need. Operation Lifeline Sudan, which provides an operational framework within which United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations in the Sudan may secure access to civilians impartially and equitably regardless of their location, provides a good model for such framework agreements. Even where such framework agreements exist, however, ensuring implementation and accountability of both State and non-State actors remains a challenge.

10. A series of regional workshops on the protection of civilians convened for southern Africa, South-East Asia and Europe identified their main protection

concerns, which were the need to separate civilians from armed elements and the impact of terrorism and counter-terrorism initiatives on the protection of civilians. The intermingling of combatants with civilian communities is an increasingly urgent concern. During complex emergencies and the subsequent transition to peace, cooperation between neighbouring States in order to combat this problem can be vital, particularly in respect of the need for host countries to ensure that refugee camps are established at a sufficient distance from borders (in order to minimize the risks to civilians, to enhance safe humanitarian access and to facilitate security in the camps). The rise of terrorism and the range of counter-terrorism initiatives by Governments have generated a number of difficult protection issues. It is crucial that Member States respond to security threats in a manner that safeguards the rights of civilians and is in accordance with principles of international humanitarian law and human rights law. "Counter-terrorism" should not be used to justify the suppression of basic human rights.

2. Staff security

11. Safeguarding the security of humanitarian personnel remains a pivotal challenge to the United Nations and its humanitarian partners. The past year has witnessed a number of tragic losses of humanitarian staff, most notably in Liberia, with the murder in February 2003 of 3 Adventist Development and Relief Agency staff in the north and the disappearance in March of almost 200 United Nations and non-governmental organization staff members, of whom half remain unaccounted for. Four Red Cross volunteers were murdered this year in western Côte d'Ivoire; abductions of humanitarian workers have taken place in Chechnya; and humanitarian workers have been killed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Equally tragic incidents have taken place in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia and the Sudan. These tragedies serve to illustrate the precariousness of the security environment often encountered by humanitarian staff and the dangers inherent in providing humanitarian assistance during conflict. It also reveals a disturbing trend of blatant disrespect for humanitarian work. Despite the strengthening of the United Nations security management system and the increased cooperation that is taking place between the United Nations and its non-governmental organization partners, little can be done when humanitarian personnel are sought out and specifically targeted by belligerents. It is therefore crucial that Governments and non-State actors provide stronger commitments to the humanitarian community so as to ensure that a climate of impunity does not prevail in such situations and that those responsible for attacks against humanitarian staff are promptly brought to justice.

3. Humanitarian and military relations

12. Since the early 1990s, military forces have become increasingly involved in humanitarian activities. This involvement in what traditionally has been seen as "humanitarian space" raises significant issues in respect of principles, as well as policy and operational questions. In response to this challenge, "Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies" (MCDA Guidelines)¹ were developed and released in March 2003, after an intensive consultative process involving Member States, the United Nations and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). In recognition of the fact that the MCDA Guidelines address only one aspect of the

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interface between the humanitarian community and the military, namely, the use of military and civil defence assets, IASC is examining how best to address the issue of guidance on the broader aspects of the civil-military relationship in humanitarian crises.

13. The issue of civil-military relations has been brought to the fore most recently in the context of Iraq, where there has been a need to balance the responsibilities, under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War,² of the Coalition Forces, as the occupying Power, against the traditional role of the United Nations and other organizations providing humanitarian assistance. An important development in this context was the endorsement and release by the Secretary-General in March 2003 of "General Guidance for Interaction between United Nations Personnel and Military and Civilian Representatives of the Occupying Power in Iraq" (General Guidance for Iraq).³ This document addresses the gap that has long been a crucial issue for United Nations humanitarian bodies and constitutes a significant step forward in terms of clarifying the parameters of the relationship on the ground.

4. Update on internally displaced persons

14. Nascent peace has created opportunities to substantially improve the lives of internally displaced persons in places as diverse as Afghanistan, Angola, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka. In the wake of recent moves towards peace, large numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees have returned home in each of these countries. Lack of access to land and inadequate property rights, however, pose a significant challenge to IDP, refugee and returnee protection and assistance in transitional settings. In many instances, land and property have been taken over by elites, military leaders or other ethnic groups, risking tension and jeopardizing the stability of peace processes. Inadequate property rights and insecure access to land can exacerbate a returnee's level of vulnerability. Women in traditional societies are particularly affected. The fact that they are often discriminated against in terms of inheritance rights and access to property and as a result are deprived of an economic base, leads to poverty for themselves and their children. More generally, returnees who have no certainty of sustained access to the same piece of land are unlikely to make investments to increase agricultural productivity and food security. An uncertain future may also encourage the migration of returnees to urban areas, where they become mired in extremely poor living conditions.

15. In many post-conflict cases, judicial institutions are often weak and unable to provide recourse. Angola, however, has in place a legal framework based on its Constitution, international legal instruments and the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, annex) that is beginning to deal with some of the difficult issues surrounding protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons during transition. The Norms on the Resettlement and Return of Displaced Populations, along with their more detailed *regulamento*, specify the preconditions and social targets related to State administration, land, health, water, sanitation and education that must be achieved during resettlement and return. Originally crafted with support from the United Nations to address poor conditions in resettlement areas, these laws have continued to be useful during return and have framed discussion on the types of post-conflict assistance needed.

16. Nonetheless, as has been the case with the robust legal framework that exists in Colombia, implementation of the Norms has been inconsistent. Only about 50 per cent of IDP resettlements and 30 per cent of IDP returns are consistent with the preconditions specified. Part of the difficulty in achieving greater implementation has been a lack of government capacity at provincial, municipal and local levels. Support and funding for this type of capacity-building are frequently low, despite its critical role in the creation of sustainable conditions for return.

17. This challenge, like others associated with IDP protection and assistance in times of both emergency and transition, underscores the importance of a collaborative approach, given the global dimensions of internal displacement. The range of activities required to support and protect IDP populations, particularly in transition, are considerable — for example, establishing legal frameworks that secure property rights, supporting government capacity-building, restoring livelihoods and providing basic social services. The inter-agency Internal Displacement Unit, whose mandate was extended for the year 2003, supports country teams with the development of collaborative approaches in the field. Recently, the Unit has provided support in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Iraq. It provides specialized advice to resident/humanitarian coordinators, develops common training and facilitates the development of strategies and agreed frameworks. The Unit and the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons are working to promote system-wide improvements in response; and the Unit is also pursuing efforts to develop parameters for a collaborative approach to help make IDP-related activities more predictable.

5. Gender mainstreaming

18. The need for greater integration of a gender perspective into emergency humanitarian assistance continues to be an important challenge confronting the United Nations, its humanitarian partners and Member States. IASC and its constituent members have developed a range of policies, strategies and guidelines aimed at ensuring that the issue of gender perspectives and the needs, priorities and experience of women and girls are consistently addressed by all personnel involved in humanitarian operations. The challenge remains of ensuring full implementation and utilization of those methods and tools. Concrete measures aimed at systematically integrating a gender perspective into the full range of emergency operations, from their initial stages, are critical to the effective targeting of emergency humanitarian assistance on the ground. Of particular concern is the need for enhanced protection capacities for women and girls in refugee and IDP camps. Integration of a gender perspective is equally vital to the effectiveness of post-conflict reconstruction processes. It is essential that efforts to mainstream gender recognize women not only as victims of complex emergencies, but also as an important key to their solution.

6. Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

19. The problem of sexual exploitation and abuse remains one of the most pressing issues arising in complex emergencies and armed conflicts. In July 2002, IASC adopted the Plan of Action prepared by the Task Force on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Humanitarian Crises,⁴ which established six core principles representing minimum standards of behaviour expected of all United

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Nations civilian staff members. A draft Secretary-General's bulletin that will further institutionalize the six core principles through their incorporation into the codes of conduct and staff rules and regulations of all member organizations is currently being finalized. The Task Force is continuing to work on appropriate disciplinary procedures to be followed in the event of a breach of these principles. Several Member States are formally adopting policies requiring incorporation of the core principles into their own agreements with operational partners, as encouraged by the Plan of Action. Humanitarian agencies outside the United Nations system are engaged in similar efforts to adopt or revise their own codes of conduct.

20. Efforts to address the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian crises need to be reinforced by concrete action on the part of Member States if they are to be truly effective. The incorporation of the core principles into standards and codes of conduct for national armed forces and police forces, and the insistence by donor countries that all of their implementing partners include the core principles in their codes of conduct prior to release of donor funding, would facilitate this goal considerably. Another important measure for Member States would be to apply appropriate follow-up action in response to allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by their troops and to report to the Security Council on the action taken.

7. Emergency preparedness and contingency planning

21. Proper preparedness and contingency planning, including improved early warning capacity to identify possible disaster and crisis risks, are essential elements of an effective response to a natural disaster or complex humanitarian emergency. IASC has played a pivotal role in leading inter-agency processes that developed and endorsed the "Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance" (Contingency Planning Guidelines). The United Nations has also been strengthening the early warning tools and capacities of relevant departments and agencies, as well as country teams, to enable them to better plan for primary and secondary scenarios.

22. The regional contingency planning and preparedness effort that the United Nations and its partners undertook prior to the war in Iraq was a comprehensive and resource-intensive exercise. IASC played a key role in ensuring the development of contingency plans in and around Iraq that allowed agencies to pre-position supplies (a task hindered by the lack of advance contributions from donors) and to pre-deploy key response personnel. It also set the scene for close collaboration between the resident coordinators, United Nations organizations, the Red Cross Movement, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and non-governmental organizations. Other important aspects of the contingency planning included the early launch of a preparedness "flash appeal" for Iraq, the deployment of humanitarian affairs officers in neighbouring countries, and the early establishment of common services, the Joint Logistics Centre, humanitarian air services, the Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC), the Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) and online coverage on ReliefWeb.

23. Improved coordination between members of IASC in preparedness and contingency planning remains a key objective for other complex emergencies. The incorporation of inter-agency contingency plans into the existing planning of United Nations country teams, based on the Contingency Planning Guidelines and common

assessments of levels of humanitarian risk, would strengthen their capacity to respond to natural disasters and complex emergencies. Enhanced coordination with donor planning in order to ensure a consistent and comprehensive response to humanitarian crises is an equally important goal.

8. Natural disasters

24. The occurrence of natural disasters has more than tripled over the last three decades, with an increasing number of people affected as a consequence. During that same period, however, there has been a dramatic decline in the number of deaths from natural disasters. The decline in casualties can be attributed in part to anticipation of potential catastrophes, including recurring natural disasters, based on knowledge of hazardous conditions and possible destructive events, and investment in protective measures. Nonetheless, lack of capacity to reduce the impact of natural hazards and environmental emergencies, especially in developing countries, remains a major hurdle.

25. The actions of Governments and civil society, with support from the international community, have demonstrated that appropriate interventions in disaster reduction can lead to a measurable reduction in disaster impact. In the case of Ethiopia, protective measures undertaken by the Government in cooperation with the international community helped reduce the scale of the food crisis. Key factors in the response included an efficient and credible government early warning system, the active involvement of donors in the assessment process from the very beginning of the drought crisis, and early advocacy by the Government, United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations, donor representatives and the media.

26. Experience has shown that the response to the threat of natural disasters requires coherent coordination and greater synergies among humanitarian and other actors. In order to improve comprehensive disaster management, a tripartite assessment was conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat/International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to strengthen coordination and cooperation at the national and international levels. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) also launched a new global partnership at the World Summit on Sustainable Development on an "Integrated Approach to Prevention, Preparedness for and Response to Environmental Emergencies in Support of Sustainable Development", which will also contribute to the objective of improving disaster management. Coordination in the European context has been enhanced by the Fribourg Process, which has enabled structured dialogue between the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Member States, regional and international organizations and non-governmental organizations to promote coherence and complementarity in crisis management and humanitarian action.

27. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has continued to develop its coordination tools for natural disasters, such as the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams, and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group. In 2002-2003, two UNDAC induction courses in Asia expanded the UNDAC system to this region. Work is also being undertaken with Member States in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/150

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of 16 December 2002 to further improve the response and coordination of international search and rescue teams.

28. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is in the process of collecting and examining hundreds of existing international disaster response law provisions and other instruments in order to promote their improved harmonization and implementation. This exercise will also identify any gaps or inadequacies, which could become the subject of future examination by the international community so as to further strengthen the legal and policy framework surrounding international disaster response activities.

9. HIV/AIDS in emergencies

29. The HIV/AIDS epidemic has introduced and firmly established a new complexity in humanitarian crises which requires the rethinking and redefinition of traditional humanitarian assistance. The lessons of southern Africa illustrate that short-term humanitarian assistance programmes must be supported by concomitant emergency development interventions. Programming tools such as needs assessments, vulnerability analyses, the design of food rations and other nutrition-related activities are being adjusted in order to reflect this new reality.

30. For those countries affected by the combination of famine and HIV/AIDS, sustainable recovery is undermined owing to the breakdown of family support networks, decline in production and loss of income leading to greater impoverishment. Of particular concern is the fact that HIV/AIDS disproportionately affects women and girls, who globally account for more than 50 per cent of new HIV infections. In Africa, women also account for 70 per cent of the agricultural labour force and are responsible for 80 per cent of the food production. The role of national actors as well as regional bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which has been at the centre of the response, will continue to be crucial to alleviating the crisis in southern Africa. Strong political commitment and leadership, recognizing and protecting the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, are also crucial in promoting an effective, long-term response to the epidemic.

31. The missions of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa have highlighted the devastating impact of HIV/AIDS when combined with other causes of vulnerability such as erratic rainfall, chronic poverty and poor policy environments. United Nations bodies are working together in the Regional Inter-agency Coordination Support Office (RIACSO) to raise awareness and emphasize the need to move beyond the traditional emergency response in order to find durable solutions to the situation in southern Africa. The Integrated Regional Information Network's PlusNews, an Internet-based HIV/AIDS news service for Africa, helps to address this need by reporting on community action programmes, government initiatives and the experiences of people living with HIV/AIDS.

32. Beyond the southern African crisis, the international community is deeply concerned about the spread of HIV/AIDS in situations of armed conflict. The risk of HIV infection is exacerbated by the high incidence of sexual violence and sexual exploitation in conflict situations, as highlighted in the 2002 Human Rights Watch report on sexual violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. To facilitate a comprehensive response to HIV/AIDS in humanitarian crises, IASC is

finalizing guidelines for emergency response which will ensure the integration of the HIV/AIDS components into all relevant programming areas.

II. The transition from relief to development

A. Background

33. Transition has been a constant and evolving feature of the Economic and Social Council agenda since 1991. The 1996 report of the Secretary-General to the Council (A/51/172-E/1996/77) explained that relief and development activities often proceed at the same time, with one type of activities having an impact upon the other. By the late 1990s, the debate had shifted. The main concerns expressed in the Council were the need to avoid funding gaps that occur as development starts to re-engage and the need to forge stronger linkages between relief and development activities. Despite concerted efforts, the funding gap remains and linkages continue to be elusive. In transition, food aid and other lifesaving interventions are comparatively better funded, while other sectors that may also provide a key bridge between relief and development, such as water, health, sanitation, agriculture, education, the rule of law and good governance, remain chronically underfunded.

34. The most recent contexts suggest that successful transition entails much more than the creation of linkages. It requires a coherent strategy for restoring stability and normalcy. A joint Working Group on Transition Issues has been established by the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), with the involvement of IOM, the Red Cross Movement and non-governmental organizations, to improve the coherence of the United Nations response in transition. It aims to provide clear, consolidated and timely guidance to the United Nations system, including humanitarian, political and development actors, which are appropriate in transition contexts. Through its efforts, the Working Group is addressing the issues raised in Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/32 and the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change (A/57/387). The Working Group is currently in the midst of reviewing a range of United Nations responses in post-conflict transition situations. A final report, with recommendations for implementation, is expected by September 2003 and more details will be included in the Secretary-General's next report on the reform of the Organization. Already, however, a number of points have emerged from the efforts of the Working Group.

B. Elements of transition

35. One of the principal problems in successfully dealing with transition relates to the confusion caused by a lack of common definitions. The fact that Member States, humanitarians and development agencies have different views on what constitutes transition, recovery, rehabilitation and peace-building leads them to use these terms interchangeably and to apply them to a wide range of differing contexts. Broadly, however, four sorts of transition are referred to, each relating to the predominant cause of the crisis from which a country is emerging: wholesale economic transformation, sudden natural disasters, underlying structural problems and conflict. These types of transition can also occur in combination. The countries of

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the Caucasus and Central Asia are undergoing massive economic transformation which has weakened the capacity of government to provide basic services just when economic disruption is increasing vulnerability. The countries of Central America have faced a number of short-lived natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes. Each event has abruptly curtailed the capacity of the State to provide basic services, though usually in a localized fashion, with overall management capacity remaining undamaged. Countries in the Horn of Africa frequently face natural disaster, but here the capacity of the State to address specific underlying structural issues (such as low investment in infrastructure and in secure land tenure) has limited the food security of rural households. As a result, when drought occurs, their ability to cope is limited. Countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia have endured years of conflict. Where countries experience protracted conflict, the capacity of the State is frequently weak. Long-term conflict generally transforms society — socially, through the erosion of social support structures; economically, through the development of “war economies”; and politically, through deteriorating capacity and limited accountability.

36. Given the current lack of definitional clarity, it is critical to be clear about the context of any given transition. The challenges in providing appropriate transitional assistance in natural disasters may be different from the challenges encountered during economic transformation. This year, with nascent peace in countries as varied as Angola and Sri Lanka, the challenges posed by the transition from conflict have been especially prominent.

C. Challenges

1. Appropriate assistance

37. Ensuring appropriate and timely assistance is a key challenge for humanitarian, development and political actors alike. This is especially true in post-conflict transition situations such as those in Afghanistan and Sierra Leone. Though warfare may have subsided, peace is not yet consolidated. Instability persists and a relapse into violence remains a possibility. The risk of relapse is particularly acute when regional or global influences are at work and parties to the conflict remain dissatisfied with the terms of ceasefires or peace processes. Under these circumstances, recovery assistance must do more than rebuild structures or institutions. It needs to aid in the consolidation of peace, counter the negative societal transformations that have occurred during the crisis, and counteract the tensions that led to the conflict. In other words, it must help to re-establish the enabling conditions for a functioning peacetime society.

38. Much of this recovery assistance is specific to post-conflict transition and needs to be carried out in a timely fashion. If the situation is not addressed promptly, the consolidation of peace can be undermined, as exemplified by the failure of previous demobilization efforts in Sierra Leone. This places added responsibility on government, donors and assistance-providers. Both time-bound activities and longer-term processes must be launched. Among the time-bound activities that are immediately needed alongside continued relief are disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes that offer former combatants a compelling alternative to the opportunities available in a war economy. Time-bound programmes are also needed to achieve the return, resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced

persons and refugees in a sustainable fashion, the revitalization of agriculture and trade, and the restoration of basic social services, all of which will help to reduce potentially destabilizing population movements. Among the longer-term processes that are needed are programmes to monitor and address new protection issues. These types of programmes are needed to avoid creating or aggravating social tensions, particularly over issues of land access, tenure and property restitution. In addition, restorative justice is needed to foster conditions for coexistence. Above all, new and multilayered efforts at capacity-building will be needed to create effective institutions of State administration which are essential to stability and normalcy and offer avenues of recourse other than violence.

2. Delivery versus support

39. Re-engaging government in the planning, management and direction of aid is a key element of all transition and a principle of effective transitional assistance. There are, however, instances during the early phases of post-conflict transition when Governments may still not have full control of their territory or the capacity to manage and support the delivery of assistance. This factor, and the capacity of civil society, will affect the extent to which relief and recovery are provided by the international community and the government. Post-conflict transition, therefore, must balance efforts to facilitate a Government's capacity to manage the assistance effort with the need to deliver assistance in a timely manner, where required and in accordance with humanitarian principles. Achieving a balance between these two needs is the fundamental challenge of post-conflict transition, and one made all the more difficult by the fact that the balance is not static. It changes in response to needs and government capacity, and it must purposefully move from substituting for government to supporting government.

3. Donor engagement

40. Donors often favour substitutive delivery of services through United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations without also working with national structures to re-establish or build service delivery capacities, and tend towards caution for a variety of reasons. They may point to human rights as a reason for lack of interest if parties to the peace process, or parties in government, have a history of human rights abuses. Where patterns of fiscal mismanagement, natural resource exploitation or lack of transparency have been revealed, donors have shown reluctance to move away from relief assistance to support for recovery and development. They may sometimes set unnecessarily high criteria, however, and, for political reasons, may choose not to establish long-term development relationships with countries that are not considered strategic or with whom they do not have historical ties. Adequate funding for all critical sectors and support for quickly building the capacity of governance remain the key to effective transition. Earlier engagement of donors in planning processes should therefore be pursued as one avenue for overcoming donor caution and ensuring success.

4. Planning and coordination

41. Post-conflict transition strategies are by nature complex, as they need to incorporate and integrate many more dimensions than is the case in humanitarian planning and include recovery, peace-building and reconstruction elements. Planning in post-conflict transition must also involve a broader range of actors such

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as peace-building and peacekeeping missions and the international financial institutions. For example, the collaborative “4Rs” initiative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction) brings together humanitarian and development actors to address the multifaceted transition challenges so as to secure the sustainability of refugees’ return to their home countries. Frequently, however, in post-conflict transition, there is a lack of clear, integrated transition strategies jointly formulated by humanitarian, development and other actors with clear steps for the scaling down and transferring of key responsibilities such as information management and donor coordination. Strategies formulated by inter-agency and United Nations country teams also frequently fail to sufficiently indicate how peace will be consolidated and how different actors can assist in that cause. Instead, planning tends to be formulated as a response to assessed needs and assumed scenarios.

42. Where Governments provide the lead but require support, as in natural disaster and structural transition, coordination is a simpler exercise. In post-conflict transition, where government capacity to manage a response is limited, more comprehensive coordination is needed. In such cases ceasefires may open new areas of responsibility, increasing the humanitarian caseload (as occurred in Angola), or precipitate large-scale return (as was the case in Afghanistan). At the same time, a substantial set of recovery activities must be launched quickly to consolidate peace.

43. Coordination will need to keep up with the demands placed on it so as to deal with increasing relief assistance, peace-building and recovery work. To establish the right mix of assistance, applied in the critical areas at the right time, requires expanded and consistent information management and the capacity to analyse a continually evolving context. Minimum standards may need to be created or established to ensure a baseline for protection and assistance appropriate to the post-conflict transition, especially on matters related to the return of displaced populations. Planning will have to become more inclusive by engaging new partners. It will need to shift from a focus on assessed needs and assumed scenarios to identifying the means by which various actors can consolidate peace. Such circumstances only serve to re-emphasize the importance of a strategic approach to coordination. The integration of government into coordination is critical and requires an investment in capacity-building and support so that government can progressively plan and coordinate assistance on its own.

44. The effective management of transition activities is critically dependent on maintaining both adequate levels of coordination and support capacity for the United Nations country team led by the resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator. The transition planning process at country level will need to be integrated across the United Nations system and allow flexibility to mix elements from various existing planning instruments and resource mobilization tools. As such, coordination capacity will need to encompass and integrate continued expertise in humanitarian coordination as well as establish new expertise in key transitional areas such as peace-building, economic and social recovery, and the restitution of the basic institutions of civil administration and government. This level of support at the country level will be critical for the effective planning and management of transition activities but is not yet capable of being realized. Humanitarian coordinators receive effective support during emergencies which is externally and separately funded through the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). During the transition, there may

well be a transfer from the humanitarian coordination system to that of United Nations resident coordinators. Effective transfer of coordination that maintains appropriate levels of capacity and support will become possible only if the resident coordinator system is strengthened and provided with more flexible resources.

III. Humanitarian financing and the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance

45. Events of the past year have underlined the need to better address the way in which humanitarian needs are financed. The drought in the Horn of Africa, coupled with complex food crises in southern Africa, dramatically increased overall humanitarian assistance requirements in 2002-2003. The potential addition of increased needs in the region of West Africa as well as Iraq, where the population remains heavily dependent on external food sources, raises concerns as to whether overall levels of humanitarian assistance are sufficient to meet global levels of need.

46. In making any assessment of the trends and direction of humanitarian assistance, there are three outstanding issues that need to be addressed: whether sufficient humanitarian assistance is available in relation to need, whether humanitarian assistance is equitably distributed with regard to humanitarian principles, and whether the assistance provided is effectively managed.

47. Overall levels of humanitarian assistance have averaged approximately US\$ 5.5 billion per year for the past three years.⁵ This represents an apparent doubling of overall levels of humanitarian aid since 1990, when the level of humanitarian assistance was US\$ 2.1 billion. However, the process of growth in humanitarian assistance has evolved in a series of phased increases, with major crises serving to increase levels of humanitarian assistance in distinct phases. The Ethiopian famine in the mid-1980s promoted a dramatic increase in humanitarian assistance. A further major increase took place in 1991 in response to another major surge in the levels of need, produced by the southern African food crisis. The Great Lakes crisis in 1994-1995 again led to increases in assistance. The Kosovo crisis in 1999 was responsible for the final step up to the current level of assistance. Frequently, food needs have been the main driver in increasing levels of response. These step increases in humanitarian assistance are generally consolidated after each major crisis and in many cases assistance may continue to fill the medium-term residual or structural gaps that result from the initial crisis. To this extent, the level of humanitarian assistance can be seen as a response to increasing need but it is also strongly driven by high levels of public concern for high-profile emergencies.

48. The growth in the volume of humanitarian assistance has occurred during a period of overall decline in the flows of official development assistance (ODA). This has resulted in humanitarian assistance's accounting for an increasing proportion of total ODA. By 2002, humanitarian assistance had accounted for 10 per cent of ODA compared with an average of less than 3 per cent of ODA between 1970-1990. This increase may be attributed not only to the high profile that humanitarian assistance enjoys but also to its value as a more flexible financial instrument for donors.

49. Over the past decade, increasing amounts of humanitarian assistance have been channelled towards longer-term emergencies. The top 10 recipients have been

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consistently dominated by seven crises, for which over US\$ 5 billion was received between 1995 and 2001. The remaining volume of humanitarian assistance is spread across more than 100 countries, about 40 of which receive less than US\$ 1 million each year. The distribution of humanitarian assistance is uneven and not clearly distributed on the basis of need. Some countries continue to receive humanitarian assistance on a regular basis as a means of providing relief for distress and absolute impoverishment; in other cases, donors may use it as a substitute for development assistance when their domestic legislation or policies would preclude the provision of development assistance on human rights or other policy grounds. There is a risk that the levels of humanitarian assistance that are now committed to longer-term crises will limit the future growth of such assistance and limit the speed and capacity of the response to newly emerging crises.

50. The various uses of humanitarian assistance lead to a blurring of the distinction between humanitarian assistance and ODA. Indeed, the absence of agreed definitions of humanitarian assistance remains a source of problems in terms of monitoring aid performance. Currently, donors report their allocations to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), which understands humanitarian assistance to be "emergency and distress relief". This definition is broad, hence there is no consistency in the way in which donors report to DAC. For example, no distinction is made between emergency relief as opposed to rehabilitation or recovery assistance which can be seen as more developmental. Some donors may also include conflict reduction and management as part of their humanitarian activities. For this reason, further thought should be given to developing definitions that clearly define eligible flows and provide a qualitative description of humanitarian assistance.

51. Assessing the adequacy of humanitarian assistance in relation to need is a complex task. One approximate measure is provided by the level of response to the Consolidated Appeals Process. While most appeals suffer from shortfalls of assistance, the variations are considerable. In 2002, 9 out of 25 countries and regions faced shortfalls of over 50 per cent. The largest shortfalls, however, occurring in countries such as Burundi and Liberia, are over 70 per cent. By contrast, Tajikistan received contributions that covered some 94.8 per cent of requirements. Such variations call into question the equity of the distribution of humanitarian assistance and the extent to which assistance is provided on an impartial basis. The reasons for such wide variations in responding to crises relate to the fact that donor decisions to allocate resources are driven primarily not by meeting needs, but rather by domestic considerations, traditional patterns of expenditure and geopolitical interests. This pattern of donor behaviour has resulted in a patchwork of activities, which results in a loss of coherence and limits the ability to meet global humanitarian need effectively.

52. There is no consistency in the way in which humanitarian needs are assessed. This is reflected in the variation in the amounts requested per beneficiary in country appeals. In 2002, 8 out of 22 appeals requested amounts of between \$20 and \$50 per head, 9 requested between \$50 and \$100 per head, and 1 requested over \$200 per head. This variation exists not just between countries but also from year to year. Needs tend to be assumed rather than diagnosed, with the result that donors mistrust the value of assessments and agencies have an insufficiently firm basis for challenging the assumptions or preferences of individual donors. As a result, humanitarian assistance is far more inequitably distributed than it should be.

53. The last decade has seen an increase in the number of channels for humanitarian assistance, as well as in the number of actors involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance on the ground. In Afghanistan, both donors and the armed forces of Member States have been directly engaged in humanitarian activities. The use of private companies working in partnership with non-governmental organizations to deliver humanitarian assistance in Iraq and elsewhere has established yet another delivery channel. Although there is as yet no clear trend demonstrating a significant increase in the volumes of assistance going through these means, this development increases the potential for duplication of activity and creates a larger challenge with respect to maintaining the coherence and integrity of humanitarian response. The greater range of actors further reinforces the need for robust coordination structures and a comprehensive and inclusive planning process in which all are engaged.

54. Recently there has been considerable variation in the proportion of assistance distributed through the United Nations system. In 1999, only 12 per cent of humanitarian assistance had been channelled through the United Nations. By 2001, this figure had risen to some 30 per cent, the highest proportion ever. To a large extent, this variation could be related to the growth in levels of food aid now moved through multilateral channels. Non-governmental agencies are the other important channel for humanitarian assistance: over \$1.4 billion from both private and official sources was channelled through non-governmental organizations in 2001. Non-governmental agencies also raise and contribute significant levels of humanitarian assistance (over \$500 million in 2001).

55. The effectiveness of humanitarian assistance is dependent on speed of response and predictable funding, which enable necessary humanitarian activities to be carried out promptly. However, the current nature of humanitarian finance has created a patchwork of response which is, with a few notable exceptions, rigidly linked to supporting specific elements of an emergency response at the national level. The consequences are even more serious at the global level and result in an inability to effectively address the needs of “forgotten emergencies” and mobilize resources between countries in order to ensure an improved, impartial response to need. An increased commitment by donors to principles of good donorship that recognize the importance of funding allocation in proportion to needs will help to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources. However, for international response to emergencies to be proportional to need, it will be necessary for donors to place more trust in the United Nations system of coordination and to facilitate mechanisms that assist the United Nations in responding more flexibly by increasing the level of unearmarked resources in emergencies.

IV. Observations and recommendations of the Secretary-General

56. The past year has seen progress in bringing conflict to an end for some of the world's longer-running emergencies. Despite such promising developments, however, the conflicts in West Africa, for example, continue to be a threat to the region as a whole. The challenge of protecting civilians in armed conflict remains a formidable task, especially when the humanitarian workers tasked with providing civilians with assistance are murdered and abducted. The year has also brought

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about increased awareness about the effects of HIV/AIDS in the context of humanitarian emergencies, particularly the increased vulnerability that the disease can cause. The situation in Iraq has brought more focus on issues of international humanitarian law and has underlined the importance of promoting principled humanitarian interaction in order to address humanitarian needs in the country. The unique characteristics and causes of the HIV/AIDS-related crises in southern Africa as well as the situation in Iraq place the onus on the United Nations to clearly define its humanitarian role and responsibilities in such situations.

57. The importance of promoting effective coordination lies at the core of the themes related to transition and humanitarian financing. Coordination in the context of the transition from relief to development is a demanding and time-critical process, which requires the full engagement of Governments and donors at the earliest stages. In transition countries where relations and structures are created, it is critical to ensure that humanitarian processes are moved to longer-term structures. The nature of humanitarian financing is unsystematic owing to a patchwork of different policies and practices, which in turn lead to inconsistencies when meeting humanitarian needs. Major gaps occur when resources for some emergencies are insufficient to meet needs. Efforts must be undertaken to ensure that humanitarian financing is better linked with humanitarian principles. A clearer definition and understanding of what constitutes the humanitarian response and its relationship with transition and development aid are also needed. The lack of agreed definitions contributes to unevenness in the flow and quality of humanitarian assistance and also hinders the development of a coherent response to transition. A number of key processes are now in place to address this critical concern and the engagement of the international community is crucial for their success.

58. **The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council may wish to:**

Protection of civilians

(a) **Urge Member States to safeguard principles of international humanitarian law and human rights law in their responses to security threats;**

(b) **Urge Member States and non-State actors to bring to an end the climate of impunity by ensuring that those responsible for attacks against humanitarian staff are promptly brought to justice;**

Internally displaced persons

(c) **Encourage Member States to welcome a collaborative approach and support humanitarian agencies in their continuing endeavours to provide a more predictable response on behalf of internally displaced persons;**

(d) **Encourage Member States with internally displaced persons to develop national laws, policies and minimum standards on internal displacement consistent with international standards, including the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement;**

Gender mainstreaming

(e) **Encourage humanitarian agencies to coordinate, consolidate and promote a gender perspective in all humanitarian assistance activities and to implement existing policies, tools and guidelines on gender mainstreaming;**

Sexual violence and exploitation

(f) Urge Member States to use the “core principles” in their standards and codes of conduct for national armed forces and police forces and to take appropriate follow-up action in response to allegations of sexual violence and exploitation and, similarly, urge donor countries to insist that all of their implementing partners include the core principles in their codes of conduct prior to the release of donor funding;

Emergency preparedness and contingency planning

(g) Urge United Nations country teams to develop hazard analysis and monitoring mechanisms to identify potential crises, to develop common assessments of levels of humanitarian risk and to incorporate into their existing planning frameworks the “Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance” in order to strengthen their capacity to respond to humanitarian crises;

Natural disasters

(h) Stress the need for increased national and regional capacity-building in early warning and monitoring of natural hazards, natural disaster preparedness, mitigation and response by strengthening coordination in the areas of information-sharing and analysis, logistics support, response coordination and strengthening of relationships with existing regional structures;

HIV/AIDS in the context of emergencies

(i) Urge Member States to implement the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS,⁶ with particular focus on the time-bound targets related to HIV/AIDS in conflict- and disaster-affected regions;

(j) Recognize the important role of humanitarian agencies in addressing HIV/AIDS in the context of emergencies and encourage them to factor HIV/AIDS considerations into their humanitarian coordination and planning efforts, inter alia, in the areas of early warning and contingency planning;

(k) Call upon humanitarian and development organizations to strengthen cooperation in order to ensure that the longer-term developmental implications of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in emergency situations are adequately addressed;

Transition from relief to development

(l) Encourage Member States to recognize that timely, appropriate and sustained support is critical to managing post-conflict transition, including early engagement in planning, more even funding across sectors, and more support for recovery activities, especially capacity-building of local governing institutions, and, in this context, to take note of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs/United Nations Development Group Joint Working Group on Transition Issues;

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(m) Encourage Member States to recognize that the need for coordination increases and becomes more complex in post-conflict transition and call upon Member States to increase support for integrated coordination, which would include information management, inclusive planning, donor coordination, strengthening of the resident coordinator system and the progressive integration of government into coordination mechanisms and processes;

Humanitarian financing

(n) Encourage donors to improve their response to humanitarian emergencies and reinforce their respect for humanitarian principles by establishing agreed principles of good donorship behaviour and practice along with mechanisms for their review;

(o) Encourage donors to allocate funding in proportion to needs and to ensure more equitable distribution of humanitarian assistance to meet global humanitarian needs in their entirety;

(p) Encourage donors to establish stable, predictable and adequate funding to meet humanitarian needs while reaffirming the primary responsibility of States for the victims of humanitarian emergencies within their own borders;

(q) Enhance and support the central and unique role of the United Nations in providing leadership for operations and coordination of international humanitarian action by: increasing the flexibility of funding to include non-earmarked contributions to United Nations organizations responding to humanitarian crises; establishing longer-term multi-year funding; and striving to avoid the use of regular humanitarian budgets for the financing of actions implemented by armed forces.

Notes

¹ Available at <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf>.

² United Nations *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

³ Available at <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf>.

⁴ Available at <http://www.unicef.org/media/publications/iasctfplanofaction.pdf>.

⁵ Data and figures for funding are drawn from a series of ongoing studies on humanitarian financing.

⁶ General Assembly resolution S-26/2, annex.

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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Economic and Social Council Substantive session of 2005

New York, 29 June-27 July 2005

Item 5 of the provisional agenda**

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster

Report of the Secretary-General***

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 59/279, adopted by the States Members of the United Nations in January 2005 in the light of global concern over the impact of the earthquake and tsunami that struck the Indian Ocean region. The report identifies the lessons learned from the humanitarian response effort and highlights key issues that have come out of the ongoing recovery effort in the affected countries. In doing so, it examines successes and challenges specific to the earthquake-tsunami response and recovery effort, and addresses several themes universal to disaster response and recovery, such as national ownership and leadership, disaster response capacity, coordination in the relief and recovery phases, resource mobilization, civil society engagement and risk reduction. The report concludes with a set of observations and recommendations from the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council and to the General Assembly for further discussion.

* A/60/50.

** E/2005/100.

*** The report was delayed for technical reasons.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, which requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the General Assembly and to the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/279 of 19 January 2005 entitled "Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster", which requested the Secretary-General to report on its implementation to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, and to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 2005.

II. Defining the crisis

2. On 26 December 2004 a massive earthquake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale struck the west coast of northern Sumatra and was followed by several severe aftershocks. The earthquake, the fourth strongest in the world since 1900 and the strongest in 40 years, led to a 10-metre displacement of the seabed. It triggered a large tsunami that surged with catastrophic force across the Indian Ocean, striking the west coast of northern Sumatra within minutes and then hitting the western coastline of Thailand, Myanmar and Sri Lanka, the east coast of India and the low-lying Maldives island archipelago before reaching the coast of Africa, causing some deaths and damage in Seychelles and Somalia. Twelve countries were affected in all.

3. Approximately 240,000 people were killed by the disaster: 50,000 are missing and feared dead, and more than one million persons were displaced. In many affected areas, three times as many women were killed as men; children represented more than a third of the victims overall, and in some communities more than half. Indonesia was the country most affected, as the coastline of its Aceh Province was damaged by the initial force of the earthquake and then immediately engulfed by the tsunami. In Indonesia, Somalia and Sri Lanka the disaster took place within the context of long-standing complex crises, which had significant implications for the organization and delivery of humanitarian assistance, including, in particular, to those who had already been displaced by conflict.

4. The earthquake and tsunami predominantly affected poor coastal communities, destroying not only critical infrastructure, administrative capacity and basic services, but also key sources of livelihoods. An initial assessment undertaken by the Government of Indonesia with the support of the World Bank and the United Nations estimates that Aceh Province in Indonesia suffered 4.5 billion United States dollars (\$) in damage, representing 97 per cent of its gross domestic product (GDP), 78 per cent of which is comprised of small trade, farming and fisheries. The United Nations estimates that Sri Lanka suffered estimated direct losses of one billion United States dollars (4.5 per cent of GDP), including approximately \$450 million in damage to the so-called "social sectors", such as housing, and nearly \$300 million in damage to the tourism industry. In Maldives, the estimate of total damage has reached \$470 million, or 62 per cent of the country's GDP. Economic losses were even significant in the larger and relatively well-developed economies of India, where 500 fishing villages were damaged along the Andaman coast, and in Thailand, where about 120,000 people lost their jobs in the tourism sector.

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5. Six months after the disaster, the immediate survival needs of those who were directly affected have been addressed. Almost all these populations have access to adequate water supplies, although in many camps sanitation facilities are below internationally recognized minimum standards for relief situations. The clearing of debris has been largely completed along the main roads. In Sri Lanka some 30,000 provisional shelters have been built; in Indonesia 11,000 earthquake-resistant homes are under construction. As most supply lines for food and medicine have been re-established, the situation is gradually stabilizing. However, considerable and continuous seismic activity in the region — including a significant aftershock in the vicinity of Nias Island in Indonesia in late March — has caused further death and damage, has slowed recovery efforts and continues to take a psychological toll on the population. It is clear that even as the recovery phase progresses, significant humanitarian needs — particularly among women, children, minorities, migrant workers and the internally displaced — will persist for many months.

A. The initial response

6. Affected Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and local communities played a crucial role in the response. Government agencies quickly took the lead in organizing and coordinating the relief efforts, local NGOs and Red Cross/Red Crescent volunteers provided immediate emergency assistance and host family networks offered shelter to the homeless. National actors also provided international actors with invaluable information for initial assessments and mapping. The role of the military in cleaning debris and clearing roads was vital.

7. For example, the Government of Indonesia deployed 600 troops and transportation assets to Nanggore Aceh Darussalam to accelerate relief efforts and to work closely with international partners in relief distribution and initial damage assessments. The Government of Sri Lanka immediately placed all of its military, administrative and logistical assets at the disposal of the relief community and rapidly instituted compensation schemes for people affected by the tsunami. The Government of Thailand promptly provided health and other services to victims, while leading a massive forensic operation to identify bodies of foreign victims of the tsunami. The Government of India responded by releasing \$155.56 million and 20,900 trained search and rescue personnel for carrying out immediate relief in its own affected states and union territories, and by deploying medical teams, naval ships, aircraft and several tons of relief supplies to Indonesia, Maldives and Sri Lanka. In Somalia, while the remoteness of the affected communities had an effect on the speed of the response, local communities, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the Somali Red Crescent Society and NGOs were quick to address immediate needs by mobilizing in-country resources and distributing much-needed relief items. The role of the local authorities in Puntland and of community elders in the towns and villages was invaluable, as they assisted humanitarian agencies in identifying the neediest populations.

8. International assistance to tsunami-affected countries began as soon as government requests for assistance were received. Following the onset of the disaster, the Governments of Indonesia, Maldives and Sri Lanka declared a state of emergency. The Governments of Indonesia, Maldives, Seychelles and Sri Lanka

formally requested international assistance. In Somalia the regional authorities of Puntland declared an emergency, and the Transitional Federal Government appealed for assistance.

9. Following the above-mentioned requests, five United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams composed of 44 disaster-response experts from 18 countries and four international organizations were deployed to five of the tsunami-affected countries. Sixteen United Nations agencies, 18 IFRC response teams, more than 160 international NGOs and countless private companies and civil society groups deployed to affected areas to provide emergency food, water and medical services to the estimated five million people in need of assistance. Some 35 countries provided military assets for the relief effort and the United Nations deployed civil-military coordination officers to key locations in the region. The United Nations Joint Logistics Centre established coordination centres in Indonesia and Sri Lanka to optimize logistics capabilities and to assist in the coordination and use of military assets. In order to facilitate the collection and flow of information among humanitarian actors, the United Nations activated the Virtual On Site Operations Coordination Centre, an online information exchange service to support real-time coordination, and set up humanitarian information centres in Indonesia and Sri Lanka to facilitate information flow. An inter-agency emergency telecommunication network was established in Indonesia to provide the communications infrastructure for coordination and operational management. The joint United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Environment Unit carried out rapid environmental assessments in collaboration with United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams in Indonesia, Maldives and Sri Lanka to identify acute environmental issues. In India the relief operations were coordinated by the Government without any external assistance; however, the United Nations disaster management team was engaged in sharing information about damages and losses with other partners, including bilateral agencies, NGOs and the private sector. Within days, most communities had received assistance; however, it took up to six weeks to reach those areas where access was most difficult.

10. Immediately following the disaster, the Secretary-General appointed the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Margareta Wahlstrom, as the Special Coordinator for humanitarian assistance to tsunami-affected communities to provide leadership and support to the United Nations country team, and particularly to facilitate the delivery of international assistance through high-level consultations with the concerned Governments.

11. The disaster also generated an unprecedented display of public and private solidarity, making greater resources available for the emergency over a shorter period of time than for any other crisis. The United Nations estimates that a total of \$6.8 billion has been pledged to the tsunami effort, including \$5.8 billion from government sources and \$1 billion (35 per cent) from corporate and private donations. Media reports indicate that at least another \$1 billion has been contributed by private donors but not reported to the United Nations.

12. Some of those funds have been channelled through United Nations appeals. On 6 January 2005 the United Nations launched a flash appeal requesting \$977 million in humanitarian and recovery assistance for the first six months. At a ministerial meeting held in Geneva on 11 January 2005, 25 states pledged a total of

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\$777 million towards the appeal as well as towards additional reconstruction activities. Fifteen days after the disaster, 60 per cent of the funds solicited in the flash appeal were committed or paid out. Following a mid-term review of the appeal in April 2005, the requirements were revised to \$1,086 million. The OCHA financial tracking service estimates that in June 2005 \$880 million was contributed to the appeal and a further \$162 million was committed. Significantly, however, much of the tsunami funding has been contributed through non-United Nations channels, including such international organizations as the IFRC, which has reported receiving \$2.2 billion, and large non-governmental organizations.

13. Such solidarity has extended to the intergovernmental level as well. On 6 January 2005 the members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) convened a ministerial-level meeting in Jakarta and adopted the Declaration on Action to Strengthen Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Prevention in the Aftermath of the Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster on 26 December 2004, which aimed to mobilize further the international emergency relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. At a special session on the earthquake and tsunami held at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction on 20 January 2005, more than 160 Governments called for the development of a tsunami early warning system in the Indian Ocean, and meetings were held to plan the establishment of early warning capacities. On 19 January 2005, many of the concepts in the Jakarta declaration received formal and broad endorsement from Member States in General Assembly resolution 59/279 on strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster, which emphasized the need for the international community to maintain its focus and support to tsunami-affected countries beyond the emergency phase.

B. Early recovery

14. From the outset, the response effort included recovery activities. Within two weeks of the crisis, the United Nations dispatched recovery teams to the affected areas to begin assessing disaster damage and to support national authorities in recovery planning. In addition, the Special Coordinator for humanitarian assistance to tsunami-affected countries was accompanied by a representative from the United Nations Development Group on several visits to the region to focus immediate attention on early recovery needs and to ensure that relief programmes incorporated early recovery elements.

15. The Governments of several of the affected countries, in partnership with the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations, were also to give early attention to assessing recovery and reconstruction needs and are currently in the process of finalizing medium- and long-term plans. Three months after the disaster, the Government of Indonesia unveiled its master plan for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Aceh, Nias and North Sumatra and then established the Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Agency (BRR) to oversee its implementation. The formation of a dedicated government agency with a strong mandate and dynamic staff has done much to align the international community around a common set of values and standards for recovery and reconstruction programming. In Sri Lanka, a 24-month transitional strategy launched by the United Nations system in support of the Government's new post-tsunami recovery will be

unveiled at the end of July. In India, the Planning Commission of the Government of India established the Inter-Ministerial Core Group to prepare and manage a 156-week, \$2.19 billion tsunami rehabilitation programme for all affected areas. In Thailand, the Government established a committee on rehabilitation management and development of the tsunami-affected countries along the Andaman coast. In Maldives, the Government has developed a detailed national recovery and reconstruction plan whose objectives include macroeconomic recovery and livelihood revival, community empowerment, environmental protection and disaster preparedness, and effective public service delivery.

16. To facilitate support for and implementation of the national plans, the Secretary-General appointed former President of the United States Bill Clinton as the Special Envoy for the Indian Ocean tsunami recovery effort. In that role, former President Clinton is working to maintain the world's attention on the tsunami operations, support coordination efforts at the country and global levels, promote transparency and accountability, and champion the kind of recovery that seizes the moral, political and financial opportunities the crisis has offered to set affected communities on a better — and safer — development path. To that end, President Clinton convened a “global consortium” of affected Governments, United Nations agencies, international organizations, international financial institutions and NGOs to improve coordination among the main actors, particularly at the country level, to facilitate the implementation of individual countries' reconstruction plans and to instil common transparency and accountability measures. The Special Envoy also visited a number of the affected countries in late May to assess progress in launching the recovery process.

III. Response successes, challenges and lessons learned

17. The Indian Ocean tsunami disaster created one of the most complex coordination and logistical challenges the disaster response system of the United Nations has ever had to manage. The timing and scale of the event required quick and flexible coordination efforts in a variety of countries and contexts, and its global reach led to a proliferation of relief actions and actors and garnered assistance from public, private and government sources at the highest levels. While such global attention and support has been both welcome and constructive, the high-intensity environment it has created has raised expectations of performance and accountability. Recognition of that context is the key to defining the challenges arising from the initial response. The following sections highlight observations and lessons learned from the response effort in five key areas.

A. National ownership and leadership

18. The fact that the disaster affected strong national Governments with well-developed national institutions and functioning legal frameworks greatly contributed to the success of relief efforts. In many areas, the relief effort benefited from robust involvement from line ministries, armed forces and the use of existing government structures, where they were in place. The collaborative relationship between the international and national relief actors and among all levels of Government ensured

greater ease in relief distribution and simplified the handover of humanitarian and early recovery activities to the appropriate government bodies.

Lessons learned

19. Pro-active government coordination and collaboration significantly facilitated relief efforts. In Indonesia the immediate appointment and placement in Aceh of a senior minister to coordinate response activities ensured that international and national response activities were complementary. In Sri Lanka, all parties and authorities immediately recognized the need for local-level coordination mechanisms that included the United Nations, NGOs and local representation, to ensure relief delivery and coordination in northern and eastern parts of the country. The Government of Thailand, in close collaboration with foreign Governments, was instrumental in ensuring a rapid and efficient evacuation of foreign nationals, and in coordinating international relief. The adoption by several Governments of emergency immigration procedures (visas upon arrival) and emergency customs clearance procedures accelerated the processing of relief personnel and goods in the early days of the crisis. Following the first two months, however, such procedures became increasingly complicated, resulting in the delay of many relief items and of items necessary for operations support (such as computers, telecommunication equipment, vehicles and essential aid supplies) and included some government restrictions on the use of satellite systems. Such administrative bottlenecks slowed relief efforts and impeded the effective delivery of much-needed assistance.

20. Effective national and international collaboration in disaster response would benefit from renewed engagement on mutual obligations and commitments to abide by agreements, such as the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, and from building knowledge of the body of practice on those issues that has developed over time.

21. Early engagement with Government at local levels ensured greater collaboration in the short and medium term. The affected Governments did not try to centralize authority during the relief effort, but instead welcomed engagement and coordination at subnational levels to facilitate their response. For example, the open, receptive and collegial attitude of senior government officials in Aceh and in Jakarta provided the basis for a strong and cooperative relationship during the initial phase, whereby sectoral and civil-military coordination meetings took place at a local level with the full support of national authorities. In India, the Government deployed experienced administrative officers to the most affected district of Nagapatinam in the state of Tamil Nadu to coordinate relief operations locally and, in collaboration with NGOs, set up a coordination centre that operated out of the district administration office.

22. Local actors are essential to successful response coordination, yet local government structures do not always have sufficient resources to perform such coordination tasks. Productive collaboration with local institutions, therefore, requires pre-disaster preparedness planning to develop relationships with local institutions in disaster-prone areas and build their capacity where they are weak.

B. Response capacity

23. By most accounts, the United Nations disaster response system functioned well: established emergency response networks and tools were quickly deployed and assistance teams reached all affected areas within the first six weeks. No epidemics or major outbreaks of disease took place, close to two million people received emergency medical assistance and an equal number received food aid. School supplies were distributed to more than 700,000 children, and most children in affected areas quickly went back in school.

24. However, the response suffered from gaps in certain sectors — shelter, water and sanitation — owing in large part to the sheer magnitude of the problem but also to the inability of the system to quickly field and maintain a cadre of sufficiently skilled and experienced staff. The response also suffered from a high turnover of United Nations staff and the delayed deployment of some critical United Nations common humanitarian services, particularly information management, communications and civil-military capacity, complicating coordination in the early days.

Lessons learned

25. **Significant gaps in sectoral capacity continue to impede response efforts.** Recurrent gaps in the system's ability to provide adequate clean water, shelter and appropriate sanitation facilities continue to impede a rapid humanitarian response. There is therefore a need to reinvest in developing and maintaining systemic capacity for humanitarian response by increasing and strengthening professional staffing and administration in key sectors, and by forming and supporting strategic partnerships that tap into NGO capacity and draw on existing expertise of local and regional organizations. In that regard, the Emergency Relief Coordinator has launched a system-wide humanitarian response review to evaluate the strengths and limitations of the current system and make practical recommendations as to how weaknesses might be addressed. The results of the review are scheduled to be available in June.

26. **The immediate and strategic deployment of common services is essential to ensuring effective response.** The fielding of United Nations Joint Logistics Centre staff as members of United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams was instrumental in jump-starting critical logistics tasks. However, civil-military coordination officers of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and humanitarian information centres were not activated as part of rapid response mechanisms but were deployed through more formal channels and were therefore delayed. The mobilization of telecommunication systems was difficult, and data collection, analysis and dissemination suffered from a lack of standards and systems. Such challenges may be addressed by United Nations recognition of the strategic value of such services during the earliest phase of a crisis and by the development of the mechanisms and standards that allow early deployment of common humanitarian services

27. Rapid response capacity could also be strengthened by the formation of a standing global response capacity under the auspices of the United Nations, with immediate responsibility and authority to engineer the initial response. Such a system might also involve the development of regional capacities, particularly in

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disaster-prone regions, so that relief teams and supplies can be employed more quickly and with a better understanding of local contexts. Initiatives such as the ongoing efforts by the Organization to expand the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination roster and the request by Indonesia to ASEAN (ASEAN) for a military assets rapid response mechanism for disasters in the region should be encouraged.

C. Coordination tactics and tools

28. Establishing effective response coordination mechanisms was one of the greatest challenges of the response effort. However, overall, coordination at the international, national and regional levels went well: standby arrangements with donors and the private sector to provide staff, equipment, transport and other assistance enhanced the timeliness of the response; the assistance of the military — national and international — was instrumental in early aid delivery; and the early deployment of senior United Nations staff to the Indian Ocean region also increased the effectiveness of coordination.

29. Coordination was not always smooth, however. Some areas were flooded with relief items and with actors who did not have the capacity to assist. In other areas the assistance provided did not match needs. Quickly establishing appropriate coordination structures with the variety of actors that arrived on the scene proved difficult in many cases. The resulting “humanitarian traffic jam” at times led to miscommunication, ad hoc planning, and assistance delays, and the United Nations field-level leadership did not always have the support necessary to assist the Governments in carrying out strategic coordination functions.

Lessons learned

30. **Leadership and coordination should be adequately supported at the field level.** While the Emergency Relief Coordinator provided effective management and strategic thinking at the headquarters level, such critical functions were not as well supported in the field. In many cases, the resident/humanitarian coordinator lacked the staff resources to be able to perform the leadership and coordination functions required for such a large-scale response. The fact that the Special Coordinator for humanitarian assistance to tsunami-affected countries was able to act as a mobile support unit to the resident/humanitarian coordinators highlighted the need for such support at a field level. It is critical that the resident/humanitarian coordinator be immediately supported with staff and capacity for critical coordination functions and with the capacity to begin recovery activities from the outset as well as being explicitly highlighted as part of the initial funding appeal.

31. **Improved civil-military relations are required to ensure a better match of humanitarian needs and requests with military capability.** The quick and generous contribution of assets and personnel by the military of many countries, including the affected Governments, was key to accessing hard-to-reach populations and filled many of the technical gaps civilian capabilities could not provide. However, in some cases, the activities of civilian and military actors overlapped. As a result, relief goods were not always distributed in the right form and quantity and where they were most needed, and parallel relief pipelines ensued. The situation was further compounded by insufficient understanding of military command structures

and by inadequate information sharing between the humanitarian community and the military. Ensuring the most effective use of military and civil defence assets requires well-defined roles and responsibilities, clear channels of communication, and respect for and an appropriate level of sensitivity to humanitarian principles. Given the above, there is a need to improve the civil-military coordination operational framework.

D. Resource mobilization

32. The tsunami generated an extraordinary display of solidarity, making enormous resources available quickly and generating new sources of funding from the private and business community. While such a response allowed the humanitarian community to operate without focusing on fund-raising, the high-stakes financial environment such generosity created put pressure on humanitarian organizations to spend funds quickly and raised the bar for how such spending — and its impact — is reported to both donors and recipients. This has been further complicated, in some cases, by the fact that contributions have far exceeded the capacity of many organizations to spend them in the response phase. As a result, organizations have had to consider rapidly their own planning for the medium term and develop strategies quickly for reporting and communicating the use of those funds.

Lessons learned

33. **Improvements in the type and style of reporting and accountability are critical if the participation of new constituencies in future emergencies is to be maintained.** Although the humanitarian system's internal and external accountability mechanisms are well-established, the unprecedented volume of funds pledged or contributed for the tsunami, particularly from the private sector, has increased scrutiny over how such funds are spent. This led to an agreement between the United Nations and PricewaterhouseCoopers for the pro bono use of 8,000 hours of professional services to assist the United Nations with its immediate accounting and tracking of contributions raised under the tsunami flash appeal and with the expansion of its existing financial tracking systems for emergency appeals to fit the requirements of the new funding environment. Such improvements are critical to increasing confidence and support from both Governments and the private sector, now and in future crises. However, the value of such a system depends on the cooperation of all entities concerned, both within and outside the United Nations system, particularly in the provision of information about their allocation and expenditures in a timely manner.

34. Moreover, the spontaneous giving witnessed in the aftermath of the tsunami has put many humanitarian agencies and organizations in the unusual position of holding an exceptionally generous reserve of relief funding. In some cases, agencies are considering how to support the activities of other organizations in same sectors. Other organizations have stopped receiving tsunami funds, requesting potential donors to direct their contributions to other crises. Still others have been able to incorporate the tsunami funding into long-term reconstruction plans. In order to maintain public trust, humanitarian organizations, irrespective of how they choose to handle such funds, should communicate their intentions in a transparent way.

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35. Large amounts of resources require strengthened local-level coordination.

Driven by huge amounts of resources and the pressure from donors to act, many organizations responded to the crisis by initiating simultaneous, multiple relief projects and executed them with large numbers of staff, complicating coordination in many areas. In the rush for rapid action, many international actors were also perceived as neglecting their national and local counterparts and failing to take the local context into account. Coordination is crucial in such cases, and must involve donors, NGOs and national counterparts.

E. Displacement and protection challenges

36. In the aftermath of the tsunami, an estimated one million people were displaced in a relatively short period of time. After the first few weeks, however, the large numbers of temporarily displaced persons began to diminish as the situation stabilized and people started returning to their home areas. The fluidity with which displaced populations moved (particularly in Aceh), the increasing strain on host families and the destruction of livelihoods challenged the national authorities' and the international community's ability to develop a response tailored to the needs of different categories of populations and raised concerns about the potential for sexual and gender-based violence, including the possibility for kidnapping or the recruitment of children into fighting forces. Initiatives to temporarily relocate populations were further complicated by the political situation in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, and by previous relocation initiatives in the Maldives.

Lessons learned

37. Addressing the particular needs of the internally displaced in the initial response phase is critical. The immediate relief phase of any sudden-onset disaster should focus on responding to the urgent, life-saving needs of as many people as possible. That includes addressing the specific protection and assistance needs of internally displaced persons and involving them in relief planning from the outset so as to ensure the equitable distribution of aid and so as not to reinforce pre-existing inequalities. Special measures for the assistance and protection of internally displaced persons and host families should therefore be ensured and should be included in the programming and implementation of projects.

38. An early focus on specifically vulnerable categories of the disaster-affected population is required. Internally displaced persons have special needs, not only for assistance but also for protection. In the wake of the tsunami, specific fears were raised about protection of women and children and the risk of sexual violence and trafficking. There were early fears that sexual, gender-based and domestic violence, significant problems in some of the affected countries before the tsunami, might escalate as the loss of family members, livelihoods and mental strain would put additional stress on affected individuals. While there were reports of abuse, they remained limited in number, and considerable attention was paid to ways to avoid the risk as well as protect especially vulnerable persons. Early advocacy and vigilance in child protection by Governments helped prevent trafficking and exploitation of children, a fear that generated a great deal of attention in the early stages of the emergency. Advocacy with respect to good adoption measures was also important. As the response effort moves into a recovery phase, addressing the

difficult issues of land rights, documentation and compensation will become increasingly important.

39. **The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement should be extended to natural disasters.** During the past few years, much work has been put into creating a generally accepted international standard for the protection and assistance of the displaced, based on the experience of massive displacement in war and conflict situations. While it is acknowledged that the Guiding Principles do not reflect the particular situation arising from short-term and massive displacement by natural disasters, their general guidelines deserve to be used as a standard. However, while the Guiding Principles can be helpful in asking the right questions, they are not likely to provide the same answers everywhere. Adequately assisting internally displaced persons requires knowledge and understanding of the specific context in which the disaster occurred.

IV. Post-disaster recovery: successes, current and future challenges

40. Managing the transition from relief to recovery in the tsunami disaster is a critical concern for the future, as it includes (a) identifying lingering gaps and vulnerabilities; (b) aligning resource requirements and uses; (c) ensuring overall operational coherence across actors, activities and phases; (d) building linkages across humanitarian and development initiatives; and (e) undertaking risk reduction as a conscious part of recovery. Failure to build and sustain the momentum and support for all of the preceding activities will squander an important opportunity to rebuild critical infrastructure while simultaneously improving the lives and livelihoods of those affected and building national and local capacity to prepare for future disasters.

41. The pace of transition to recovery has and will continue to vary from country to country, requiring different approaches to the recovery effort. Recent reports from the field suggest that the impact of early recovery efforts is indeed uneven. The Government of Sri Lanka, for example, is reporting that about 17,300 families made homeless by the tsunami still live in 100 camps. Of those, 9,480 families live in tents, particularly in those coastal areas where available land away from the coastline is scarce. However, construction of transitional shelters is gaining momentum (31,000 in June), so it is hoped that those numbers will be significantly reduced in the short term. In Aceh, the continuing movement of internally displaced persons between various shelter options reflects attempts by the population to best align themselves for the start of the recovery phase and to have access to reconstruction assets and materials as quickly as possible. Work now being initiated by the Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Agency aims to ensure that affected populations understand how the reconstruction process will succeed and what role they can play in it.

42. As the recovery effort moves forward in all of the affected countries, it will become critical to sustain support to the affected Governments and communities for such recovery activities and to align recovery programming as well as Government and community priorities with an awareness of the existing socio-economic situation. The following sections examine the broad issues and challenges that have surfaced in the early stages of the recovery phase.

II**A. Early government ownership**

43. Early national ownership of and participation in the design and implementation of recovery programmes is essential, not only for the achievement of the desired impact of recovery efforts but also to strengthen capacities on the ground. Participation by local disaster management experts and technicians will help ensure that recovery programming considers the needs and capacities of the affected population, and involvement of national decision makers is critical to building consensus around recovery priorities, roles, responsibilities and resources.

44. To ensure that such ownership takes hold, external support must build up local actors and institutions through the transfer of technology and know-how and through public education. Support provided to the Government of Indonesia by international actors has included planning, mapping, shelter and employment development at the national, provincial and district levels. In Sri Lanka international teams have supported needs assessments and data collection. In India, post-tsunami humanitarian and recovery operations were boosted by close collaboration among government authorities, local communities and Indian United Nations volunteers. Indian United Nations volunteers were also assigned to assist the recovery programming and implementation in Maldives and Sri Lanka, and reportedly have been instrumental in accelerating early recovery efforts. In Thailand, national task forces were established to work with their international counterparts and follow-up on critical issues in the recovery phase. However, greater support and field-level coordination between national and international partners for the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, including longer-term strategic planning, is needed.

B. A focus on recovery during the relief phase

45. The early attention to recovery in the relief phase of the emergency helped local populations get back on their feet. For example, in Indonesia, rubble removal operations undertaken under the concept of "cash for work" injected cash into the local economy, while also providing a psychological boost to the participating population of some 11,000 people.

46. However, in many areas, early recovery was not possible as damage to roads posed a problem for the early transportation and delivery of reconstruction materials. Enhanced arrangements with private contractors and standby partners with advanced logistical capabilities and air services would assist in overcoming such recovery difficulties in the early stages. There is also currently a vacuum within the United Nations system for accepted, system-wide mechanisms for post-disaster recovery, particularly those with a risk reduction focus. Gaps in areas, such as suitable assessment methodologies for identifying early recovery needs and predictable mechanisms for the deployment of technical experts to support recovery planning and programming and for funding key recovery and vulnerability reduction interventions in a timely fashion, have been identified as major shortcomings in the effort to close the gap between relief and development.

C. Coordination

47. There have been several key achievements in sectoral coordination among international and national actors in the early recovery phase. Sectoral coordination in the reconstruction phase, led by the Governments of Indonesia and Sri Lanka with the assistance of the World Bank, ADB, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, resulted in the development of national reconstruction plans, which have mapped out all reconstruction actors and activities into a coherent strategy. In Indonesia and Sri Lanka, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has assisted relevant line ministries and development banks in the preparation of their reconstruction plans in the agriculture and fisheries sector. In Sri Lanka, UNHCR (UNHCR), the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the International Organization for Migration worked together to link the transitional shelter strategy with permanent housing schemes. UNHCR and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also conducted joint missions to assess the sexual and gender-based violence problems in the temporary government camps and devised a joint response plan. In Myanmar, coordination of sectoral activities proved efficient, thanks to an innovative joint coordination mechanism spearheaded by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the United Nations. In India, UNICEF has worked to bring together international and national NGOs to discuss water and sanitation issues at the national level as well as in Tamil Nadu. The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Meteorological Organization and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction have worked closely together with national agencies to build the institutional and technical foundations for a tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean region.

48. Despite such achievements, overall coordination of disaster recovery requires additional study and work. While disaster **response** is guided by clear and universally accepted coordination standards and tools, disaster **recovery** — which involves a wider range of actors — does not benefit from any formal overarching coordination structures. This is particularly true for international coordination at the country level and is compounded by the fact that resident coordinators do not have adequate support to fulfil their coordinating role. Recognizing the gap, the United Nations is currently using the occasion of the tsunami to identify what support is needed to improve coordination in disaster recovery.

D. Civil society engagement

49. The contributions of civil society during both the humanitarian assistance and the recovery phases have been unprecedented in many of the affected countries. Civil society groups in Thailand were essential to organizing recovery operations in cooperation with local governments and national authorities and to drawing attention to those who might otherwise have been overlooked, such as migrant workers from Myanmar and Moken sea nomads. In Indonesia, the Aceh Recovery Forum provided support and advice to the Government, the United Nations and the international financing institutions in the development of the Government's master plan for rehabilitation and reconstruction. Wide-ranging consultations with civil society in Aceh further enhanced the credibility of the planning process.

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50. However, while it is widely understood that recovery programming must be based on the sound and participatory assessments of needs and capacities of the affected population, this has not always happened in practice. In several countries, concerns were raised by the affected populations about their lack of involvement in recovery planning. With the support of United Nations agencies and civil society organizations, decentralized capacities that promote participatory approaches to recovery are now being strengthened. Through that approach, it is hoped that sensitive issues, such as those regarding land rights, as well as the special vulnerabilities of minorities and migrant populations can be addressed.

E. Flexible and innovative fund-raising

51. Past experience suggests that funds that are readily forthcoming when a disaster dominates the news dry up later as attention wanes. That was the case following the earthquake in Bam, Iran in December 2003 and after Hurricane Mitch in October 1998, when only a small percentage of the hundreds of millions of dollars needed was ever pledged or paid out.

52. Recognizing that the window of opportunity for disaster fund-raising is narrow and short lived, the scope of the tsunami flash appeal was extended into the recovery phase, making it possible to raise resources for shelter, livelihood development, micro-infrastructure and the environment, and allowing the implementation of recovery plans and programmes without delay. Though the cash-rich environment the tsunami created made such flexibility possible, extending flash appeals to cover recovery needs should be considered a best practice for future disasters.

53. In addition, the fact that in many cases tsunami contributions are being applied to medium-term projects should help accelerate the recovery effort. With an estimated \$6.8 billion pledged to the tsunami emergency, representing roughly half of the total reconstruction needs of all affected countries, the focus is therefore not on raising more money for recovery but on the implementation of the recovery plans. The recovery effort will also benefit from the efforts of the Global Consortium, convened by former President Clinton, which has been given the task of following up on recovery plans, keeping the momentum of reconstruction high and working with Governments to deal with the difficult policy and operational issues that typically stall recovery. The development of a common financial tracking database that aims to capture all forms of assistance, including official aid, NGO support and private sector contributions in one coherent system, will also facilitate recovery planning and implementation.

F. Early incorporation of risk reduction measures

54. In the recovery effort, all of the affected countries have been struggling to balance the need for rapid recovery with the importance of protecting their citizens from future disasters. Too often, societies affected by a major disaster tend to seek rapid and visible initiatives to restore normalcy, frequently at the cost of more sustainable and durable solutions. Failure to factor risk reduction into development policies, strategies and plans can result in large-scale disaster loss, increasing and costly demands on national and international humanitarian assistance and the

systematic erosion of economic growth and social welfare. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held from 18 to 22 January 2005, just a few weeks after the tsunami, provided timely guidance in that respect, through the launch of the long-negotiated intergovernmental agenda of priorities for action on disaster risk reduction, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, on building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters.

55. Although it is generally accepted that it would have been impossible to prepare adequately for an event of such magnitude, it is nevertheless clear that effective early warning systems, including preparedness measures, could have saved thousands of lives. For example, the Government of India, following the 2001 earthquake in Gujarat, has been strengthening its capacity for disaster risk management at all levels for the last several years. As a result, when the tsunami struck Tamil Nadu, the villagers in one coastal district — who had received training in rescue operations and first aid under the disaster risk management programme — were able to save more than 100 lives. In this way, the tsunami has been instrumental in highlighting the need to empower communities at risk to protect themselves and their property from the impact of disasters. Developing community-based disaster preparedness plans — from stockpiling food and medicine, to building embankments in flood-prone areas and to including preparedness as part of teacher training and school curricula — would minimize the risk substantially. Further emphasis is also needed on building capacities for “end-to-end” early warning systems that include physical measures (earthquake-resistant structures, shelters, escape routes), preparedness plans and communications strategies that allow for quick and concrete action once warnings are issued.

V. Implications for future action and recommendations of the Secretary-General

Improve structures for national and international field response to major sudden-onset emergencies

56. Emergency response in sudden-onset disasters requires a commitment to further develop and coordinate rapid-response capacities and those common services that are instrumental in the immediate response phase. This includes reinforcing deployable capacity that does — or did — exist in disaster-prone countries. In addition, international response efforts would greatly benefit from strengthened field-level management for large-scale emergencies.

57. The United Nations, Governments and relevant civil society groups should commit to building and re-establishing regional, national and local disaster response capacities so that the humanitarian system has immediate access to deployable resources, particularly in disaster-prone areas.

58. The United Nations should expand and sustain its essential common humanitarian services so that they can be deployed predictably and with the right combination of skills.

59. The United Nations should develop a more unified field-level management structure to ensure response efforts are well coordinated and therefore effective. This includes strengthening support to resident/humanitarian coordinators.

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Develop regional response capacity

60. Regional organizations are best equipped to respond with speed to a major disaster, benefiting from local knowledge and prior relationships with national decision makers. The United Nations should cooperate with regional organizations in disaster-prone regions so as to ensure that regional response plans and capacities are established and in place before a disaster strikes.

61. The international community should develop improved mechanisms for the deployment of regional standby capacities under the leadership of the United Nations, for example through pre-disaster agreements with regional organizations and the development of standard operating procedures for their deployment and coordination processes.

62. Governments should make their existing disaster response capacity available to such structures.

Build coherence within the civil-military response

63. The response to the tsunami by the military of different countries was unprecedented and critical to the initial life-saving and stabilization phase of the response. The tsunami was a watershed event in that respect. It is therefore likely that in future disaster-driven emergencies, military assets will be made available by States very quickly and in significant quantities. It is therefore necessary to ensure that the enormous capacity of the military contributes to the response in disasters, including establishing and better communicating accepted coordination procedures and structures between militaries and between military and humanitarian partners.

64. The United Nations should strengthen the procedures for the use and coordination of military assets in disaster response and develop more systematic links with major providers.

65. Recognizing that national military, civil defence and fire and rescue services are often the first responders, the disaster response community should actively engage those groups in determining when and how they can cooperate in disaster response.

Invest in early warning and preparedness

66. It is now widely recognized that the adoption of a regional tsunami early warning system could have saved thousands of lives. A regional system, however, will work only if it forms part of an “end-to-end” solution reaching the communities at risk and if it is supported by appropriate legal and institutional frameworks and local warning and emergency response systems. The United Nations should seek to foster regional frameworks and mechanisms for early warning systems as well as support technical and policy efforts for integrated risk management, in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015.

67. The international community should invest in systematic, people-centred early warning systems for all hazards and all countries and to reach all those at risk. They should include risk assessments, awareness raising and preparedness measures so that communities are ready and able to act upon warnings.

Enhance the coordination and capacity of the United Nations system for recovery

68. Strengthening the ability of the United Nations to support the affected Governments while coordinating its own humanitarian and recovery activities is essential to an effective recovery. Though coordination of emergency response is led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and undertaken at the field level by humanitarian coordinators, there is no institutional equivalent or support at either headquarters or in the field for the recovery phase. Addressing such gaps includes identifying an institutional mechanism to provide leadership and coordination at headquarters and Government levels, creating greater synergies between the resident and humanitarian coordinator role in the reconstruction phase and strengthening the United Nations country team.

69. Recognizing the institutional, coordination and strategic planning gap that exists in disaster recovery, the United Nations system should support ongoing initiatives to identify the support that is needed to improve coordination of disaster recovery efforts.

Promote financial transparency and accountability

70. The increasing magnitude of disasters — and, consequently, of the scope of the response and recovery effort, — means that the United Nations will play a larger role in ensuring financial transparency and accountability in the use of funds. Strengthening and maintaining a transparent financial tracking system for both government and private contributions inside and outside global appeals will be essential. The system will also better incorporate private actions into coordination structures and financial tracking and engage key private sector actors in resource mobilization and coordination efforts. Initiatives, such as the financial tracking system developed with the assistance of PricewaterhouseCoopers should be encouraged. International organizations and Governments should also work together to strengthen the reporting and accountability mechanisms in the recovery and reconstruction phases.

71. The international community should encourage the development of a common mechanism within the United Nations system for the tracking and reporting of humanitarian funds and should urge organizations both within and outside the United Nations system to contribute to such mechanisms in a timely way.

72. International organizations and Governments should work together to strengthen the reporting and accountability mechanisms in recovery and reconstruction phases.

Commit to reducing vulnerability and risk

73. In spite of the compelling evidence linking risk reduction and sustainable development, commitment to and investment in vulnerability and risk reduction continues to be a challenge. Long-term support for sustainable economic development, resulting in strong civil societies as well as sound infrastructure, will help ensure that nations are prepared to weather the shocks from natural hazards.

74. The international community should commit to and invest in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015.

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Promote research and learning to guide recovery activities

75. Response and recovery programming must be based upon a sound, participatory assessment of the needs and capacities of the affected population, so that local initiatives, resources and capacities are fully understood and utilized. National policy development and consultation mechanisms and priority setting activities contribute to building consensus on recovery priorities, roles, responsibilities and resources.

76. The disaster response community should capture, consolidate and disseminate a body of knowledge on the lessons learned from the tsunami and other recent disasters that promotes institutional learning at all levels and guides future disaster management.



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Agenda item 39

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/59/L.58 and Add.1)]

59/279. Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 57/152 of 16 December 2002, 57/256 of 20 December 2002, 58/25 of 5 December 2003, 58/214 and 58/215 of 23 December 2003, 59/212 of 20 December 2004, and 59/231 and 59/233 of 22 December 2004,

Expressing sincere condolences and deep sympathy to the victims, their families, the Governments and the peoples of those States that suffered huge losses of life and socio-economic and environmental damage from the unprecedented tsunami disaster that struck the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian regions on 26 December 2004,

Commending the prompt response, support, generous contributions to and assistance of the international community, by Governments, civil society, the private sector and individuals, in the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, which reflect the spirit of international solidarity and cooperation to address the disaster,

Commending also the leading role of the affected States and the role of the United Nations in addressing the disaster, and recognizing the importance of cooperation for effective mobilization, coordination and delivery of international assistance in the emergency relief phase,

Welcoming the Declaration on Action to Strengthen Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Prevention in the Aftermath of the Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster of 26 December 2004,¹ adopted at the special meeting of leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005 in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami, and the pledges made by donor countries and international financial institutions for the affected countries,

Welcoming also the launching of the Indian Ocean earthquake-tsunami 2005 flash appeal by the Secretary-General to respond to the urgent and immediate needs

¹ A/59/669, annex.

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of communities severely affected by the earthquake and tsunami² and the outcome of the Ministerial-level Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance to Tsunami-affected Communities, held in Geneva on 11 January 2005,

Welcoming further the recent announcement by the Paris Club creditors that they will not expect debt payments from affected countries that request such forbearance until the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have made a full assessment of their reconstruction and financing needs as well as specific initiatives from countries on this issue,

Welcoming the appointment by the Secretary-General of a Special Coordinator to coordinate international emergency relief operations in support of national emergency programmes of countries affected by the tsunami disaster and covered by the flash appeal,

Expressing concern over the medium- and long-term social, economic and environmental impacts of the disaster on the affected States,

Stressing the need to develop and implement risk-reduction strategies and to integrate them, where appropriate, into national development plans, in particular through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, so as to enhance the resilience of populations in disasters and reduce risks to them, their livelihoods, the social and economic infrastructure and environmental resources,

Recognizing that the development of stronger institutions, mechanisms and capacities, including at the community level, that can systematically build resilience to hazards and disasters is essential to reducing the risks and the vulnerability of populations to disasters, including disaster preparedness, mitigation and early warning systems at all levels,

Recalling the need for continued commitment to assist the affected countries and their peoples, particularly the most vulnerable groups, to fully recover from the catastrophic and traumatic effects of the disaster, including in their medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, and welcoming Government and international assistance measures in this regard,

Emphasizing that disaster reduction, including reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, is an important element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

Welcoming the convening of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005, with a view to updating the guiding framework on disaster reduction for the twenty-first century,

Noting the outcome of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held in Mauritius from 10 to 14 January 2005,

Stressing the importance of advancing the implementation of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg

² Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Seychelles, Somalia, Sri Lanka.

Plan of Implementation”)³ and its relevant provisions on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management,

Emphasizing the importance of establishing a partnership, upon the request and with the leadership of the country concerned, involving donor countries and regional and international financial institutions as well as the private sector and civil society, to support the respective national rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes of the affected countries,

Emphasizing also the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters in all phases, including prevention, preparedness, mitigation, recovery and reconstruction, as well as in strengthening the response capacity of affected countries,

1. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact within recent years, which have resulted in a massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in developing countries;

2. *Emphasizes* the need for the international community to maintain its focus beyond the present emergency relief, in order to sustain the political will to support the medium- and long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and risk reduction efforts led by the Governments of the affected countries at all levels;

3. *Welcomes* the effective cooperation between the affected States, relevant bodies in the United Nations system, donor countries, regional and international financial institutions and civil society in the coordination and delivery of emergency relief, and stresses the need to continue such cooperation and delivery throughout the ongoing relief operations and rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, in a manner that reduces vulnerability to future natural hazards;

4. *Encourages* the international community, particularly donor countries, international financial institutions and relevant international organizations, as well as the private sector and civil society, to deliver swiftly on their pledges and to continue to provide the necessary funds and assistance to support the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts;

5. *Welcomes* the increasing efforts to further enhance transparency and accountability with respect to the channelling and utilization of resources;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative in order to, inter alia, sustain the political will of the international community to support medium- and long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and risk reduction efforts led by the Governments of affected countries at all levels;

7. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to explore ways to further strengthen the rapid response capacities for immediate humanitarian relief efforts of the international community, building on the existing arrangements and ongoing initiatives, including the consideration of “standby arrangements” under the auspices of the United Nations;

³ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

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8. *Invites* the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, in collaboration with other international and regional financial institutions and the United Nations, to convene members of the international community, including affected countries, to address the medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of the affected countries;

9. *Recognizes* the importance of the decision by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to establish regional mechanisms on disaster prevention, preparedness and mitigation, encourages regional cooperation in this regard, and urges donor countries and regional and international organizations as well as other relevant institutions to provide, where appropriate, financial and technical assistance;

10. *Also recognizes* the importance of the promotion of public education, awareness and community participation in disaster prevention and preparedness, particularly at the local level, as well as the pressing need to develop and promote national and regional capacity and access to technology and knowledge in building and managing a regional early warning system and in disaster management, through national and regional efforts as well as through international cooperation and partnership;

11. *Emphasizes* the urgent need for the establishment of a regional early warning system, particularly for tsunamis, in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian regions, and notes the interest expressed by some Governments, bodies and organizations, including the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, to support the establishment of this system;

12. *Welcomes* the proposed convening of a regional ministerial meeting on regional cooperation with regard to a tsunami early warning system, to be held in Thailand on 28 January 2005;

13. *Also welcomes* the proposal of Germany to host a third international early warning conference, covering the complete range of natural hazards, with a focus on the urgent implementation of early warning systems for hydrometeorological and geological hazards on a global scale;

14. *Further welcomes* the fact that the World Conference on Disaster Reduction will discuss the issue of a global and regional tsunami early warning system as part of its agenda;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance" and to report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 2005.

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United Nations

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III

Sixtieth session

Item 76 (a) of the preliminary list*

Oceans and the law of the sea

Oceans and the law of the sea

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report has been prepared in response to the request of the General Assembly, in paragraph 101 of its resolution 59/24 of 17 November 2004, for the Secretary-General to present at its sixtieth session his annual comprehensive report on developments and issues relating to oceans and the law of the sea. It is also presented to States parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, pursuant to article 319 of the Convention, to be considered by the meeting of States parties under the agenda item: "Report of the Secretary-General under article 319 for information of States Parties on issues of a general nature relevant to States Parties that have arisen with respect to the Convention". It will be presented as a basis for discussion at the sixth meeting of the United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea and contains information on fisheries and their contribution to sustainable development and marine debris, the areas of focus chosen for the sixth meeting of the Consultative Process, as recommended by the General Assembly. The report also contains information on the status of the Convention and its implementing Agreements, on declarations and statements made by States under articles 287, 298 and 310 of the Convention, and on recent submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. The report includes a special section on the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster and a section on capacity-building activities and elaborates on recent developments regarding the safety and security of navigation and protection of the marine environment. Finally, it covers the activities of the Oceans and Coastal Areas Network, a mechanism for inter-agency coordination and cooperation.

* A/60/50.

** Owing to the page limit, this report contains a mere summary of the most important recent developments and selected parts of contributions by major agencies, programmes and bodies.

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Abbreviations

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GPA	Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IOC	Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO
MARPOL	International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, 1973, as modified by the Protocol of 1978 relating thereto
MEPC	IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee
MSC	IMO Maritime Safety Committee
SOLAS	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
STCW Convention	International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers
SUA Convention	Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation
SUA Protocol	Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf
TSC	TRAIN-SEA-COAST
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WHO	World Health Organization

I. Introduction

1. The world was appalled by the tragic loss of life caused by the devastating tsunami that struck countries along the rim of the Indian Ocean on 26 December 2004. The earthquake-generated waves caused extensive damage to the environment, destroyed the fishing industries of several countries and severely damaged homes and infrastructure. The present report contains a special chapter on the tsunami and its aftermath. As the tsunami disaster made clear, more scientific research is required in order to understand and to be able to predict ocean-related natural disasters. Indeed, a major theme underlying developments throughout the year is the importance of marine scientific research.

2. The future of the planet and our security depend upon increased understanding of oceans processes and their interaction. Oceans-related issues should be addressed in a comprehensive manner, taking an integrated approach. To fully understand the value of the oceans, it is necessary to undertake worldwide oceanic research to acquire scientific knowledge about the state of the marine environment in its different aspects and phenomena. Improving scientific knowledge and applying it to management and decision-making can make a major contribution to eliminating poverty, ensuring food security, supporting human economic activity, conserving the world's marine environment, predicting and mitigating the effects of and responding to natural events and disasters, and, generally, promoting the use of the oceans and their resources for the objective of sustainable development.

II. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its implementing Agreements

A. Status of the Convention and its implementing Agreements

3. As at 31 January 2005, following ratification by Denmark on 16 November 2004, accession by Latvia on 23 December 2004 and ratification by Burkina Faso on 25 January 2005, the number of States parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS or "the Convention"), including the European Community, has risen to 148 (129 coastal States from among the total of 153 and 18 landlocked States from among the total of 42). Burkina Faso, Denmark and Latvia have expressed their consent to be bound by the Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI. In addition, Botswana acceded to this Agreement on 31 January 2005, bringing the number of parties to 121.

4. Since the issuance of the addendum to the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/59/62/Add.1), there have been no changes in the status of the 1995 United Nations Fish Stocks Agreement. The number of parties to the Agreement remains at 52, including the European Community.

B. Declarations and statements under articles 287, 298 and 310 of the Convention

5. Denmark made a declaration upon ratification of UNCLOS, stating that the exception from the transit passage regime provided for in article 35 (c) of UNCLOS

through further research and monitoring activities. To this end, strategies for identifying the types, sources, amounts, interactions and key user groups need to be established, as well as strategies for assessment of the socio-economic aspects of marine debris. Monitoring mechanisms should be established where none exist and a limited number of basic marine indicators should be developed for use in all monitoring activities so that data and information about quantities and trends in marine debris are more coherent and compatible and enable the building of a common global basis for action. Global and regional assessments of the state of the coastal and marine environments should include marine debris as an issue of concern. The GPA Clearing-house node (Global Marine Litter Information Gateway), which was established to provide a global mechanism for the sharing of information about marine litter from land-based sources, could also be utilized to share information on all sources of marine debris based on information provided by relevant organizations.

283. Given its potential for causing transboundary pollution, marine debris is a global problem as well as a national one. There is no single solution to the problem and it must be addressed through a wide range of carefully targeted integrated measures. Therefore, the entities that are addressing the problem of marine debris in a variety of contexts should cooperate in order to ensure that the battle against marine debris is waged in a comprehensive and effective manner at the national, regional and global levels.

XI. The Indian Ocean tsunami disaster

284. On 26 December 2004, an earthquake of magnitude 9.3 on the Richter scale¹²² off the island of Sumatra (Indonesia) generated a devastating tsunami, flooding vast expanses of coastal areas in countries all around the Indian Ocean rim from Indonesia to Somalia, including Sri Lanka, India, the Maldives, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Kenya, Madagascar, Seychelles and the United Republic of Tanzania. A tsunami ("wave in the port" in Japanese) is a series of large waves, which can reach vertical heights of 10 to 30 metres or more at the shoreline. It can be generated when the sea floor abruptly deforms and vertically displaces the overlying water as a result of an earthquake, submarine landslide or volcanic eruption. Subduction earthquakes (or tectonic earthquakes) are particularly effective in generating tsunamis and occur where denser oceanic plates slip under continental plates in a process known as subduction. These events generally occur around the crustal plate subduction zone known as the "ring of fire" in the Pacific Ocean. The devastating megathrust earthquake of 26 December 2004 was caused by the release of stresses that developed as the India plate subducted beneath the overriding Burma plate. Preliminary locations of larger aftershocks following the megathrust earthquake show that approximately 1200 km of the plate boundary slipped as a result of the earthquake.¹²³ This was confirmed in a recent survey by the *HMS Scott* conducted in the exclusive economic zone of Indonesia under the marine scientific research provisions of UNCLOS.¹²⁴

A. Impact of the tsunami

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285. It is estimated that the Indian Ocean tsunami took the lives of 273,770 people, displaced over 1.6 million and rendered over half a million homeless.¹²⁵ It eroded coastlines and caused extensive flooding. The affected countries suffered several billion dollars worth of damage to property, infrastructure, coastal environments and essential ecosystems. Vital ocean-related economic sectors, such as the fisheries and tourism, were severely impacted. Exports from these sectors alone represented over \$30 billion of the annual earnings of the States concerned.¹²⁶

286. The tsunami destroyed or seriously damaged fishing harbours and tens of thousands of fishing boats; resulted in the loss or damage of hundred thousands of fishing gear; the destruction of thousands of fish cages and fish ponds; and caused serious damage to aquaculture and fish processing plants. As a result, exports of fish and fish products from affected countries are expected to decline in the short term and local fish production is expected to be reduced by as much as 90 per cent, with implications for the food security of local populations.¹²⁷ For many people in coastal communities, fisheries are the only source of income and livelihood.

287. Maritime infrastructure, such as ports, navigational aids and global positioning system ground stations, was also damaged by the tsunami. For example, in the Strait of Malacca thousands of navigational aids, such as buoys held in place by mushroom-shaped anchors, were carried off to new locations by waves, thereby possibly sending out false positions.¹²⁸ The International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) and the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) have begun the process of assessing in detail the extent of damage to ports and their approaches, navigational channels and navigational aids in the areas affected by the tsunami.

288. The high intensity of the tsunami and the wave of deposits and the debris it generated damaged coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves and associated ecosystems. In the case of coral reefs, some areas appear to have been severely damaged, while others were spared or should recover in the next 5 to 10 years.¹²⁹ Generally, most of the affected countries suffered varying degrees of similar tsunami-induced environmental problems. Tsunami-generated waste poses a risk to human health as well as to ecological functions. Coastal waters have been contaminated as a result of damage to sewage collection and treatment systems, as well as to industrial installations.

289. Post-tsunami environmental assessments revealed that coastal ecosystems, including coral reefs, mangrove forests and seagrass beds, acted as a natural buffer, at least partially protecting the coastline of some countries from destruction. Both in Thailand and in the Maldives the extensive reefs reduced the impact of the tsunami and losses were thus smaller compared to other areas. Unfortunately, the protective reefs, sand dunes and mangroves in many areas of the Indian Ocean have been destroyed by economic development, in particular tourism and aquaculture. As a result, many coastal communities found themselves with no such shields against the tsunami. Protection of the environment is essential for the protection of human life.

B. Responses to the tsunami disaster

290. In response to the huge loss of life and massive destruction caused by the Indian Ocean tsunami, the international community acted quickly to address the immediate humanitarian crisis, to establish an early warning system, and to initiate rehabilitation and reconstruction. Many States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and private entities contributed or pledged their resources for humanitarian and disaster relief.¹³⁰

1. Early warning systems

291. Early warning and preparedness play a critical role in preventing hazardous events from turning into disasters. Clear warnings received in time, coupled with the knowledge of how to react, can mean the difference between life and death, or between economic survival and ruin, for individuals and communities. In the case of the Indian Ocean tsunami, the initial underestimation of the magnitude of the earthquake prevented the issuance of a timely warning. The urgent need to establish early warning systems at the global and regional levels was emphasized in a number of global and regional forums, including the General Assembly.¹³¹

292. The special meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations held in Indonesia on 6 January 2005, *inter alia*, called for the establishment of a regional tsunami early warning system for the Indian Ocean and the South-East Asia region. At the subsequent ministerial meeting on regional cooperation on tsunami early warning arrangements held in Bangkok on 29 January 2005, it was decided to take immediate and practical steps to enhance early warning capabilities in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia and to cooperate towards the establishment of interim early warning arrangements and strengthening and upgrading of national systems, while moving towards a coordinated regional system. The ministerial meeting agreed that a regional early warning system should be developed, if possible by June 2006, within a United Nations international strategy coordinated by IOC.

293. The World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Japan from 19 to 22 January 2005, adopted a common statement on the Indian Ocean disaster (A/CONF.206/6, annex II) that recognized the need to use the experience of the existing Pacific Ocean tsunami early warning systems, making use of the existing coordination mechanisms of IOC and other relevant international and regional organizations. However, the establishment of an interim Indian Ocean early warning system was also considered at the Conference. It would involve the Japanese Meteorological Agency and the IOC Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre¹³² providing national authorities in the Indian Ocean region with information and warning arising from their monitoring activities.

294. It was also decided during the Conference to create an international early warning programme, if possible by June 2007, to cover not just the tsunami but all other threats such as storm surges and cyclones. In order to coordinate the many initiatives advanced by organizations and countries, IOC will host the international coordination meeting for the development of a tsunami warning and mitigation system for the Indian Ocean within a global framework in Paris from 3 to 8 March 2005. This meeting is expected to produce a draft work plan and timetable for a tsunami warning and mitigation system for the Indian Ocean and a draft design plan for a global tsunami warning system.

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295. The need for early warning systems for natural hazards was also underscored at the meeting of small island developing States held in Mauritius in January 2005. Delegates agreed that early warning systems were vital and that reducing vulnerability required not only technology, such as telecommunications and sea-based buoys, but community-based initiatives involving education and training.

296. The establishment of a Caribbean tsunami early warning system was considered at an expert group meeting held in Barbados in February 2005. The group reviewed the existing monitoring networks within the region, examined data-sharing arrangements and devised a future programme of action. Working groups will determine the risk to coastal communities through tsunami flood mapping and design medium to long-term education and outreach programmes.

297. The vital importance of effective telecommunications systems for early warning systems and prevention of loss of life, and for the support of rescue and relief operations, has been underlined by the international community. IMO has proposed, *inter alia*, that the satellite and radio-based communications infrastructure that it established for the promulgation of maritime safety information could be used for the dissemination of tsunami warnings particularly to ships and fishing vessels. WMO will provide the use of its global telecommunication system for data collection and dissemination.

298. In order to ensure a better response to disasters, prevent the loss of life and help survivors, regulatory barriers that impeded the use of telecommunications resources for disasters have been waived with the entry into force on 8 January 2005 of the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations.¹³³ Victims of disasters will now be able to benefit from faster and more effective rescue operations, since telecommunication is at the basis of the coordination of complicated rescue and relief operations.

299. Assistance that States have offered in support of early warning systems includes (a) help in building a United Nations database on disasters; (b) contributing new tsunami detecting buoys through the Global Earth Observation System of Systems; and (c) training disaster experts in developing countries. For example, a seminar launched by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction was held in Japan from 22 to 24 February 2005 to provide to high-level administrative policy makers operational and technical information on how an early warning system can operate at the national level.¹³⁴

2. Reconstruction and rehabilitation

300. While natural disasters affect all countries, they have a disproportionately greater impact on developing countries, including small island developing States. The crippling damage to the coastal zone and the various economic sectors and the environment caused by the Indian Ocean tsunami resulted in the loss by millions of people in the region not only of their homes and possessions, but also of the means to support their families. Therefore, economic revival and the generation of employment are among the pressing priorities once the need for emergency relief starts to ebb. Many States and organizations are supporting reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts in the affected areas.

Coastal zone planning and development

301. The important role of natural features such as coral reefs and mangroves in defending small islands and low-lying coastal areas from aggressive and destructive seas was underlined at the meeting of small island developing States held in Mauritius in January 2005. Governments agreed that more action should be taken to conserve these vital ecosystems by, for example, better assessing the impact of coastal developments. UNEP has underlined that the destruction caused by the tsunami to the environment offers an opportunity to rebuild in a manner that preserves natural resources for the benefit of the local communities that were hardest hit by the disaster.¹³⁵ A meeting on coastal zone rehabilitation management for the tsunami-affected region was held in Egypt in February 2005 to discuss basic principles for coastal reconstruction and rehabilitation within the broader framework of integrated coastal zone management and to provide information on related policy tools and mechanisms aiming to reduce the impacts of possible future disasters. A document containing key principles to guide the reconstruction of coastlines affected by the tsunami was introduced at the meeting.¹³⁶

302. In Thailand, environmentalists and some tourist industry professionals are cautioning against unfettered construction on tsunami-hit beaches, advising instead strictly regulated construction so as to ease pressure on the environment and preserve the islands' environment. Officials and local authorities have indicated they would regulate beachfront development more stringently.¹³⁷

Tourism

303. In the Maldives, whose economy largely depends on the tourism industry, the Government has established an "Adopt an Island" programme to try to persuade businesses to participate in the cost of rehabilitating and rehousing the 12,000 people displaced by the disaster.¹³⁸

304. The World Tourism Organization has adopted the Phuket Action Plan to encourage tourists back to Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Indonesia. The Plan focuses on saving jobs in the tourism industry, relaunching tourism-related businesses and increasing visitors' numbers. UNCTAD has pointed out that since the tsunami negatively affected employment and sustainable livelihoods, immediate trade measures should be focused on socio-economic recovery and include special measures to revive the tourism industry and infrastructure.¹³⁹

Fisheries sector

305. FAO produced and intends to distribute an atlas on tsunami-damaged areas in Asia. It established a Special Fund for Emergency and Rehabilitation Activities which was instrumental in its being able to rapidly assist Governments and international financing institutions in assessing the damage and losses to agriculture and fisheries. Following its first assessment of the extensive damage to the fisheries sector of the riparian States of the Indian Ocean, FAO made a concerted effort to assist the marine capture fisheries and aquaculture of the affected countries through relief and rehabilitation measures. FAO intends to assist Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Seychelles, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Thailand, according to their needs, in the repair and reconstruction of fishing infrastructure such as harbours and fish ponds, the repair and replacement of fishing vessels and gear, and the relief and

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rehabilitation of affected fishing communities through activities like the provision of financial aid and training.

Maritime infrastructure

306. IMO has underlined the strategic importance of ensuring that ports, navigational aids and other key elements of the maritime infrastructure are in working order as soon as possible, both to facilitate the medium- and long-term recovery of the affected areas and to ensure that short-term aid can arrive by sea efficiently and in safety. It has developed a joint plan for future actions to be undertaken together with IALA and IHO. The three organizations, together with the World Meteorological Organization, will be focusing their attention principally on ensuring the integrity of the maritime navigational infrastructure to ensure the safe navigation of ships, including those carrying urgently needed relief supplies.¹⁴⁰

Environment

307. The central role of a healthy environment in long-term disaster risk reduction was discussed at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction. The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (A/CONF.206/L.2/Rev.1*) notes that disaster risk increases when hazards interact with, inter alia, environmental vulnerabilities. Consequently, in order to reduce the underlying risk factors, the environment and natural resources should be used and managed in a sustainable manner and fragile ecosystems (e.g. coral reefs) should be managed appropriately.

308. In the immediate aftermath of the tsunami, UNEP established the Asian Tsunami Disaster Task Force, which supports the national authorities of the affected countries and the United Nations in assessing and addressing the environmental impacts from the disaster, providing environmental expertise and mobilizing and coordinating international efforts in the environmental sector. The Task Force, inter alia, mobilizes immediate environmental assistance by integrating short-term environmental needs into the humanitarian flash appeal. It also aims at integrating environmental assessment and recovery in the reconstruction of affected areas. UNEP has also responded to requests from most of the affected countries for assistance in assessing the environmental damage, for example on coral reefs, and devising action plans to address the environmental issues identified and develop early warning capacity.

309. The UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre will provide remote sensing and geographic information system support in assessing impacts on biodiversity, in particular on coral reefs, shorelines and protected areas. UNEP will also facilitate and support the development of a waste management strategy and guidance materials, in particular to immediately address debris management.

310. Other organizations that are currently active in providing assistance to the affected countries include the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. It established a high-level task force to develop responses to the devastating effects of the Indian Ocean tsunami, with an emphasis on damage assessment and rehabilitation of coastal environments.

XII. International cooperation and coordination

A. United Nations Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea

311. By its resolution 54/33, the General Assembly decided to establish an open-ended informal consultative process to facilitate the annual review by the Assembly, in an effective and constructive manner, of overall developments in ocean affairs and the law of the sea. By its resolution 57/141, the Assembly decided to continue the Consultative Process for a further period of three years. At its sixtieth session, the Assembly will review the effectiveness and utility of the Consultative Process. Pursuant to paragraph 3 (e) of resolution 54/33 and after consultations with Member States, by letter dated 10 December 2004, the President of the General Assembly reappointed Felipe H. Paolillo (Uruguay) and Philip Burgess (Australia) as co-chairpersons of the sixth meeting of the Consultative Process, to be held from 6 to 10 June 2005.

312. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 59/24, the sixth meeting of the Consultative Process will focus its discussions on fisheries and their contribution to sustainable development and on marine debris, as well as issues discussed at previous meetings.

B. Regular process for the global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects

313. The World Summit on Sustainable Development agreed in paragraph 36 (b) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation³⁴ to establish by 2004 a regular process under the United Nations for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects, both current and foreseeable, building on existing regional assessments (the regular process). The General Assembly endorsed this proposal in resolution 57/141 and in resolution 58/240 requested the Secretary-General to organize a group of experts, an international workshop on the regular process and an intergovernmental meeting to formally establish the regular process. The international workshop held in June 2004 concluded that it appeared premature to hold the intergovernmental meeting in 2004 as mandated by the General Assembly (see A/59/126, para. 16).

314. During the debate on oceans and the law of the sea at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, States reaffirmed the importance of establishing the regular process as a significant mechanism for increased research and collection of information for the protection of the marine environment and biodiversity. Although there was agreement on the need to focus on the start-up phase, and in particular the "assessment of assessments" (see A/AC.271/WP.1, paras. 8-11), it was also concluded that there was no consensus upon which to launch the preparatory phase of the process. Consequently, in paragraph 86 of its resolution 59/24, the General Assembly decided to convene a second international workshop to continue considering issues relating to the establishment of the process. This workshop will be held from 13 to 15 June 2005.

C. Oceans and Coastal Areas Network

315. The first meeting of the Oceans and Coastal Areas Network (UN-Oceans) was held in Paris at the headquarters of IOC from 25 to 26 January 2005. It was attended by representatives from the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, FAO, the International Atomic Energy Agency, IMO, IOC, the International Seabed Authority, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, UNDP, the GPA Coordination Office, the World Meteorological Organization and the World Bank. Patricio Bernal of IOC was elected Coordinator of UN-Oceans and Anne Rogers, of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, was elected Deputy Coordinator, both for two-year terms.

316. The objective of UN-Oceans is to enhance cooperation and coordination among the secretariats of the international organizations and bodies concerned with ocean-related activities, in particular by (a) coordinating and harmonizing the agencies' activities related to oceans; (b) reviewing programmes and activities and identifying issues needing to be addressed, with a view to updating and enriching the relationship between UNCLOS and Agenda 21; (c) ensuring integrated ocean management at the international level; and (d) undertaking joint activities to address emerging challenges and issues like global marine environmental assessment, regional ocean governance and the development of guidelines for the application of the ecosystem approach.

317. UN-Oceans is to operate as a flexible mechanism to review joint and overlapping ongoing activities and to support related deliberations at the Consultative Process. UN-Oceans plans to meet once a year in conjunction with Consultative Process meetings, and may hold special meetings when required. In order to minimize financial and human resource requirements, UN-Oceans will have a "distributed secretariat", with the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea as the "organizing secretariat" and IOC as the "implementing secretariat".

318. UN-Oceans will pursue time-bound initiatives, with well-defined terms of reference, through ad hoc task forces open to the participation of non-governmental organizations and other international stakeholders, as required. The task forces, coordinated by a lead institution with a mandate and major activities in the specific issues being considered, will foster collaboration around existing and future joint activities. The following four task forces were established: Task Force on Post-Tsunami Response (chaired by IOC), Task Force on the Regular Process (Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea), Task Force on Biodiversity in Marine Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity), and Task Force on the Second Intergovernmental Review of GPA (GPA Coordination Office). The next meeting of UN-Oceans will take place in conjunction with the Consultative Process, from 2 to 3 June 2005.

XIII. Conclusions

319. **The future of the oceans depends on enhanced scientific research into ocean processes, effective implementation of the international instruments that regulate various ocean activities and a comprehensive and integrated approach to ocean management. Yet, as the present report indicates, our oceans and seas**

are threatened by climate change, natural disasters, environmental degradation, depletion of fisheries, loss of biodiversity and ineffective flag State control. To address these threats and thereby achieve security and sustainability of the oceans, including the internationally agreed goals contained in the Millennium Declaration, it is suggested that a number of concerted actions be taken by the international community:

(a) As security depends on respect for and compliance with the rule of law, States should ratify and fully implement UNCLOS and other ocean-related instruments and strictly apply and enforce their provisions.

(b) As the lack of effective flag State control can pose a threat to the security and safety of navigation and the marine environment and lead to overexploitation of marine resources, States should be called upon to exercise effective control over their vessels and should not register vessels if they cannot exercise such control.

(c) States should be encouraged to take further measures to address the threat of climate change and associated effects, such as sea level rise and coral bleaching.

(d) To address continued degradation of the marine environment from land-based activities, States should increase their efforts to implement GPA.

(e) To deal with the persistent problem of marine debris, in addition to effectively implementing the relevant international instruments, States should foster environmentally sound waste management practices, ensure the availability of adequate reception facilities and take firm measures to deal with fisheries-related marine debris.

(f) To address the very serious issue of the depletion of fisheries, States should:

(i) Take urgent action and adopt innovative measures to eliminate overfishing and illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing;

(ii) Improve the legal and policy framework within which small-scale fisheries operate;

(iii) Provide financial and technical assistance to developing countries to improve governance of marine natural resources under their national jurisdiction.

(g) With respect to marine biodiversity, States should support work in various forums to prevent further destruction of marine ecosystems and associated losses of biodiversity, and be prepared to engage in discussions of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in the ad hoc open-ended working group established by the General Assembly (see para. 149 above).

(h) To increase understanding of ocean processes and the marine environment, States should make a concerted effort to launch the initial phase of the regular process for global reporting and assessment of the state of the marine environment, including socio-economic aspects.

Notes

- ¹ For more information regarding the fourteenth session, see CLCS/42. For an overview of the first six years of work of the Commission, see A/59/62, paras. 83-109.
- ² Brazil delivered its submission on 17 May 2004; see A/59/62/Add.1, para. 19.
- ³ With reference to the letter from the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America, the Commission noted that, in accordance with annex II to the Convention and the rules of procedure, the Commission is required to consider communications from States other than the submitting one only in the case of disputes between States with opposite or adjacent coasts or in other cases of unresolved land or maritime disputes. Consequently, the Commission concluded that the content of the letter should not be taken into consideration by the subcommission.

After the fourteenth session, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States conveyed to the Legal Counsel the disappointment of her Government at the decision of the Commission. In particular, the United States asked the Commission to reconsider its conclusions, arguing that the rules of procedure require the Commission and subcommission to consider comments from other States regarding the data reflected in the executive summary, not only comments related to disputes between States with opposite or adjacent coasts or other disputes. This correspondence is available on the website maintained by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, at www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_bra.htm.
- ⁴ In paragraph 31 of its resolution 59/24, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its sixtieth session proposals on how to ensure that the Commission could fulfil its functions under the Convention, taking into account the need for expanded facilities adequate to the projected workload of the Commission.
- ⁵ The correspondence by the United States, the Russian Federation, Japan and Timor-Leste is available on the Division's website, at www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/submissions_files/submission_aus.htm.
- ⁶ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.
- ⁷ UNCTAD/GDS/DMFAS/2003/1, p. 4, available at www.unctad.org/en/docs/gdsdmfas2003_en.pdf.
- ⁸ Further information on the trust funds is available at www.un.org/Depts/los.
- ⁹ Amendments were adopted to the International Code for the Application of Fire Test Procedures (resolution MSC.173(79)), the International Codes of Safety for High Speed Craft of 1994 and 2000 (resolutions MSC.174(79) and MSC.175(79)), the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Dangerous Chemicals in Bulk (resolution MSC.176(79)), the International Code for the Construction and Equipment of Ships Carrying Liquefied Gases in Bulk (resolution MSC.177(79)), the International Code for the Safe Carriage of Packaged Irradiated Nuclear Fuel, Plutonium and High-Level Radioactive Wastes on Board Ships (resolution MSC.178(79)) and the International Management Code for the Safe Operation of Ships and for Pollution Prevention (resolution MSC.179(79)).
- ¹⁰ See resolutions MSC.181(79), MSC.182(79), MSC.183(79), MSC.184(79), MSC.185(79), MSC.186(79) and MSC.187(79).
- ¹¹ IMO document MSC 79/23, para. 4.12.
- ¹² International Chamber of Shipping/International Shipping Federation, *Mariscene* 31, Winter 2005.

- ¹³ See United States submission to the first session of the Joint IMO/ILO Ad Hoc Expert Working Group on the Fair Treatment of Seafarers in the Event of a Maritime Accident, IMO document IMO/ILO/WGFTS 1/6/3.
- ¹⁴ Reports of the Conference can be consulted on the ILO website at www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/maritime/.
- ¹⁵ Report V(1) is on the ILO website at www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc93/pdf/rep-v-1.pdf.
- ¹⁶ Report of the Joint IMO/ILO Working Group on Fair Treatment of Seafarers, IMO document IMO/ILO/WGFTS 1/11.
- ¹⁷ The 1996 edition of the Transport Regulations (as amended in 2003) was published in 2004. Further review of these regulations resulted in approval by the Board of Governors for publication of the 2005 edition. Changes approved for this 2005 edition will be included in the 2005 edition of the United Nations Model Regulations and will then be incorporated in the 2007 editions of international air, sea, road and rail regulations, to become effective 1 January 2007.
- ¹⁸ The text of the action plans and the IAEA resolution can be found on the IAEA website at www.iaea.org.
- ¹⁹ An overview of the modernized IAEA nuclear liability regime, i.e., the 1997 Protocol to Amend the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage, is provided in IAEA document GOV/INF/2004/9-GC(48)/INF/5, available at www.iaea.org/About/Policy/GC/GC48/Documents/gc48inf-5.pdf. The explanatory texts are available at www.iaea.org/About/Policy/GC/GC48/Documents/gc48inf-5explanatorytexts.pdf.
- ²⁰ Information provided by the secretariat of the Pacific Community.
- ²¹ Communiqué of the thirty-fifth Pacific Islands Forum, Apia, Samoa, 5-7 August 2004. See press statement 56-04 of the Pacific Islands Forum secretariat at www.forumsec.org.fj/docs/Communique/2004%20Communique.pdf.
- ²² The Mauritius Strategy was adopted on 14 January 2005 at the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and is contained in draft form in document A/CONF.207/CRP.7.
- ²³ It has not been decided yet whether the code will cover only mandatory instruments.
- ²⁴ Opening address by the Secretary-General of IMO at the seventy-ninth session of MSC, IMO document MSC 79/23, p. 9.
- ²⁵ Guidance relating to the implementation of SOLAS Chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code (MSC/Circ.1132); Interim guidance on voluntary self-assessment by SOLAS Contracting Governments and by port facilities (MSC/Circ.1131), which includes a self-assessment questionnaire to assist SOLAS Contracting Governments in the implementation of, and the maintenance of compliance with, the requirements of SOLAS Chapter XI-2 and the ISPS Code; Reminder of the obligation to notify flag States when exercising control and compliance measures (MSC/Circ.1133); and a revised circular on false security alerts and distress/security double alerts (MSC/Circ.1109/Rev.1).
- ²⁶ See Special press summary: Australia's maritime identification zone, 21 December 2004, prepared by the Pacific Virtual Information Center, at www.vic-info.org. The summary includes the press release of the Australian Prime Minister's announcement of the zone.
- ²⁷ See IMO document LEG 89/16, and the report of the working group in LEG/SUA/WG.2/4.
- ²⁸ International Maritime Bureau, *Annual report of incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships* (2004).
- ²⁹ Report by the National Union of Marine, Aviation and Shipping Transport Officers (NUMAST), providing the seafarers' perspective of the unacceptable threat to merchant shipping and how

seafarers perceive the problem could be best addressed, available on NUMAST website at www.numast.org.

- ³⁰ The Government of Japan expects that this agreement will strengthen the anti-piracy activities in Asia, especially in the Malacca and Singapore Straits, and become a leading model of regional cooperation in Asia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, press conference 12 November 2004, at www.mofa.go.jp/announce/press/2004/11/1112.html).
- ³¹ See "United Nations launch container control programme against illicit trafficking", press release UNIS/NAR/863 of 21 October 2004, at www.unis.unvienna.org/unis/pressrels/2004/unisnar863.html. An electronic link is provided to a PowerPoint presentation on the Container Control Programme.
- ³² United Nations Environment Programme, *Global Environment Outlook 3* (Earthscan Publications, 2002).
- ³³ The Global Programme of Action was adopted by an intergovernmental conference held in Washington, D.C., in October and November 1995. The text is contained in document A/51/116, annex II.
- ³⁴ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.
- ³⁵ See GPA website at www.gpa.unep.org/pollute/sewage.htm.
- ³⁶ Proceedings of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its eighth special session, held in Jeju, Republic of Korea, from 29 to 31 March 2004, UNEP document UNEP/GCSS.VIII/8, annex II. The Jeju initiative, prepared by the Chair and moderators of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum at its Eighth Special Session, is a summary of the rich and interactive discussion on the part of the ministers and other heads of delegations attending the meeting, rather than a consensus view on all points.
- ³⁷ The Strategic Action Plan on Municipal Wastewater was developed by UNEP, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council; text at www.gpa.unep.org/pollute/documents/SAP/SAP%20Wastewater.pdf.
- ³⁸ Suggested actions to be undertaken at the national, regional and global levels can be found on the GPA Coordination Office website at www.fao.org/gpa/nutrients/nutintro.htm.
- ³⁹ The key principles developed under the project for each of these sectors are presented on the GPA Coordination Office website at <http://padh.gpa.unep.org>.
- ⁴⁰ A GPA report on this subject can be found at <http://www.gpa.unep.org/pollute/documents/SAP/WET/UNEP%20WS%20Targets%20RS%20section3.doc>.
- ⁴¹ The guidelines, contained in resolution MEPC.120(52), will take effect on 1 January 2007.
- ⁴² Other areas designated as Particularly Sensitive Sea Areas are the Great Barrier Reef, Australia (1990); the Sabana-Camagüey Archipelago, Cuba (1997); Malpelo Island, Colombia (2002); around the Florida Keys, United States (2002); the Wadden Sea, Denmark, Germany, Netherlands (2002); and Paracas National Reserve, Peru (2003). MEPC has approved in principle the Torres Strait (Australia and Papua New Guinea), the Baltic Sea (except Russian waters), waters of the Canary Isles (Spain) and the Galapagos Archipelago (Ecuador).
- ⁴³ The review of the Guidelines is based on a proposal by the United States (MEPC 52/8). Other submissions contained in documents MEPC 52/8/1, MEPC 52/8/2, MEPC 52/8/3 and MEPC 52/8/4 are taken into account, as well as the discussions and direction given in MEPC 52/24, paras. 8.14-8.34 and annex 15.
- ⁴⁴ For information on the Convention see A/59/62, paras. 179-181.

- ⁴⁵ See report of the twenty-sixth consultative meeting of Contracting Parties to the London Convention, IMO document LC 26/15.
- ⁴⁶ European Commission, Directorate-General Energy and Transport, *Oil Tanker Phase Out and the Ship Scrapping Industry: A study on the implications of the accelerated phase out scheme of single hull tankers proposed by the EU for the world ship scrapping and recycling industry*, June 2004, p. 11.
- ⁴⁷ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1673, p. 57.
- ⁴⁸ It is estimated that approximately 2,000 single-hull oil tankers will be scrapped in the next five years. European Commission, Directorate-General Energy and Transport, *supra* note 46.
- ⁴⁹ *Impacts of a Warming Arctic: Arctic Climate Impact Assessment*, Cambridge University Press, November 2004.
- ⁵⁰ European Environment Agency, *Arctic environment: European perspectives*, 2nd edition, 2004; G. Matishov and others, *Barents Sea, Global International Waters Assessment Regional assessment 11*, University of Kalmar, Kalmar, Sweden, August 2004; UNEP, *Global Environmental Outlook-3*, Fact sheet: the Polar regions, available from www.unep.org/GEO/.
- ⁵¹ Reykjavik Declaration, available at www.arctic-council.org/en/main/messageslistpage/1.
- ⁵² See A. Atkinson and others, "Long term decline in krill stock and increase in salps within the Southern Ocean", *Nature*, vol. 432, 4 November 2004, pp. 100-103.
- ⁵³ On the Antarctic Peninsula, the speeds at which several glaciers are surging into the sea have increased eight-fold between 2000 and 2003. See "Antarctica, warming, looks ever more vulnerable", *The New York Times*, 25 January 2005.
- ⁵⁴ "Grass flourishes in warmer Antarctic", *The Sunday Times* (London), 26 December 2004.
- ⁵⁵ See UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21, annex, decision VII/5. For a summary of the Elaborated Programme of Work on Marine and Coastal Biological Diversity, see A/59/62, para. 228.
- ⁵⁶ See UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/8 and Add.1 and UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/10/INF/6.
- ⁵⁷ Report of the meeting not yet available.
- ⁵⁸ Notification to the Parties No. 2004/073, Geneva, 19 November 2004.
- ⁵⁹ See press release at http://www.cites.org/eng/news/press/2004/041014_cop13final.shtml.
- ⁶⁰ Okinawa Declaration on Conservation and Restoration of Endangered Coral Reefs of the World, Tenth International Coral Reef Symposium (28 June to 2 July 2004, Okinawa, Japan). The Declaration recommends four key strategies : (a) achieve sustainable fishery on coral reefs; (b) increase effective marine protected areas on coral reefs; (c) ameliorate land-use change impacts; and (d) develop technology for coral reef restoration.
- ⁶¹ *Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2004*, vols. 1 and 2, edited by Clive Wilkinson.
- ⁶² A. Freiwald and others, *Cold-water coral reefs, out of sight — no longer out of mind*, UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 2004.
- ⁶³ www.iwcoffice.org/_documents/sci_com/SCRepFiles2004/56SCrep.pdf.
- ⁶⁴ Bulletin of the European Union 10-2004, Environment (14/17).
- ⁶⁵ Resolution 3.53 of the third World Conservation Congress.
- ⁶⁶ Mauritius Strategy, *supra* note 22, para. 19.
- ⁶⁷ This section makes use of contributions from FAO, GEF, UNEP, the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission, the United Nations University, the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization, the Pacific Community, the Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic Fisheries and the Commonwealth secretariat.

- ⁶⁸ *Our common future: The World Commission on Environment and Development* (Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 43.
- ⁶⁹ FAO Committee on Fisheries, cited in FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 353, *Living marine resources and their sustainable development — Some environmental and institutional perspectives* (FAO, Rome, 1995), p. 3.
- ⁷⁰ See Department for International Development (DFID), Background Briefing, *Socially Sustainable Development: Concepts and Uses*, August 2002, available at www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/wssd-brief-sdd-concepts.pdf.
- ⁷¹ See *Report of the FAO World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development, Rome, 27 June-6 July 1984* (FAO, Rome, 1984).
- ⁷² Much of this section is drawn from *Strategies for increasing the contribution of small-scale capture fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation*, FAO Committee on Fisheries, twenty-fifth session, Rome, 24-28 February 2003, document COFI/2003/9.
- ⁷³ FAO, Fisheries Department, *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2002* (FAO, Rome, 2002), pp. 13 and 16.
- ⁷⁴ *Rome Declaration on World Food Security and World Food Summit Plan of Action* (FAO, 1998), para. 1.
- ⁷⁵ FAO, *Fisheries and economic development* at www.oceansatlas.com/worldfisheriesandaquaculture/html/issues/sustain/fiecond.
- ⁷⁶ International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development, Natural Resources, International Trade and Sustainable Development Series No. 1, *Fish for thought — fisheries, international trade and sustainable development*.
- ⁷⁷ FAO, *Contribution of fisheries to food security*, at www.oceansatlas.com/worldfisheriesandaquaculture.html/.
- ⁷⁸ *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2002*, supra note 73, p. 34.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 34 and 39.
- ⁸⁰ The precautionary approach is a recognition of the fact that because uncertainty affects all elements of the fishery management system in varying degrees, the use of precaution is required at all levels of the system, including development planning, conservation measures, management decisions, research, technology development as well as legal and institutional frameworks (Contribution of the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization).
- ⁸¹ FAO Fisheries Circular No. 985, *Summary information on the role of international fishery organizations or arrangements and other bodies concerned with the conservation and management of living aquatic resources* (FAO, Rome, 2003), pp. 6-7.
- ⁸² This section is drawn in part from *Strategies for increasing the contribution of small-scale capture fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation*, supra note 72.
- ⁸³ Information provided by the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission.
- ⁸⁴ Agenda 21, supra note 6, para. 17.45.
- ⁸⁵ E. Franckx, *Pacta Tertiis and the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks & Highly Migratory Fish Stocks*, FAO Legal Papers on Line No. 8, June 2000, p. 7.
- ⁸⁶ Agenda 21, supra note 6, para. 17.72.
- ⁸⁷ *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2002*, supra note 73, pp. 22-23.
- ⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

- ⁸⁹ *Strategies for increasing the contribution of small-scale capture fisheries to food security and poverty alleviation*, supra note 72, para. 20.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., para. 21.
- ⁹¹ FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 353, supra note 69, p. 16.
- ⁹² FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 228, *Management concepts for small-scale fisheries: economic and social aspects* (FAO, Rome, 1982), p. 25.
- ⁹³ Ibid., p. 22.
- ⁹⁴ R. B. Pollnac and J. Sutinen, "Economic, social, and cultural aspects of stock assessment for tropical small-scale fisheries" in *Stock Assessment for Tropical Small-scale Fisheries*, ed. by S. B. Saila and P. M. Roedel (University of Rhode Island, International Center for Marine Research and Development, Kingston, Rhode Island), pp. 48-50; see also FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 228, supra note 92, p. 30.
- ⁹⁵ M. J. Kaiser and others, "Impacts of fishing gear on marine benthic habitats" in *Responsible Fisheries in the Marine Ecosystem*, ed. by M. Sinclair (FAO, Rome, 2003), p. 201.
- ⁹⁶ FAO Fisheries Technical Paper 443, *The ecosystem approach to fisheries — issues, terminology, principles, institutional foundations, implementation and outlook*, (FAO, Rome, 2003), p. 11.
- ⁹⁷ *The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture, 2002*, supra note 73, pp. 74-83; see also FAO Fisheries Circular 989 (FIRI/C989), *Genetically modified organisms and aquaculture* (FAO, Rome, 2003), pp. 19-22; and *Financial Times*, 13 January 2004.
- ⁹⁸ UNEP(DEC)/RS.6.1.INF.9, available at www1.unep.org/dec/RegionalSeas/INF.9MarineLitterFeasibilityStudy.doc.
- ⁹⁹ Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection (GESAMP) Reports and Studies 71, *Protecting the oceans from land-based activities* (available at <http://gesamp.imo.org/no71/index.htm>), pp. 15-26.
- ¹⁰⁰ Ibid.
- ¹⁰¹ See General Assembly resolutions 59/24, para. 92; 59/25, para. 60; 58/14, para. 44; 57/142, para. 23; and 55/8, para. 20.
- ¹⁰² Seba B. Sheavly, "Marine debris — an overview of a critical issue for our oceans", paper presented at the 2004 International Coastal Cleanup Conference, 14-18 May 2004, San Juan, Puerto Rico, available from www.coastswEEP.umb.edu.
- ¹⁰³ www.noaa.gov/stories2005/s2362.htm.
- ¹⁰⁴ www.ukmarinesac.org.uk.
- ¹⁰⁵ The lack of on-shore storing and disposal facilities has been cited as one of the reasons why fishers purposefully discard damaged gear. See Proceedings of the Fourth International Marine Debris Conference on Derelict Fishing Gear and the Marine Environment, Honolulu, Hawaii, 2000 (available through <http://hawaii.humpbackwhale.noaa.gov>), p. 27.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 31.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 21.
- ¹⁰⁸ Sheavly, supra note 161.
- ¹⁰⁹ *Marine Debris Abatement* on website of United States Environmental Protection Agency at www.epa.gov/owow/oceans/debris.
- ¹¹⁰ Ibid.
- ¹¹¹ Information from www.oceansatlas.org.
- ¹¹² Sheavly, supra note 161.

- ¹¹³ T. Fanshawe and M. Everard, *The Impacts of Marine Litter*, Marine Pollution Monitoring Management Group, 2002, p. 13.
- ¹¹⁴ A determination as to whether the legal regime for vessels or that relating to artificial islands, installations or structures applies to mobile offshore craft such as floating production, storage and offloading units, is dependent on a number of factors: the type of unit involved, (whether it is self-propelled or not); its mode of operation (whether or not it is on station and whether it is engaged in exploration and exploitation of the seabed); and the kind of activity being regulated.
- ¹¹⁵ For example, article 8, on in situ conservation, calls for States to promote the protection of ecosystems and natural habitats and the maintenance of viable populations of species in natural surroundings; to rehabilitate and restore degraded ecosystems and promote the recovery of threatened species; and to prevent the introduction of, control or eradicate those alien species which threaten ecosystems, habitats or species.
- ¹¹⁶ For relevant decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention at its seventh meeting, see UNEP/CBD/COP/7/21, annex.
- ¹¹⁷ See www.fao.org/fi/agreem/codecond/codecon.asp.
- ¹¹⁸ See the Baltic Strategy for Port Reception Facilities for Ship-generated Wastes and Associated Issues, at www.helcom.fi/stc/files/Publications/Proceedings/bsep62.pdf.
- ¹¹⁹ Fact sheet on marine debris of the Humane Society International, Australia, at www.hsi.org.au/news_library_events/fact_sheets/F0053.htm.
- ¹²⁰ See *Recommendations for the marking of fishing gear*, Supplement to the Report of the Expert Consultation on the Marking of Fishing Gear; Victoria, British Columbia, Canada, 14-19 July 1991, ISBN 92-5-103330-7.
- ¹²¹ Proceedings of the Fourth International Marine Debris Conference, supra note 105, p. 216.
- ¹²² "Dr. Seth Stein on tsunami earthquake" at www.northwestern.edu/univ-relations/broadcast/2005/02/tsunami.html; *The New York Times*, 8 February 2005.
- ¹²³ United States Geological Survey website <http://earthquake.usgs.gov/>.
- ¹²⁴ As reported in *Landslides seen on Indian Ocean seafloor near earthquake*, Environment News Service, 11 February 2005. *HMS Scott* is a UK deep-water hydrographic survey vessel which started collecting images of the Indian Ocean seafloor near the epicentre of the earthquake in January 2005.
- ¹²⁵ International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdfappeals.pl?04/280449.pdf.
- ¹²⁶ United Nations press release IHA/995-TAD/2006, 18 January 2005.
- ¹²⁷ Information provided by FAO, at www.fao.org/newsroom/en/news/2005/88321/index.html.
- ¹²⁸ The National Maritime portal at portsworld.com.
- ¹²⁹ "Powerful tsunami's impact on coral reefs was hit and miss", *Science*, vol. 307, 4 February 2005.
- ¹³⁰ The United Nations Indian Ocean Tsunami/Earthquake Flash Appeal was launched on 6 January 2005. The appeal focuses on supporting people in Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Seychelles, Somalia and Sri Lanka from January to the end of June 2005. As of 22 February 2005, \$6.3 billion was pledged by States, regional organizations including development banks, non-governmental organizations and other private entities.
- ¹³¹ In its resolution 59/279, the General Assembly recognized the pressing need to develop and promote national and regional capacity and access to technology and knowledge in building and managing a regional early warning system and in disaster management, through national and regional efforts as well as through international cooperation and partnership.

¹³² The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center provides warnings for Pacific basin teletsunamis (tsunamis that can cause damage far away from their source) to almost every country around the Pacific rim and to most of the Pacific island States. This function is carried out under the guidance of the UNESCO/IOC International Coordination Group for the Tsunami Warning System in the Pacific (ICG/ITSU). The ICG/ITSU was formed in 1968 and is a subsidiary body of the IOC/UNESCO. Its purpose is to recommend and coordinate programmes most beneficial to countries belonging to the IOC, whose coastal areas are threatened by tsunamis. The IOC also maintains the International Tsunami Information Centre (ITIC) to assist in the work of the ICG/ITSU, and the identification of improvements to the international tsunami warning system currently operated by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For information about the Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunamis project, see <http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/tsunami/Dart>.

¹³³ See United Nations press release IHA/983 of 7 January 2005.

¹³⁴ See United Nations press release IHA/1017 of 18 February 2005.

¹³⁵ See UNEP report "After the tsunami: rapid environmental assessment", available at www.unep.org.

¹³⁶ See www.gpa.unep.org/documents/Key_PrinciplesFINAL.doc.

¹³⁷ Amy Kazmin, "Disaster brings chance to regain paradise", *The Financial Times*, 25 January 2005.

¹³⁸ Edward Luce, "Tsunami disaster: Maldives up for adoption", *The Financial Times*, 8 February 2005.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ IMO document COMSAR 9/3/1; IMO, IHO and IALA meet to coordinate tsunami responses, IMO press briefing, 12 January 2005, and IMO to help coordinate restoration of key maritime infrastructure in tsunami aftermath, IMO press briefing, 5 January 2005, at www.imo.org.

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II

Substantive session of 2005

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Report on post-tsunami actions undertaken by the World Tourism Organization

Note by the Secretary-General

Summary

The Secretary-General hereby transmits to the Economic and Social Council the report of the World Tourism Organization following the tsunami of 26 December 2004 which tragically hit countries in the Indian Ocean whose major industry is tourism.

The World Tourism Organization organized two meetings in Phuket, Thailand, an Emergency Task Force meeting and an extraordinary emergency session of the Executive Council of the World Tourism Organization, to assess the magnitude of the damage and to prepare an action plan commensurate with each destination's recovery needs. The Prime Minister of Thailand addressed the Executive Council session and the ministers of tourism of the affected countries actively participated in the discussions. The Emergency Task Force meeting, held on 31 January 2005, the day before the Executive Council session, was chaired by the Minister of Tourism of India. Following the deliberations, the Executive Council adopted the Phuket Plan of Action.

As provided under Article 7 of the Agreement between the United Nations and the World Tourism Organization (General Assembly resolution 58/232 of 23 December 2003, annex), the World Tourism Organization shall submit to the United Nations regular reports on its activities. Accordingly, the present report on the post-tsunami actions undertaken by the World Tourism Organization is submitted to the Economic and Social Council under item 5, entitled "Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance", of the provisional agenda for its substantive session of 2005.

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Report on post-tsunami actions undertaken by the World Tourism Organization

1. In the aftermath of the unprecedented natural disaster that had befallen a number of countries in the Indian Ocean, the World Tourism Organization, as a specialized agency of the United Nations, responded in a manner commensurate with the magnitude of the disaster and undertook a series of emergency actions as follows:

(a) On 29 December 2004, the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization decided to rally the support of the international tourism community by convening an emergency session of its Executive Council in order to assess the situation and its impact on tourism. Phuket, being the “tourism epicentre” of this tragedy, was chosen as the venue for this emergency meeting, upon the recommendation of the Government of Thailand. It was a symbolic gesture for the World Tourism Organization to meet at the destination that was most affected yet, for the most part, still operational;

(b) Second, the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization decided to immediately dispatch two high-level, internationally reputed experts to the four countries hardest hit by the tsunami, namely, Thailand, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Maldives. These two special envoys of the World Tourism Organization, who conveyed the international community’s messages of condolence and solidarity, succeeded in accomplishing their mission of assessing the extent of the impact of the tsunami disaster on the tourism destinations;

(c) Third, based on its experience in crisis management acquired following the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, the World Tourism Organization constituted an Emergency Task Force composed of senior tourism officials, industry leaders, high-level tourism experts, and representatives of regional and international institutions. The members of the Task Force who were called upon to assess the extraordinary situation prepared the draft of a global tourism recovery action plan;

(d) On 1 February 2005, in Phuket, Thailand, an emergency session of the Executive Council was held for the first time in the history of the World Tourism Organization. The Emergency Task Force submitted a draft action plan which was unanimously adopted by the Executive Council as the Phuket Action Plan. At this meeting, the World Tourism Organization brought together government representatives from 42 countries as well as industry leaders, and representatives of regional organizations and financial institutions;

(e) While the programmes of other international agencies and institutions focus on humanitarian needs and the reconstruction of infrastructure, the Phuket Action Plan concentrates on the human element in the recovery by focusing on the saving of tourism jobs, relaunching of small and medium-sized tourism enterprises, training or retraining of the tourism workforce, repositioning of the tourism product to be more sustainable and less vulnerable and, most importantly, restoration of consumer confidence in the tourism destinations affected;

(f) The Phuket Action Plan has been divided into five operational areas:

- (i) Marketing and communications;
- (ii) Community relief;

- 
- (iii) Professional training;
 - (iv) Sustainable redevelopment;
 - (v) Risk management.

2. To implement the Phuket Action Plan, the World Tourism Organization, in collaboration with the international tourism community, has initiated a series of specific activities and actions including familiarization trips for the media and tour operators, communication campaigns, waiving of participation fees at international tourism fairs, assistance in channelling funds to small and medium-sized tourism enterprises, workshops on risk management and repositioning of tourism products.

3. Finally, the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization has decided to take advantage of the world's biggest travel fair — the forthcoming ITB Berlin — by convening the second meeting of its Emergency Task Force during the fair. The meeting will review the progress of the implementation of the Phuket Action Plan with a view to obtaining more international support and speeding up the recovery efforts of the affected destinations.

Madrid, February 2005



General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 February 2006Sixtieth session
Agenda item 73**Resolution adopted by the General Assembly***[without reference to a Main Committee (A/60/L.20 and Add.1)]***60/15. Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster***The General Assembly,*

Recalling its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 57/152 of 16 December 2002, 57/256 of 20 December 2002, 58/25 of 5 December 2003, 58/214 and 58/215 of 23 December 2003, 59/212 of 20 December 2004, 59/231 and 59/233 of 22 December 2004 and 59/279 of 19 January 2005,

Commending the prompt response, continued support, generous assistance and contributions of the international community, by Governments, civil society, the private sector and individuals, in the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, which reflect the spirit of international solidarity and cooperation to address the disaster,

Noting the Declaration on Action to Strengthen Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Prevention in the Aftermath of the Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster of 26 December 2004, adopted at the special meeting of leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005,¹

Recalling the Hyogo Declaration² and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015,³ as well as the common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster,⁴ adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005,

Noting the communiqué relating to support for tsunami and multihazard warning systems within the context of the Global Earth Observation System of

¹ A/59/669, annex.

² A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 1.

³ Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2).

⁴ Common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster: risk reduction for a safer future (A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, annex II).

Systems, adopted at the third Earth Observation Summit, in Brussels, on 16 February 2005,

Taking note of the joint Asian-African leaders' statement on tsunami, earthquake and other natural disasters, adopted at the Asian-African Summit 2005, held in Jakarta on 22 and 23 April 2005,⁵

Also taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster,⁶

Welcoming the appointment of Mr. William Jefferson Clinton, former President of the United States of America, as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery and the establishment of the Global Consortium for Tsunami-Affected Countries to sustain the political will of the international community to support medium- and long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and risk reduction efforts led by the Governments of affected countries,

Taking note with appreciation of the convening of the Global Consortium for Tsunami-Affected Countries in June and September 2005, aimed at improving coordination among relevant stakeholders and developing a common online tracking system and common indicators to monitor and evaluate the impact of tsunami relief and rehabilitation programmes, which emphasizes the need to promote national ownership of the tracking processes in tsunami-affected countries,

Welcoming ongoing efforts by the international system to capture, consolidate and disseminate lessons learned from the tsunami response and recovery to guide future disaster management at all levels,

Welcoming also the establishment of the Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, which will contribute to setting up an early warning system and to building up the capacity of the region in dealing with natural disasters,

Welcoming further the proposed convening of a Third International Conference on Early Warning, in Bonn, Germany, from 27 to 29 March 2006, covering the complete range of natural hazards, with a focus on the urgent implementation of early warning systems for hydrometeorological and geological hazards on a global scale,

Stressing the need to develop and implement risk reduction strategies and to integrate them, where appropriate, into national development plans, in particular through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, so as to enhance the resilience of populations in disasters and reduce risks to them, their livelihoods, the social and economic infrastructure and environmental resources,

Emphasizing that disaster reduction, including reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, is an important element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

Stressing the need for continued commitment to assist the affected countries and their peoples, particularly the most vulnerable groups, to fully recover from the

⁵ See A/59/841, annex.

⁶ A/60/86-E/2005/77.

catastrophic and traumatic effects of the disaster, including in their medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, and welcoming Government and international assistance measures in this regard,

1. *Notes with appreciation* the efforts by the Governments of affected countries to complete the emergency relief phase and move forward to the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, as well as in enhancing financial transparency and accountability with respect to the channelling and utilization of resources, including, as appropriate, through the involvement of international public auditors;

2. *Takes note with appreciation* of the work of Mr. William Jefferson Clinton, former President of the United States of America, the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, and his various initiatives, and encourages his efforts to continue sustaining the political will of the international community, particularly regional and international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector, to support medium- and long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and risk reduction efforts led by the Governments of affected countries;

3. *Encourages* donor countries and international and regional financial institutions, as well as the private sector and civil society, to strengthen partnerships and to continue supporting the medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of the affected countries, including through the swift delivery of pledges made by donors;

4. *Emphasizes* the need to promote transparency and accountability among donors and recipient countries by means of, inter alia, a unified financial and sectoral information online tracking system – a development assistance database – with the support and participation of the Global Consortium for Tsunami-Affected Countries, and highlights the importance of timely and accurate information on assessed needs and the sources and uses of funds;

5. *Encourages* the continued effective coordination among the Governments of affected countries, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, international organizations, donor countries, regional and international financial institutions, civil society and private sectors involved in relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, in order to ensure adequate response to the remaining humanitarian needs and effective implementation of existing joint programmes and to prevent unnecessary duplication, as well as to reduce vulnerability to future natural hazards;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations institutional mechanism and capacities in support of national and local authorities for the coordination of tsunami disaster recovery efforts;

7. *Reaffirms* that all regional efforts should serve the purpose of strengthening international cooperation aimed at the creation of a global multihazard early warning system, including the newly established Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System;

8. *Stresses* the need for the development of stronger institutions, mechanisms and capacities at the regional, national and local levels, as affirmed in the Hyogo Declaration² and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015,³ as well as through the promotion of public education, awareness and community participation, in order to systematically build resilience to hazards and disasters, as well as reduce the risks and the vulnerability of populations to disasters, particularly in developing countries;

9. *Urges* Governments and the United Nations system, in planning for disaster preparedness and responding to natural disasters, and implementing recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, to integrate a gender perspective and to ensure that women take an active and equal role in all phases of disaster management;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to explore ways to strengthen the rapid response capacities of the international community to provide immediate humanitarian relief, building on existing arrangements and ongoing initiatives;

11. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance”, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in 2006.

*52nd plenary meeting
14 November 2005*

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General Assembly

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Sixtieth session
Agenda item 55 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/491/Add.1)]

60/228. Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries: high-level meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/279 of 12 July 2001, in which it endorsed the Brussels Declaration¹ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,² and its resolutions 57/276 of 20 December 2002, 58/228 of 23 December 2003 and 59/244 of 22 December 2004 on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,

Recalling also its resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003 on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields,

Reaffirming its resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, by which it adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in particular paragraph 15 thereof, in which the Heads of State and Government undertook to address the special needs of the least developed countries,

Recognizing the importance of the review of the progress achieved towards meeting the goals and targets contained in the Programme of Action, as well as other internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as they address the special needs of the least developed countries,

Taking note of the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the 2004 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on the theme "Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the

¹ A/CONF.191/13, chap. I.

² Ibid., chap. II.

context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010”,³

Recalling paragraph 5 of its resolution 59/244, in which it decided to hold the midterm comprehensive global review of the Programme of Action in 2006 during its sixty-first session, in accordance with paragraph 114 of the Programme of Action, and recalling also paragraph 6 of the same resolution, in which it decided to consider at its sixtieth session the modalities for conducting such a midterm comprehensive review,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/44 of 27 July 2005 on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,⁴

Taking note of the annual progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,⁵

1. *Reaffirms* the commitment to address the special needs of the least developed countries, and urges all countries and all relevant organizations of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to make concerted efforts and adopt speedy measures for meeting in a timely manner the goals and targets of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010;²

2. *Expresses its deep concern* over the insufficient implementation of the Programme of Action, and stresses the need to address the areas of weakness in its implementation;

3. *Stresses* that progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action will require effective implementation of national policies and priorities for the economic growth and sustainable development of the least developed countries, as well as strong and committed partnership between those countries and their development partners;

4. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to ensure at the secretariat level the full mobilization and coordination of all parts of the United Nations system to facilitate coordinated implementation as well as coherence in the follow-up to the Programme of Action at the national, subregional, regional and global levels, and in this context requests the Secretary-General to engage the United Nations Development Group, consistent with the respective mandates of its members, in the coordinated implementation of the Programme of Action;

5. *Decides* to convene a high-level meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, in New York on 19 and 20 September 2006, to be chaired by the President of the General Assembly;

6. *Decides also* to convene a three-day preparatory meeting of experts during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, preferably on 4, 5 and

³ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/59/3), chap. III, para. 49.*

⁴ See resolution 60/1.

⁵ A/60/81-E/2005/68.

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6 September 2006, for the midterm comprehensive global review in order to propose, as appropriate, measures to advance the process of the implementation of the Programme of Action;

7. *Stresses* that the midterm comprehensive global review should assess the progress made in the implementation of commitments and provide the occasion to reaffirm the goals and objectives agreed upon at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to share best practices and lessons learned, and to identify obstacles and constraints encountered, actions and initiatives to overcome them and important measures for the further implementation of the Programme of Action, as well as new challenges and emerging issues;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare, for consideration by Member States, a note on the organizational aspects of the high-level meeting;

9. *Requests* the regional commissions to assist the least developed countries in undertaking regional reviews of the implementation of the Programme of Action in their respective regions in preparation for the midterm comprehensive global review in 2006 by the General Assembly at its sixty-first session;

10. *Emphasizes* that the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action is of particular significance as it will provide an opportunity for the international community, in particular the least developed countries and their development partners, to discuss the implementation of the Programme of Action with a view to ensuring support for the least developed countries in all areas, in order to ensure the timely, effective and full implementation of the Programme of Action during the remainder of the decade;

11. *Requests* the organs, organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to undertake sectoral appraisals in their respective fields of competence on the implementation of the Programme of Action, with special emphasis on areas where implementation has remained insufficient, and to make proposals for new measures as necessary, as further inputs to the preparation for the midterm comprehensive global review, and in this regard affirms that appropriate inter-agency meetings should be convened to ensure the full mobilization and coordination of the entire United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions;

12. *Recognizes* the importance of the contribution of civil society actors in the preparatory process, and in this regard requests the President of the General Assembly to organize, within existing resources, one-day informal interactive hearings in New York with representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector, as an input to the midterm comprehensive global review;

13. *Calls upon* all Member States to take a positive interest in the preparation of the midterm comprehensive global review and to be represented at a high level in the plenary meeting of the review, with a view to reaching a successful outcome;

14. *Emphasizes* the importance of country-level preparations as a critical input to the preparatory process for the midterm comprehensive global review and to the implementation of and follow-up to its outcome, and in this context calls upon the least developed countries to undertake their national reviews on the implementation of the Programme of Action, with a particular focus on progress, obstacles, constraints, actions and measures necessary to further its implementation;

15. *Requests* the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations Development Group, to ensure the full involvement of the United Nations resident coordinators and country teams in the least developed countries in the preparations for the midterm comprehensive global review, in particular at the country level, including in the preparation of national reports;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit, in a timely manner, a comprehensive report for the midterm comprehensive global review;

17. *Reiterates* the critical importance of the full and effective participation of the least developed countries in the midterm comprehensive global review of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels, stresses that adequate resources should be provided, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to mobilize extrabudgetary resources in order to cover the cost of participation of two government representatives from each least developed country in the process of the high-level meeting on the midterm comprehensive global review;

18. *Welcomes* the pledges already made by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to support the preparatory process, and calls upon Member States and invites other multilateral development partners, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector to make voluntary contributions to the trust fund established by the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 59/244;

19. *Requests* the Secretary-General, with the assistance of concerned organizations and bodies of the United Nations, including the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, to take the necessary measures to intensify their public information efforts and other relevant initiatives to enhance public awareness in favour of the midterm comprehensive global review;

20. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

*69th plenary meeting
23 December 2005*

United Nations

A/60/81-E/2005/68



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General Assembly Sixtieth session

Item 57 (a) of the preliminary list*

Groups of countries in special situations:

Third United Nations Conference on the Least

Developed Countries

Economic and Social Council Substantive session of 2005

New York, 29 June-27 July 2005

Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda**

**Implementation of and follow-up to
major United Nations conferences and
summits: review and coordination of the
implementation of the Programme of
Action for the Least Developed Countries
for the Decade 2001-2010**

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/65 and General Assembly resolution 59/244.

This is the first results-oriented annual progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. The report shows that, despite significant progress by some least developed countries in meeting individual goals, their progress as a group in meeting most goals has been insufficient to meet the goals of the Brussels Programme of Action and its objectives of eradicating poverty, sustained growth and sustainable development in the least developed countries. Three major obstacles — country ownership, capacity and resources — identified in the previous reports continue to hamper the implementation of the Programme of Action by the least developed countries. Lack of statistical data jeopardizes monitoring and reporting on the progress of the Programme of Action at both the national and the global levels. Achieving the objectives and goals of the Brussels Programme of Action by 2010 requires increased efforts by the least developed countries and scaled-up official development assistance, full debt cancellation, fair trade and enhanced technical assistance from donors. It also calls for tapping the enormous potential of South-South and triangular cooperation.

* A/60/50 and Corr.1.

** E/2005/100.

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I. Introduction

II

1. In Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/65 and General Assembly resolution 59/244 Member States reiterated their deep concern at the weak implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 and requested submission of an annual progress report “in a more analytical and results-oriented manner, by placing greater emphasis on concrete results and indicating the progress achieved in its implementation”.
2. Results orientation is a key underlying principle of the Brussels Programme of Action, designed as a partnership framework between least developed countries and their development partners.
3. Time-bound and measurable goals of the Programme of Action for the least developed countries not only provide benchmarks for measuring progress, they also serve as an effective means for planning, policymaking, institutional reform and resource mobilization. Furthermore, they ensure transparency and accountability. Finally, they mobilize national and international partners to action and help forge partnerships and alliances.
4. The Programme of Action contains 30 international development goals, including Millennium Development Goals. Monitoring progress on these goals, however, presents a real challenge. First, not all of them are specified in such a way that they can be monitored. Secondly, there are a number of full or partial overlaps between the goals. Thirdly, lack of resources, statistical capacity and necessary infrastructure for data collection, processing and evaluation results in poor data coverage of the least developed countries.¹
5. Given existing constraints, the elaboration of the monitoring methodology for the Brussels Programme of Action was guided by two basic principles: simplification and harmonization. Thus, only simple indicators have been selected for the purpose of monitoring. Highly composite indicators, which often require a developed analytical capacity, complex statistical infrastructure and more resources, were explicitly excluded. Furthermore, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/27, and in line with recommendations of the Statistical Commission,² selected indicators have been harmonized with the Millennium Development Goals, to ensure their coherence.
6. Statistical data used in the report overwhelmingly originate from the Common Database. Given that some goals contained in the Programme of Action are the Millennium Development Goals, 1990 was used as a base year, to ensure consistency. Wherever possible, data were disaggregated by sex and rural/urban areas.
7. Inputs of least developed countries and their development partners,³ as well as their relevant reports and existing reporting mechanisms, including the 2004 Economic and Social Council high-level segment review of the theme “Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010”, were used in the preparation of this report to ensure “the broader development agenda” and to “avoid duplication”, as requested by Member States.⁴

II. Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action

Commitment 1: Fostering a people-centred policy framework

8. Halving the proportion of people living in extreme poverty and hunger by 2015 has been the overarching goal of the Programme of Action. To that end, the least developed countries committed themselves to reaching a GDP growth of at least 7 per cent and to increasing the ratio of investment to GDP to 25 per cent per annum. In 2003, the economies of least developed countries grew at the annual rate of 5 per cent, benefiting from the world economic recovery. In fact, their economies grew faster than those of many other groupings of countries. Notwithstanding that positive trend, only 11 least developed countries⁵ achieved the 7 per cent GDP growth rate target and 7 least developed countries⁶ achieved the 25 per cent investment to GDP ratio target in 2003. Moreover, the relationship between growth and poverty in least developed countries has never been either automatic or straightforward:⁷ despite their greater economic growth in the decade, the incidence of poverty in the least developed countries remained high, at about 43 per cent.⁸

9. Growth and poverty reduction lie at the heart of poverty reduction strategies in many least developed countries. By 31 March 2005, 32 of 50 least developed countries had prepared interim or complete poverty reduction strategy papers, including Bhutan and Cape Verde in 2005 and Burundi, Djibouti and the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 2004.⁹ Poverty reduction strategy papers have constituted a step forward over the structural adjustment policies. Yet, analysis of the impact of economic and social policies on growth and poverty reduction in poverty reduction strategy papers remains weak. Coverage of infrastructure, rural development and other areas with poverty reduction potential and the integration of the macroeconomic framework with sectoral strategies have been inadequate. Poverty reduction strategy papers have added the most value in countries where government leadership and aid management were already strong and had less effect in countries with weak public sector capacity or with donor-dominated aid relations.¹⁰

10. Poverty reduction strategies of the least developed countries, including poverty reduction strategy papers, must have strong country ownership, be tailored to the special needs of least developed countries and be aimed at achieving long-term development objectives and goals, including those contained in the Brussels Programme of Action and the Millennium Declaration (see General Assembly resolution 55/2). Donors should align their assistance to these results-oriented investment and operational frameworks for poverty reduction and sustainable development in the least developed countries.

11. Government policies of the least developed countries must ensure that people, particularly the poorest, are both active agents and ultimate beneficiaries of growth. These policies must benefit all poor, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, race or location. Furthermore, these policies need to favour the poor and ensure that they benefit first, and that their incomes grow faster than those of the non-poor.¹¹ Hence, a people-centred policy framework for poverty eradication in the least developed countries needs to be both pro-growth and pro-poor.

Commitment 2: Good governance at national and international levels

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12. Poverty reduction and sustainable human development cannot be achieved without good governance at the national level. Several least developed countries have reported on measures instituted by their countries towards good governance, in particular regarding their efforts to promote democracy and human rights, introduce institutional reforms, fight corruption, empower people, especially women, and promote national reconciliation and dialogue. To that end, in 2004 several least developed countries, including Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burundi, the Central African Republic and Uganda have adopted or amended their Constitutions to ensure greater voice and participation of poor people in decision-making. The new Constitution of Afghanistan guarantees women 27 per cent, or 68 seats, of seats in the Lower House and 50 per cent of appointments made by the President to the Upper House of the Parliament. Many post-conflict least developed countries, in the process of democratization, have adopted affirmative measures, such as reserved seats and a quota, to ensure the participation of women in decision-making. As of 28 February 2005, the overall proportion of seats held by women in the Parliaments of least developed countries was 12.4 per cent, but in Rwanda women occupy 48.8 per cent and in Mozambique 34.8 per cent of all seats in their respective Parliaments.¹² Greater representation of women at the highest decision-making level and gender sensitization campaigns resulted in more gender-sensitive legislation and policies. Thus, a national gender policy was elaborated and adopted in Burundi, Lesotho, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania. An action plan on the advancement of women was adopted in Equatorial Guinea.

13. Presidential elections took place in 2004 in Afghanistan, Malawi, Mozambique and the Niger. Parliamentary elections were held in 2004 in the Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, the Niger and Somalia. Municipal elections took place in 2004 in Equatorial Guinea, Mali, the Niger and Sierra Leone. Burundi held a referendum on 28 February 2005, and is currently preparing for local and parliamentary elections. Presidential elections took place in Togo on 24 April 2005.

14. The promotion of justice and the rule of law in post-conflict countries contribute to peaceful settlement of disputes, national reconciliation and consolidation of peace. By calling to account and de-legitimizing perpetrators, doing justice to victims and restoring their dignity, tribunals strengthen public confidence in the State's ability to enforce the law and serve the purpose of national reconciliation. To that end, the International Criminal Tribunal was established for Rwanda and mixed tribunals were established for Sierra Leone and Cambodia. The Panel with Exclusive Jurisdiction over Serious Criminal Offences was established in Timor-Leste. Past human rights abuses have also been addressed by truth commissions established in Timor-Leste and Sierra Leone.¹³

15. As of 1 April 2004, 14 African least developed countries¹⁴ have voluntarily acceded to the African Peer Review Mechanism of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a self-learning monitoring mechanism that evaluates performance in the following areas: political representation, institutional effectiveness, executive effectiveness, human rights and rule of law, independence of media and civil organizations, economic management and corruption control. In addition, governance in 15 least developed countries has been monitored by the Economic Commission for Africa under the African governance project.¹⁵ Both the

African Peer Review Mechanism and the Economic Commission for Africa reviews reveal improvement of governance in African least developed countries. Fiscal Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes in nine sub-Saharan least developed countries¹⁶ also suggest progress in fiscal transparency, including the quality of budget formulation and investment in the fiscal reporting system.

16. Many least developed countries embarked on the path of decentralization and the strengthening of local governance. Senegal started the process of decentralization and the Local Government Act was adopted in Sierra Leone. Decentralization policies have been introduced and are being implemented in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. The Department of Local Governance was established in Bhutan. The United Republic of Tanzania has undertaken fiscal decentralization in local governance and education and health sectors. Donors have played a critical role in supporting the decentralization processes. France provided support to decentralization processes in Benin, Cape Verde, Chad, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, the Niger and Senegal. The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) provided assistance to local governance in 11 least developed countries. The United States of America provides assistance to all 50 least developed countries in four areas: strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights; promoting free and fair elections and political processes; increasing development of politically active civil society; and supporting more transparent and accountable governance. Good governance is also the most important criterion to qualify for development assistance from the United States of America under the Millennium Challenge Account. On 8 November 2004, its Board approved the first 16 countries eligible for Millennium Challenge Account assistance. Half of them are least developed countries.¹⁷

17. A number of least developed countries undertook measures to prevent and root out arbitrary and corrupt practices. A national anti-corruption strategy was developed and an anti-money laundering act was enacted in Sierra Leone. The Commission of Inquiry on properties and assets of civil servants was established in the Gambia. Anti-corruption, legal and judicial reforms, public administration reforms and armed forces reforms have been undertaken by the Government of Cambodia. The United Republic of Tanzania has adopted a national anti-corruption strategy and an action plan for the period 2003-2005, has established the National Integrity Fund to support anti-corruption activities and has passed an anti-money laundering act. Benin has undertaken reforms aimed at increasing efficiency, accountability and transparency in government procurement and established the Observatory for the Fight against Corruption. Of 50 least developed countries, 24 have signed and 4 have ratified the United Nations Convention against Corruption while 28 have signed and 15 have ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

18. Good governance requires adherence to international standards in the area of human rights. In the period 2003-2004, Liberia, Mauritania and Timor-Leste acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. During the 2003-2004 period, Afghanistan, Kiribati, Sao Tome and Principe and Timor-Leste acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and six least developed countries (Angola, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia and Nepal) submitted their

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country reports on their compliance with it. In 2004, all 50 least developed countries were States parties to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and 39 have acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. An action plan to promote human rights was elaborated in Equatorial Guinea; human rights committees were established in Afghanistan, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone. A national commission on women and children was established in Bhutan. The United Republic of Tanzania has established the Human Rights and Good Governance Commission and has reviewed laws discriminatory to women.

19. An effective State needs effective national governance. Effective governance requires the promotion of the rule of law and of political, economic and social rights; transparent, accountable and efficient public administration that provides public goods and social protection; sound economic policies, which boost growth, production and employment, encourage investment and promote private sector development. It also needs to be participatory and based on constructive dialogue with civil society. Effective planning and the implementation of poverty reduction policies, strategies, programmes and activities require the strengthening of the institutional and human capacities of governance and public administration of least developed countries.

20. Good governance at the international level consists of, first and foremost, a universal, open, fair, rule-based and transparent multilateral system. It requires coherence between national and international efforts and between multilateral monetary, financial and trading systems.

Commitment 3: Building human and institutional capacities

21. Progress in achieving poverty reduction and economic growth in the least developed countries depends, to a great extent, on human capital, on the access of people to nutrition, health, education, sanitation, safe drinking water and on their social integration. The Brussels Programme of Action contains 18 quantifiable goals and targets in these areas.

22. Achieving these goals depends not only on economic performance, but also on the population policies of the least developed countries. Of 50 least developed countries, 32 have adopted policies and programmes designed to decrease their population growth rates and two thirds have adopted policies and programmes to address adolescent fertility.¹⁸ The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the lead United Nations agency in the field of reproductive health and family planning, has been supporting their efforts by allocating between 67 and 69 per cent of its resources in 2004 and between 69 and 71 per cent of its resources in 2005 to Group A of the countries category classification, which includes all least developed countries.¹⁹ Nonetheless, both the fertility level and the population growth rate of least developed countries remain very high. It is estimated that their population will reach 759 million in 2005 and 942 million by 2015. The population of least developed countries will more than double by 2050, and will more than triple between 2005 and 2050 in 11 least developed countries.²⁰

23. The proportion of people who suffer from hunger has decreased slightly in the least developed countries, from 38 per cent in the period 1990-1992 to 36 per cent in the period 2000-2002. Especially acute is the malnutrition rate among children, with almost 43 per cent of children under five underweight for their age. Malnutrition

makes children particularly vulnerable to diseases. Half of them die worldwide from five major diseases: pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria, measles and HIV/AIDS. Unsurprisingly, the least developed countries, where almost half the population lives in extreme poverty and hunger, have the highest under-five mortality rate (155 per 1,000 live births) in the world.

24. Child survival needs a continuum of care approach that begins in pregnancy and extends through birth and childhood. However, data reveal that only 32 per cent of women in least developed countries were assisted at birth by skilled personnel in 2003, and 20.2 per cent of pregnant women made four antenatal visits between 1995 and 2003. Insufficient maternal care during pregnancy and delivery is largely responsible for maternal and infant mortality in the least developed countries. Between 1985 and 2003 the maternal mortality ratio in the least developed countries was 890 per 100,000 live births, and the infant mortality ratio in 2003 was 98 per 1,000 live births. Poor maternal nutritional status and health also result in low weight of children at birth. Low birth weight has negative effects on the physical and/or the mental development of children and increases the likelihood of their death during their first years of life. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has reported that some 19 per cent of children in the least developed countries were born with low weight (less than 2.5 kilograms) but 68 per cent of infants were not weighed at birth because of their delivery outside health facilities.²¹

25. It has been reported that exclusive breastfeeding, immunization, bed nets and relevant drugs, as well as access to water and sanitation, could have saved millions of children in the least developed countries. However, only 30 per cent of children were exclusively breastfed, 79 per cent were immunized against tuberculosis, 68 per cent were immunized against diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus and 67 per cent were immunized against measles in 2003 in the least developed countries. Sleeping under a bed net has proved to be a cheap and effective way to prevent malaria, but only 19 per cent of children under the age of five in the least developed countries slept under a bed net, and 36 per cent of children under the age of five with fever received antimalarial drugs in 2003.²² Free distribution of malaria bed nets has increased in 28 African least developed countries, but only Guinea-Bissau met the 2000 Abuja Summit bed nets target in 2002. All African least developed countries have adopted a national antimalarial treatment policy, but few have adopted the World Health Organization-recommended artemisinin-based combination therapies, and even fewer are implementing them due to their health budget constraints.²³

26. The prevalence of tuberculosis has increased in the least developed countries owing partly to persistent poverty, but largely to the spread of HIV/AIDS, which weakens human resistance. Estimated prevalence of HIV/AIDS in least developed countries in 2003 was 3.2 per cent, but in most African least developed countries it was above that level. It was especially high in Lesotho (28.9 per cent), Zambia (16.5 per cent), Malawi (14.2 per cent) and the Central African Republic (13.5 per cent).²⁴ Infection rates are especially high among young women. HIV/AIDS is, however, not solely a health problem. It presents a serious threat to the development of the least developed countries by affecting their productive capacity and, ultimately, their economic growth. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the least developed countries has been stabilized since 1999, but its incidence has neither been reversed — a Millennium Development Goal target — nor reduced by 25 per cent in the most affected countries — a Brussels Programme of Action target.

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27. There has been good progress in the least developed countries in the area of education. Thus, the net enrolment in primary education increased to 62 per cent in the period 2001-2002, with most dramatic changes observed in Bangladesh, Benin, Eritrea, the Gambia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal and Togo. However, the primary completion rate was at 50.1 per cent during the same period, which suggests a great number of dropouts, especially among girls, particularly in landlocked least developed countries. Data also suggest that in the area of education women are discriminated against and men are favoured in the least developed countries, especially the landlocked ones, at all levels. The adult literacy rate among 15-to-24-year-olds in the least developed countries has increased.

28. Access to water and sanitation has slightly improved, but rapid urbanization poses a real challenge to many least developed countries. The proportion of population of least developed countries residing in urban areas has increased from 22.6 per cent in 1994 to 28.1 per cent in 2004, and is projected to reach 35.3 per cent in 2015.²⁵ This presents a serious challenge to the Governments of the least developed countries with regard to the capacity of their cities to absorb new residents and to provide them with clean water, electric power and waste management. Providing basic services, such as health and education, and ensuring their accessibility and affordability are primarily the responsibility of Governments, but, in the situation of pervasive poverty and limited domestic resources in the least developed countries, Governments usually have little room to increase their public expenditures on social services,²⁶ ensure their affordability, invest in infrastructure or improve their accessibility. Improvement of the delivery of basic services in the least developed countries requires not only public sector reforms, an enabling regulatory framework for the private sector and adequate capacity-building, but also faster economic growth and scaled-up official development assistance (ODA) in the social sector.²⁷

Commitment 4: Building productive capacities to make globalization work for the least developed countries

29. Growth of agricultural production and a vibrant agricultural sector are of particular importance for the least developed countries, where poverty is predominantly a rural phenomenon: 72 per cent of the population of the least developed countries lives in rural areas.²⁵ Several least developed countries have adopted policies to deregulate agricultural markets, provide a greater role for the private sector, attract investments and promote new agricultural technology (Bhutan, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone and Zambia). The development of high-value agricultural products features prominently in the recent poverty reduction strategy papers of Ethiopia, the Gambia, Madagascar, Malawi, Nepal and Senegal.

30. Efforts of the least developed countries were supported by their development partners. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) provided support to 33 least developed countries under the NEPAD comprehensive agriculture programme. The International Trade Centre (ITC) of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)/World Trade Organization (WTO) assisted in market and business practice analysis in the areas of organic food, biodiversity products and medicinal plants that are of high interest to the least developed countries. It provided support to silk production (Cambodia) and strengthened the supply side in mushrooms and peaches (Lesotho), mangoes (Haiti)

and jute production (Bangladesh). Germany supported agriculture and rural development in 13 least developed countries and assisted in the development of strategies to promote private agriculture enterprise in 11 least developed countries. The New Rice for Africa (NERICA) project is a remarkable example of the global compact for food security in the African least developed countries, within the framework of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development. Protein-rich, weed-competitive, pest- and disease-resistant and fast-growing varieties of rice initially launched in seven African pilot countries, including Benin, the Gambia, Guinea, Mali and Togo, have been extended to Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. High-yielding rice varieties are forecast to raise production in these African least developed countries enough to reduce their food imports by \$100 million per year.

31. Adequate physical infrastructure (roads, railways, ports, etc.) is crucial for a vibrant economy, the promotion of trade, reducing poverty and social integration of the poor. Comparing the progress of the least developed countries with the progress of other developing countries on these goals, however, presents a serious challenge. First, it is unclear whether the current progress of least developed countries on these goals should be compared with the current progress of other developing countries or with their progress in 2001. Secondly, the level of road and railway infrastructure depends on many endogenous factors: size of the country, type of economy, export orientation, proximity to market, density of population, terrain, etc. Existing data suggest, however, the dramatic deterioration of physical infrastructure in least developed countries as a result of the decline of public and foreign investment and limited participation of the private sector owing to the lack of an adequate regulatory framework, capacity and information base.

32. Information and communication technology (ICT) can improve delivery of services, promote trade, business, governance, foreign investment, employment and rural development and ensure social inclusion of the poor. The paradox of asymmetrical globalization, however, is that ICT has also widened the gap between the poor and the rich. More important, in the absence of adequate infrastructure, especially in the landlocked and small island least developed countries, ICT often is a substitute for more expensive or non-existent fixed telephone lines and it facilitates the delivery of basic services and the promotion of trade and, ultimately, contributes to growth. Thus, recent studies suggest that an increase of 10 mobile phones per 100 people can increase GDP growth by 0.6 per cent in the poorest countries.²⁸ Remarkably, teledensity and Internet penetration have almost doubled in the least developed countries since 2001, but the cost of mobile phones will be the decisive factor in further narrowing the digital divide between the least developed countries and wealthy nations. This will require the least developed countries to create an enabling environment for ICT-related investment and competitive services.

33. Private sector development can play an important role in poverty alleviation. A number of least developed countries have simplified regulations affecting the entry, operation and exit of private enterprises (Bhutan, Madagascar, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia). However, much more remains to be done. Business registration is still a cumbersome, long and expensive procedure in many least developed countries.²⁹ No wonder they score lowest in business competitiveness among 102 developed and developing countries.³⁰

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the financial support of the Government of the Netherlands, also launched a new three-year WTO internship programme for the least developed countries.

44. Many least developed countries, including Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Togo, Uganda and Zambia, have been benefiting from trade facilitation programmes such as the Automated System for Customs Data and the Advanced Cargo Information System of UNCTAD. While the customs programme assisted the least developed countries in modernizing their customs service, ACIS has contributed to improving their transport infrastructure and significantly increased their financial gains.⁴³ UNCTAD has also been providing extensive training and capacity-building to the least developed countries in trade negotiations and commercial diplomacy, including on issues related to WTO accession. This assistance has resulted in greater effectiveness on the part of least developed countries' negotiators, including in the formation of coalitions with other developing countries on issues of common interest, in WTO and in other trade negotiations.

45. The International Trade Centre continued the export-led poverty reduction programme, aimed at integrating poor communities into international markets in Cambodia and Ethiopia. The ITC World Trade Net Programme, aimed at facilitating business community participation in the world trading system, currently covers Bangladesh, Cambodia, Haiti, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nepal, Senegal and Zambia. Cooperation with 38 least developed countries accounted for 35 per cent, or \$20.1 million, of total ITC delivery in 2004.

46. Making trade a more effective mechanism for poverty reduction in the least developed countries requires: (a) mainstreaming trade in poverty reduction and national development strategies; (b) increased international financial and technical assistance for building production and trade capacities in the least developed countries; and (c) a more enabling international trading environment.⁴⁴

47. Special international support measures, such as preferential market access and special and preferential treatment of the least developed countries under WTO provisions, need to be expanded and deepened bearing in mind the supply-side constraints of the least developed countries.²⁷ Enhanced market access for least developed countries' products to other developing countries could also contribute to the expansion of their trade opportunities. All efforts should be made to reach a successful outcome of the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations no later than 2006 and the effective implementation of the Doha Development Agenda, which includes, inter alia, special treatment of the least developed countries. Continued support from all stakeholders will be necessary to strengthen the trade negotiating capacity of the least developed countries.

Commitment 6: Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment

48. The poor, especially women, children and the elderly, are extremely vulnerable to natural disasters, and are highly susceptible to the adverse effects of global warming and climate change. The Hyogo Framework for Action, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in January 2005, recognizes that "Disaster-prone developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States, warrant particular attention in view of their higher vulnerability and risk levels, which often greatly exceed their capacity to respond to and recover from disasters". In view of the particular vulnerabilities and insufficient capacities

of least developed countries to respond to, and recover from, disasters, it recommends, as a matter of priority, that they be provided support in the implementation of the Framework for Action and in building their disaster-risk reduction capacity.⁴⁵

49. Small island least developed countries are particularly vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters. The massive earthquake that triggered the tsunami in Asia in December 2004 had a devastating effect on Maldives. It seriously damaged housing and infrastructure and hit especially hard the poor people who lost their houses, boats, fishing nets and fish processing equipment used to sustain their livelihoods. The adoption of mitigation and adaptation policies is the responsibility of Governments under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Currently, 46 least developed countries are States parties to the Convention and 33 have ratified the Kyoto Protocol.⁴⁶

50. The LDC Fund of GEF provides funds for the enhancement of the adaptive capacity of the least developed countries and the implementation of their national adaptation programmes of action. It also provides grants for their environmental projects in six areas: biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer and persistent organic pollutants. Of 50 least developed countries, 48 have had regular access to GEF funds for national capacity self-assessments, country programmes, targeted capacity-building projects and enabling activities. In 2004 alone 26 least developed countries were allocated GEF funds.⁴⁷ GEF priorities for the period 2002-2006 include 90 per cent coverage of the least developed countries in transboundary water projects; capacity-building for sustainable land management and an integrated approach to ecosystem management; enhancement of adaptive capacity to adverse effects of climate change; and small grants to civil society organizations.

51. Pervasive poverty, high demographic pressure on natural resources, lack of adequate technology, including biotechnology, and lack of investments can lead to environmental degradation (land degradation, deforestation, pollution, loss of biodiversity, etc.) in least developed countries. Ensuring environmental protection and environmental sustainability in least developed countries calls for modern technology aimed at raising agricultural productivity; investments in improved environment management of forests, watersheds, coastal ecosystems and fisheries, freshwater and related ecosystems; integration of environmental sustainability into sector strategies; strengthening regulatory and institutional mechanisms, such as property rights, regulation of pollution and market-based strategies; and effective monitoring and enforcement. Protection of the environment and the rational use of natural resources (land, water, energy, forestry, etc.) also require mainstreaming environmental protection in poverty reduction and national development strategies of the least developed countries. Environmental protection, economic development and social development should be intimately interlinked in poverty reduction and sustainable development in the least developed countries.

Commitment 7: Mobilizing financial resources

52. Recognizing the critical role of financial resources in achieving the goals of the Brussels Programme of Action, the 2004 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council undertook an in-depth and comprehensive review of domestic and external resources mobilization under the theme "Resources mobilization and

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enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010".⁴⁸

53. The Economic and Social Council review concluded that external debt can adversely affect economic performance of the least developed countries and hinder their efforts to eradicate poverty and achieve sustained growth. Bringing debt down to the level of long-term sustainability through deeper, broader and faster debt relief has been the most ambitious goal of the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative launched in 1999 by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. By 1 March 2005, of 30 least developed countries that participate in the enhanced HIPC Initiative, 11⁴⁹ had reached the completion point, 10⁵⁰ had reached the decision point and 9⁵¹ remained under consideration for debt relief. It is expected that Burundi will reach its decision point and that Chad, Rwanda and Zambia will reach their completion points in 2005. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Malawi, Sao Tome and Principe and Sierra Leone are expected to reach their completion points in 2006. The Lao People's Democratic Republic has established a track record of sound macroeconomic performance under the IMF-supported Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility, but indicated that it would not avail itself of the HIPC Initiative.⁵²

54. In September 2004, the International Development Association (IDA) and IMF Boards extended the HIPC sunset clause until the end of 2006 and lowered the thresholds so that more countries could become eligible for greater debt relief. Furthermore, interim relief is provided already at the decision point. In addition, some countries receive topping up,⁵³ which enables them to reach the level of sustainability at the completion point. Notwithstanding these positive developments, reconciling debt sustainability, sustained growth and poverty reduction remains a daunting challenge for many least developed countries. In that regard, the fourteenth replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA 14), finalized in February 2005, set a positive tone for future development financing by increasing financial resources by 25 per cent and the number of grants by up to 30 per cent over the next three years.⁵⁴ Debt sustainability will be the primary determinant for grant eligibility in IDA 14, while the joint IMF-World Bank debt sustainability framework aimed at supporting the efforts of HIPC countries in achieving the Millennium Development Goals will provide the analytical basis for linking debt sustainability to grant eligibility.

55. The Brussels Programme of Action recognizes that "Despite the positive effects that domestic policies can achieve in the mobilization of local resources, ODA will remain a critical resource for achieving the objectives, goals and targets of this Programme of Action".⁵⁵ In the Millennium Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus developed countries committed themselves to achieving the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national income (GNI) as ODA to least developed countries. They agreed not only to provide more but also better aid to harmonize their aid policies, procedures and practices; align aid to the recipient countries' priorities; streamline aid delivery; and, finally, untie aid.⁵⁶ By 2003, seven Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries (Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) had surpassed the 0.20 per cent GNI/ODA target and one country (France) had met the 0.15 per cent target.

56. It is worth noting that least developed countries accounted for most of OECD/DAC aid (41.1 per cent) and EU aid (47.1 per cent) in the period 2002-2003, with the aid disbursements of some donor countries exceeding 50 per cent: Belgium (67.3), Denmark (54.3), Ireland (69.6), Italy (63.5), Norway (53.4), Portugal (72.8), and Sweden (52.6). In 2003, 92 per cent of OECD/DAC aid was untied and 94.7 per cent of bilateral aid to least developed countries was provided in grants. Total OECD/DAC net disbursement to least developed countries reached \$22,542 million, or 0.08 per cent of donors' GNI/ODA, a modest increase over 2002,⁵⁷ considering the sizeable dollar depreciation against other major currencies and debt forgiveness to the Democratic Republic of the Congo,⁵⁸ which accounted for most of the aid increase. It is projected that OECD/DAC aid to least developed countries will further increase in 2006, in the light of the commitments made by individual donor countries.⁵⁹ The Paris High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held from 28 February to 2 March 2005, also signalled the determination of donors to improve aid effectiveness by monitoring progress on ownership, aid alignment, harmonization, managing for results and mutual accountability.

57. The share of net foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to least developed countries has increased, reaching almost 5 per cent in the period 2003-2004. However, FDI inflows remained highly concentrated in four oil-exporting African least developed countries: Angola, Chad, Equatorial Guinea and the Sudan. A number of least developed countries have also succeeded in attracting South-South FDI (Lesotho, Nepal, Uganda, etc.) from neighbouring developing countries, owing to their favourable investment climate, geographical proximity, common economic and environmental interests and cultural similarities.⁶⁰

58. Workers' remittances have recently emerged as an important source of external finance for development. They are currently a primary source of external finance to several least developed countries. In 2004 they were quite significant for Bangladesh (\$3.4 billion), the Sudan (\$1.2 billion), Senegal (\$0.3 billion) and Lesotho (\$0.2 billion). They also account for a significant share of GDP in small island least developed countries (Haiti, Kiribati and Samoa).⁶¹

59. Microfinance and microcredit can be a powerful tool for increasing production, growth and poverty eradication. Still, the vast majority of poor people in the least developed countries do not have access to microfinancial services owing to the policy and regulatory environment, insufficient access to information, lack of collateral, and weak human and institutional capacities. In most of the least developed countries, with the exception of Bangladesh (5 per cent), the penetration rates hardly exceed 1 per cent. With the support of the United Nations Capital Development Fund, 11 least developed countries improved their policy and regulatory environment for microfinance, increased the number of borrowers and created viable microfinance institutions that provide quality services in 2004.⁶² Many other least developed countries (Bangladesh, Benin, Sierra Leone, United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen and Zambia) also undertook concrete measures to create an enabling environment for microcredit and microfinance.

60. Several least developed countries,⁶³ with the support of donors, have also made sustained efforts to improve their investment and economic governance through the implementation of investment policy reviews, good governance in investment and least developed country investment guides executed by UNCTAD. These projects have enabled the beneficiary countries to improve their investment

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frameworks, adapt to changing policy environment at the national and international levels and enhance perceived images of these countries as investment locations.

61. Official development assistance remains the main source of external finance for the least developed countries because of their limited capability to raise domestic resources, high vulnerability to external economic shocks and acute susceptibility to natural disasters. Donor countries that committed themselves to the 0.15-0.20 per cent GNI/ODA target should make their best effort to reach that target no later than 2006.⁶⁴ The International Finance Facility should be launched in 2005 to support an immediate front-loading of ODA.

62. Full cancellation of the external debt of HIPC least developed countries and significant debt relief for the non-HIPC least developed countries are critical to enable them to reduce poverty and achieve sustained growth. Debt sustainability needs to be redefined to enable the least developed countries to achieve the goals contained in the Brussels Programme of Action without an increase in debt ratio. All loans to least developed countries, including concessional ones, should be provided in the form of grants. Furthermore, debt relief needs to be placed in a broader development agenda that includes stronger national policies, more targeted and predictable development assistance and an enabling international environment for growth.

63. A good investment climate is essential for attracting productive private investment that drives growth, creates sustainable jobs for poor people and improves their livelihoods. Creating a good investment climate requires from Governments not only adopting policies and measures that remove unjustified costs, risks and barriers to competition by firms, but also addressing a broader investment agenda: stability and security, regulation and taxation, finance and infrastructure, workers and labour markets. A sound domestic investment climate also needs to be supported by international rules and standards. There is a need, through triangular cooperation, to ensure the complementarities of South-South and North-South private capital flows.

64. The enormous potential of microfinance and microcredit can be fully realized in combination with other interventions such as social protection programmes, wage employment schemes, and education and training, and as part of a broader poverty eradication strategy.

65. Workers' remittances can have a positive effect on poverty alleviation, sustained growth and sustainable development. To enhance the development impact of remittances, both recipient and origin countries should pursue integration of migration and remittances in their development policy. They should also adopt specific policies to affect volumes of remittances, remittance transfer mechanisms, management of remittance funds, the use of remittances and diaspora contributions to development. Other innovative financing mechanisms⁶⁵ need also to be explored, but as additional and, not alternative, sources of financing for development in the least developed countries.

III. Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

66. During the reporting period, the Office has been pursuing the implementation of its mandate with regard to the least developed countries (awareness-raising and advocacy, mobilization and coordination of international support and monitoring and reporting), guided by its midterm plan⁶⁶ and based on the programme budget for 2004-2005.⁶⁷ As a result of successfully applied advocacy strategies and activities (statements, website, publications, events, media and outreach campaigns), there has been greater international awareness about the vulnerabilities and special needs of the least developed countries. That awareness was manifest in the increased number of references to the least developed countries in the statements of delegations and resolutions adopted by the United Nations and other multilateral, regional and subregional forums and their outcomes.

67. To ensure full mobilization of all parts of the United Nations system for the integrated and coherent follow-up, implementation and monitoring of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels, the Office has been using the existing coordination mechanisms, such as the United Nations Development Group and, through it, the Resident Coordinator system, as well as the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs. It has also continued to encourage all United Nations entities and multilateral organizations that have adopted decisions on mainstreaming to undertake regular sectoral reviews of the Brussels Programme of Action and include information on its implementation in their reporting.⁶⁸

68. Four Open Forums for Partnership, on agriculture, commodities, HIV/AIDS and emergency preparedness, have been also organized by the Office to reach out to civil society and the private sector, mobilize international support and raise awareness about the specific constraints and special needs of the least developed countries in development. A number of activities, including panels, round tables and dialogues, were organized in preparation for the high-level plenary of the General Assembly and the International Year of Microcredit in 2005. Special events on governance, HIV/AIDS and gender equality were organized by the Office to highlight the challenges faced by the least developed countries and to advocate for the effective implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. In collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office has ensured system-wide coordination in the organization of, and the effective follow-up to, the high-level segment of the 2004 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on the theme "Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010".

69. The Office was instrumental in the preparation of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, held from 10 to 14 January 2005 in Port Louis, and its outcomes. To ensure effective follow-up to and implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States organized the high-level meeting on the role of international,

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regional and subregional organizations for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, in Almaty, Kazakhstan, from 29 to 31 March 2005. It also contributed to the successful outcome of the Ministerial Conference on Transport and Infrastructure, held in Addis Ababa in April 2005. The adoption in 2003 of the Almaty Programme of Action and in 2005 of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States constitute important contributions towards the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, since they directly concern 16 landlocked and 12 small island least developed countries.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

70. Despite the significant progress of some least developed countries in meeting specific goals, the progress of the least developed countries, as a group, in meeting most of the goals⁶⁹ has been slow and uneven. Their progress has not been sufficient to achieve the goals of the Brussels Programme of Action and its objective of eradicating poverty and achieving sustained growth and sustainable development in the least developed countries. Moreover, it is projected that the number of people living in extreme poverty may increase from 334 million in 2000 to 471 million in 2015, if the current incidence of extreme poverty persists.²⁷

71. Three obstacles — country ownership, capacity and resources — identified in the first progress report,⁷⁰ continue to hamper implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action by the least developed countries. Lack of statistics and statistical capacity in the least developed countries pose a serious challenge to their proper monitoring and reporting on national implementation of the Programme of Action. Strengthening ownership requires preparation by the least developed countries of a results-based poverty reduction strategy whereby public actions of the least developed countries and donor support are aimed at achieving the goals and objectives of the Brussels Programme of Action. Addressing the challenges of capacity-building and resources mobilization calls for strengthening the partnership between the least developed countries and their development partners, the very foundation of the Brussels Programme of Action. Developed countries should fulfil their commitments on ODA, debt relief, trade and technology transfer, fully and expeditiously, to enable the least developed countries to achieve the goals of the Brussels Programme of Action by 2010.

72. The Brussels Programme of Action needs to be integrated in the development policies, strategies and programmes of the development partners of the least developed countries, including monitoring and reporting. All United Nations reports on economic and social items should include, in the analysis of global development trends, a group of countries classified by the United Nations as least developed countries to ensure monitoring of their development in a broader context, prevent their further marginalization and integrate them beneficially in the world economy.

73. Country-level coordination of various development programmes in the least developed countries needs to be strengthened in order to ensure that the integrated and coordinated follow-up to and implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits will take into account the

outcomes of the Brussels Programme of Action. To that end, United Nations country teams should support, as a priority, the preparation and the implementation of national development strategies based on the Brussels Programme of Action in the least developed countries. United Nations Resident Coordinators should also include the Brussels Programme of Action in their annual reporting.

Notes

- ¹ TD/B/48/14; UNCTAD, *The Least Developed Countries, 2004 Report*.
- ² E/CN.3/2002/26.
- ³ A total of 41 inputs, 10 from the least developed countries, 6 from donors, 22 from the United Nations system and international organizations and 3 from regional organizations.
- ⁴ Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/65.
- ⁵ Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Equatorial Guinea, the Gambia, Madagascar, Maldives, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- ⁶ Angola, Chad, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal and Sao Tome and Principe.
- ⁷ UNCTAD, *The Least Developed Countries, 2002 Report* and *The Least Developed Countries, 2004 Report*.
- ⁸ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division.
- ⁹ World Bank Board Presentation of PRSP documents, 30 September 2004.
- ¹⁰ World Bank, *The Poverty Reduction Strategy Initiative: An Independent Evaluation of the World Bank's Support Through 2003, 2004*.
- ¹¹ Martin Ravallion, "Pro-Poor Growth: A Primer", World Bank Policy Research Paper, March 2004.
- ¹² See www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm.
- ¹³ S/2004/616.
- ¹⁴ Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe.
- ¹⁵ "Striving for Good Governance in Africa", 2005 African Governance Report.
- ¹⁶ Benin, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- ¹⁷ Benin, Cape Verde, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Senegal and Vanuatu.
- ¹⁸ E/CN.9/2005/3.
- ¹⁹ DP/FPA/2005/6.
- ²⁰ World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision Population Database, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division.
- ²¹ See www.childinfo.org/areas/delivery_care.
- ²² UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children Report 2005*.
- ²³ A/59/261.
- ²⁴ UNAIDS 2004 Report on the global AIDS epidemic.

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- ²⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Review and Appraisal of the Progress Made in Achieving the Goals and Objectives of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, the 2004 Report* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.XIII.8).
- ²⁶ For example, public expenditures on health in the least developed countries in 2001 were only \$4.3 per capita, or 1.9 per cent of their GDP, World Development Indicators, 2004.
- ²⁷ UNCTAD, *The Least Developed Countries, 2004 Report*.
- ²⁸ Vodafone Policy Paper Series, "Africa: the impact of mobile phones", March, 2005.
- ²⁹ World Bank, *Doing Business in 2005: Removing Obstacles to Growth*, 2005.
- ³⁰ World Economic Forum, *Global Competitiveness Report 2004-2005*.
- ³¹ See *Unleashing Entrepreneurship: Making Business Work for the Poor* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.III.B.4), April 2004.
- ³² In 2002, of 49 least developed countries, 31 were exporters of primary commodities and only 18 were exporters of manufactured goods or services.
- ³³ *One Minute to Midnight*, Oxfam Briefing Paper, July 2004.
- ³⁴ Recent research suggests that rules of origin raise costs of goods by between 3 and 5 per cent; see P. Brenton and M. Manchin, *Making EU Trade Agreements Work: The Role of Rules of Origin*, The World Economy, vol. 26, 2003; UNCTAD/ITCD/TSB/2003/8.
- ³⁵ TD/B/51/CRP.1.
- ³⁶ WT/L/508, WTO, 20 January 2003.
- ³⁷ Afghanistan, Bhutan, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Samoa, the Sudan, Vanuatu and Yemen.
- ³⁸ Jointly managed by IMF, ITC, UNCTAD, UNDP, World Bank and WTO.
- ³⁹ Benin, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, the United Republic of Tanzania, Yemen and Zambia.
- ⁴⁰ Burundi, Cambodia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Nepal, Senegal and Yemen.
- ⁴¹ Jointly managed by ITC, UNCTAD and WTO.
- ⁴² Benin, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.
- ⁴³ Independent evaluation of the Advanced Cargo Information System in 2002.
- ⁴⁴ UNCTAD, *The Least Developed Countries, 2002 Report*.
- ⁴⁵ A/CONF.206/6.
- ⁴⁶ Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, Rwanda, the Sudan, Togo and Yemen ratified the Protocol in 2004-2005.
- ⁴⁷ Global Environment Facility, Annual Report, 31 March 2005.
- ⁴⁸ E/2004/54.
- ⁴⁹ Benin (2003), Burkina Faso (2002), Ethiopia (2004), Madagascar (2004), Mali (2003), Mauritania (2002), Mozambique (2001), the Niger (2004), Senegal (2004), Uganda (2000) and the United Republic of Tanzania (2001).

- ⁵⁰ Chad (2001), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2003), the Gambia (2000), Guinea (2000), Guinea-Bissau (2000), Malawi (2000), Rwanda (2000), Sao Tome and Principe (2000), Sierra Leone (2002) and Zambia (2000).
- ⁵¹ Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Comoros, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Myanmar, Somalia, the Sudan and Togo.
- ⁵² Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative — Statistical Update, 4 April 2005, prepared by the staffs of the World Bank and IMF.
- ⁵³ Topping up was provided to Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, the Niger, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Zambia.
- ⁵⁴ Of 50 least developed countries, 47 are eligible for IDA soft loans, but Liberia, Myanmar, Somalia and the Sudan are inactive; a total of 81 developing countries are IDA borrowers.
- ⁵⁵ A/CONF.191/11.
- ⁵⁶ The 2001 DAC high-level meeting adopted a recommendation on untying all aid to least developed countries, excluding technical cooperation and food aid.
- ⁵⁷ Net disbursement of aid to least developed countries in 2002 was \$15.8 million, or 0.06 per cent of total OECD/DAC aid.
- ⁵⁸ \$4.4 million.
- ⁵⁹ Official development assistance from Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy and Portugal is expected to reach 0.33 per cent of GNI in 2006; from Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden, 1 per cent in the period 2006-2009; from Ireland 0.7 per cent and France 0.5 per cent by 2007; five countries committed themselves to reaching 0.7 per cent at a later stage — Belgium and Finland by 2010, France and Spain by 2012, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland by 2013.
- ⁶⁰ World Bank, *Global Development Finance 2005*.
- ⁶¹ IMF, *World Economic Outlook 2005*.
- ⁶² DP/2004/17.
- ⁶³ Bangladesh, Benin, Cambodia, Ethiopia, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Nepal, Senegal, Swaziland, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.
- ⁶⁴ In fact, it is estimated that donor countries must reach 0.22 per cent of their GNI as ODA to the least developed countries to enable them to achieve the Millennium Development Goals; "Investing in Development — a practical plan to achieve the Millennium Development Goals", United Nations Millennium Project report.
- ⁶⁵ "Moving forward: financing modalities toward the MDGs", prepared by the staffs of the World Bank and IMF; A/59/272.
- ⁶⁶ A/57/6/Rev.1, programme 26.
- ⁶⁷ A/58/16, part III, section 10.
- ⁶⁸ Currently, only ESCAP, FAO, UNCTAD and WTO undertake sectoral reviews of implementation of the Programme of Action by their governing bodies.
- ⁶⁹ Not all goals could be monitored owing to poor data coverage and lack of adequate methodology to assess progress.
- ⁷⁰ A/58/86-E/2003/81.



Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 88 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/486/Add.1)]

59/244. Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/279 of 12 July 2001, in which it endorsed the Brussels Declaration¹ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010,² and its resolutions 57/276 of 20 December 2002 and 58/228 of 23 December 2003 on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,

Reaffirming its resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, by which it adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in particular paragraph 15 thereof, in which the Heads of State and Government undertook to address the special needs of the least developed countries,

Recognizing the importance of the review of the progress achieved towards meeting the goals and targets contained in the Programme of Action, as well as other internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as they address the special needs of the least developed countries,

Taking note of the ministerial declaration of the high-level segment of the substantive session of 2004 of the Economic and Social Council on the theme “Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010”,³

Taking note also of Economic and Social Council resolutions 2004/66 of 5 November 2004 on the smooth transition strategy for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries and 2004/67 of 5 November 2004 on the report of the Committee for Development Policy on its sixth session,

¹ A/CONF.191/13, chap. I.

² Ibid., chap. II.

³ A/59/3, chap. III, para. 49. For the final text, see *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 3*.

*Taking note further of the Least Developed Countries Report, 2004,*⁴

Recognizing that the eradication of poverty in the least developed countries will require, inter alia, steps to empower the poor, unleash their entrepreneurial skills and allow them to access, develop and use their assets,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,⁵

1. *Reiterates its deep concern* over the weak implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010;²

2. *Urges* the least developed countries and their bilateral and multilateral development partners to increase concerted efforts and speedy measures for meeting the goals and targets of the Programme of Action in a timely manner;

3. *Reiterates* its request to the Secretary-General to ensure at the secretariat level the full mobilization and coordination of all parts of the United Nations system to facilitate coordinated implementation as well as coherence in the follow-up to and monitoring of the Programme of Action at the national, regional, subregional and global levels, and in this context requests the Secretary-General to engage the United Nations Development Group's team leaders, consistent with their respective mandates, in the coordinated implementation of activities of the Programme of Action;

4. *Invites* the 2005 high-level event, in accordance with the modalities to be set by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, to address the special needs of the least developed countries, while reviewing the progress made in the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

5. *Decides* to hold the comprehensive review of the Programme of Action in 2006 within the General Assembly during its sixty-first session, in accordance with paragraph 114 of the Programme of Action, bearing in mind the provisions of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003, with modalities to be decided upon;

6. *Decides also* to consider at its sixtieth session the modalities for conducting such a comprehensive review;

7. *Reiterates* the critical importance of the participation of government representatives from the least developed countries in the annual review of the Programme of Action by the Economic and Social Council, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to establish a specific trust fund for the travel and subsistence of two representatives from each least developed country to attend the annual review of the Programme of Action; the trust fund should be funded by voluntary contributions;

8. *Calls upon* Member States, and invites intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to make voluntary contributions to the trust fund;

9. *Welcomes* the decision of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development at its eleventh session to conduct analyses through the *Least*

⁴ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.II.D.27.

⁵ A/59/94-E/2004/77.

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*Developed Countries Report, 2004*⁴ on the causes of the decline in the share of least developed countries in world trade and the linkages between trade, growth and poverty reduction, with a view to identifying long-term solutions to the problem, as expressed in paragraph 34 of the São Paulo Consensus,⁶ and invites the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to conduct an analysis of the role that enterprise development can play in alleviating poverty in least developed countries and to recommend measures the Governments of least developed countries can take to promote the development of their private sector;

10. *Emphasizes* the importance of the effective implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/66 in order to support countries graduating from the list of least developed countries;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit an annual progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action in an analytical and results-oriented way by placing emphasis on concrete results and indicating the progress achieved in its implementation.

*75th plenary meeting
22 December 2004*

⁶ TD/412, part II.

United Nations

A/59/94-E/2004/77



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Fifty-ninth session**

Item 91 (a) of the preliminary list*

**Groups of countries in special situations: third United
Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries**

**Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 2004**

New York, 28 June-23 July 2004

Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda**

**Implementation of and follow-up to major
United Nations conferences and summits:
review and coordination of the
implementation of the Programme of
Action for the Least Developed Countries
for the Decade 2001-2010**

**Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least
Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010**

Report of the Secretary-General***

* A/59/50 and Corr.1.

** E/2004/100 and Corr.2.

*** Submission of the document was delayed owing to the demands placed on the substantive department by its involvement in all aspects of the preparations for the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council.

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II

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/17 and General Assembly resolution 58/228.

It evaluates the progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 by the least developed countries and their development partners and provides conclusions and recommendations to all stakeholders in order to ensure a coherent approach to the effective implementation of the Programme.

The report identifies lack of country ownership, lack of institutional and human capacity, and lack of domestic and external resources as the main challenges to effective implementation of the Programme of Action. It recommends that the least developed countries and their development partners focus on the development of productive capacity: agriculture and agrobusiness, small and medium-sized enterprises, infrastructure, information and communications technology and energy. It underscores the crucial importance of partnership, South-South cooperation, good governance at the national and global levels for poverty eradication and sustainable development of the least developed countries.

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I. Introduction

1. Both the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2003/17 and the General Assembly in its resolution 58/228 requested the Secretary-General to submit an annual progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,¹ adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in Brussels in May 2001, in a more analytical and results-oriented way by placing greater emphasis on concrete results and indicating the progress achieved in its implementation.

2. The present report is based mainly on the analysis of inputs, including 26 country-level inputs (16 from United Nations Resident Coordinators)² from least developed countries (LDCs), 17 from development partner countries, 27 from United Nations and other international entities, 8 from intergovernmental and regional agencies and 3 from non-governmental entities. Annual reports and other publications of the United Nations and its organizations and agencies, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/Development Cooperation Directorate (DAC) provided additional inputs for the report.

II. Overall situation in the least developed countries and an overview of the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action

3. Some 736 million people or 11.5 per cent of the global population now live in the 50 LDCs. It is estimated that their numbers will increase by 206 million and reach 942 million or 13.1 per cent of the global population, by 2015. At the end of the 1990s, 49 to 50 per cent of the population in the LDCs lived on less than \$1 a day. If this trend continues, the number of people living in extreme poverty in the Least Developed Countries could increase from 334 million in 2000 to 471 million in 2015.³

4. There have been a number of major developments of relevance for the least developed countries since the first progress report, considered by the Economic and Social Council in July 2003, notably (i) the African Union's decision in 2003 to institute a peer review mechanism under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), (ii) the Third World Water Forum, held in Japan in March 2003, (iii) the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III) in September/October 2003, marking the first decade of the TICAD process, (iv) meetings of the ministers of trade of the least developed countries in Dhaka in May-June 2003 and in Dakar in May 2004, (v) the Second International Conference on Early Warning, held in Bonn in October 2003, (vi) the World Summit on the Information Society, held in December 2003 in Geneva and (vii) the International Ministerial Conference on transit transport cooperation held in Almaty in August 2003.

5. In 2003, Timor-Leste was included in the list of the least developed countries, increasing their number to 50. The Committee for Development Policy, at its meeting in April 2003, recommended that two of these countries — Cape Verde and Maldives — graduate from their least developed countries status.

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6. 2003 was a better year for the world economy. Trade and output growth, at 2.5 and 4.7 per cent respectively, were higher than in the two previous years. The acceleration in growth was not encouraging for the least developed countries, however. Trade and output growth in the least developed countries was 3.8 per cent, slightly lower than the 4.6 and 3.9 per cent in 2001 and 2002 respectively.⁴ Since 2000, a larger share of official development assistance (ODA) has been going to least developed countries. In 2002, it was \$17.3 billion, up by 35 per cent over the 2000 level and by 26.6 per cent over the 2001 level, and represented 28 per cent of all ODA.⁵

7. Despite many impediments, democratic State systems, the resolution of conflicts, and nation-building efforts have progressed remarkably well. Electoral practices have been reformed in many LDCs.

8. Poverty eradication remained at the top of the development agenda and globally 49 programmes are under implementation with the support of the Bretton Woods institutions. As of April 2004 the World Bank-International Monetary Fund (IMF) poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP), initiated in 1999, is in operation in 31 LDCs. Three PRSPs were completed in 2004, in Bangladesh, Burundi and Nepal.

9. The increased interest of development partners and international and intergovernmental agencies in the development of LDCs is encouraging. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) has been prepared for 37 LDCs and information on implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action has been furnished by 54 development partners, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

10. Resource shortfall is a major impediment to implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action by the least developed countries. Their domestic resource mobilization remains weak. Debt burden is an additional obstacle to LDC development. The efficient use of external assistance is still complicated, although the Rome agenda on harmonization holds out good promises. Dependence on single or limited commodities for export income further prevents LDCs from breaking out of the cycle of adverse terms of trade.

11. The Brussels Programme of Action recognizes that success in attaining its objectives will depend on effective follow-up, implementation, monitoring and review at the national, regional and global levels. At the national level the focal points and the national forums are the key institutions and at the regional and international levels the United Nations development system has the leading role. Forty-five least developed countries, as compared to 10 last year have designated national focal points for country-level coordination of the follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action. Eighteen⁶ LDCs have put in place their national forum for the follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action at the country level.

12. At the regional level, the focus of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) activities for LDCs was on promoting policy dialogue, training and capacity-building, promoting information and communications technology (ICT), good governance and gender equality. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is planning to undertake a regional review of the implementation of the Programme of Action at the seventh session of the Special Body for the Least Developed and Landlocked Developing Countries in April 2005

in Bangkok. It has also included a section on implementation of the Programme of Action in its annual report. Relevant United Nations organizations and agencies and other multilateral organizations are paying special attention to development needs of the LDCs, as discussed below in chapter IV.

III. Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action: Framework for Partnership

Commitment 1

Fostering a people-centred policy framework

13. The Brussels Programme of Action placed human beings at the centre of efforts for sustainable development. Comparison of key development indicators for poverty alleviation provides proof of whether people-centred policy frameworks are in place and are being implemented, and whether progress has been achieved. Three important targets in the Programme of Action, besides halving extreme poverty and hunger by 2015, are: an annual investment rate of 25 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP), output growth of 7 per cent for each LDC and aid commitment of 0.20 per cent of their GDP by developed countries.

14. Among 41 LDCs for which data are available, only seven registered a growth rate of more than 3 per cent in 2003. In 2003, 14 LDCs experienced a further decline in their GDP per capita, and the ratio of investment to GDP in the LDCs was on average only about 22 per cent in 2001.⁷ In 1990s, only nine LDCs achieved a growth rate of more than 5 per cent.⁸ The current decade has seen improvement in output growth in Angola, Benin, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Tanzania. The overall growth performance has marginally deteriorated from 4.6 per cent in 2001 and 3.9 per cent in 2002 to 3.8 per cent in 2003.⁹ In Africa, according to the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), only 18 LDCs improved their performance over the previous year and 16 suffered deterioration. In a number of LDCs, economic vulnerability has been accentuated by conflict situations.

15. Most LDCs articulated their development and poverty reduction strategy. Thirty-one countries have a PRSP and others, such as Bhutan, Maldives or Samoa, have adopted their own development strategy focusing on poverty eradication. In the countries going through or emerging from a conflict situation, such as Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Eritrea, Haiti, Liberia, Madagascar, Myanmar, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan and Timor-Leste, development strategy has not yet been fully articulated. Equatorial Guinea, Chad and Mauritania are planning to use their income from hydrocarbon exports effectively, for poverty reduction and overall development programmes.

16. Development partners intensified their focus on development strategy aimed at poverty eradication. The African Development Bank is pursuing a rural development for poverty reduction strategy in its lending programmes. The Asian Development Bank concluded Poverty Partnership Agreements with six LDCs in 2003: Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu. At the initiative of ECA, in November 2003, the third meeting of the African PRSP Learning Group considered lessons learned. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is active in 30 LDCs and half of its volunteers work in those countries in capacity-building

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operations. The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is supporting programmes in 26 LDCs and it reports that 93.7 per cent of its resources were spent in them in 2003. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP) invested more than half of their resources in the LDCs. These organizations also make sizeable procurements of materials from the LDCs.

17. Among the development partner countries, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States of America reported providing support to poverty eradication strategies of the LDCs. The Government of Norway has a plan of action for the reduction of poverty by 2015 in the developing countries, with special attention to LDCs. The European Commission emphasized a holistic approach to poverty eradication. Japan gave importance to building social safety nets for the very poor. The United States signed into law the Millennium Challenge Account in January 2004 to promote growth in low-income countries with proposed funding of \$1 billion for 2004.

18. The PRSP process has been participatory in LDCs but stronger national commitment to pro-poor policies and programmes is needed.¹⁰ The three-year time horizon of PRSPs also needs to take into account a longer-term perspective for the economy.

19. National inputs indicate that devolution of both regulatory and service delivery functions is contained in the development strategies of Burkina Faso, Bhutan, Burundi, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Lesotho, Maldives, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. But decentralized institutions are still weak in most LDCs and effective local governance remains a real challenge.

20. Based on the reports, gender equality features prominently in the development programmes of Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Lesotho, Maldives, Mali and Mauritania. In Mali, the idea of setting up a "multi-activities platform for women" is promising. Remarkably, post-conflict LDCs are among the top 20 countries with the highest proportion of women in their parliaments. They are, Rwanda (48.8 per cent), Mozambique (30 per cent), Timor-Leste (26.1 per cent), Uganda (24.7 per cent) and Eritrea (22 per cent).

21. LDC Watch reports that Bangladesh, Maldives, Sierra Leone and Zambia demonstrated sensitivity to gender issues in their PRSPs. Among the development partners, the European Commission, Germany and Sweden, as well as most of the United Nations and other international agencies and organizations gave special attention to gender issues. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) "Digital diaspora initiative in Africa" can assist the leapfrogging process in some LDCs.

22. Monitoring the results of gender orientation and interventions is practically non-existent. Each country should break down the Beijing Platform for Action into relevant and feasible activities at the country level, thereby making monitoring effective.

Commitment 2

Good governance at national and international levels

23. Success in achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development depends to a great extent on good governance (transparent, accountable and efficient public

institutions and practices), the dynamism of the private sector and civil society, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights.

24. Nation building in post-conflict countries is not proving to be easy, as is being experienced in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Haiti, but it has progressed creditably in Cambodia, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and even Liberia. Electoral reforms have been instituted in most LDCs with the support of the United Nations system and, for African LDCs, in cooperation with African Union. The Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat undertook electoral assistance programmes in 13 LDCs in 2003.

25. Many LDCs have embarked on the revision or codification of laws covering human rights and for establishing the rule of law. However, there is still a great need to mainstream human rights in development strategies. To address this issue, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights launched draft guidelines on a human rights approach to poverty reduction strategies. Training of human rights workers and judicial personnel enjoys high priority in most LDCs. It is also supported by development partners, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the European Commission, Finland, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States, as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank. Amnesty International, Transparency International and Social Watch activities have contributed significantly to sensitizing LDCs on human rights issues.

26. In a number of countries, attempts are being made to find sustainable peace in post-conflict situations. The Department of Political Affairs reports that task forces to manage conflict are proving useful in the Central African Republic, the Comoros, Guinea-Bissau and Niger. The European Commission, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, UNHCR, UN-Habitat and the African Union reported specifically about their support to LDC efforts for peace-building and conflict resolution.

27. Public administration reforms have been initiated in many LDCs, such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, Benin, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania and Zambia. Accounting systems and expenditure programming are being given priority in Bhutan, Cambodia, Lesotho, Maldives, Senegal and Zambia. A matter of concern, however, is that public administration reforms are usually ad hoc and reform measures are half-hearted. In Chad, a training programme on the management of oil revenues is a good governance initiative.

28. Several LDCs reported on their determination to curb corruption. Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Tanzania have made institutional arrangements for corruption control. The Bretton Woods institutions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United States of America and Germany report on the particular attention they have given in their development assistance programmes to the subject of corruption. Transparency International is performing an important advocacy role in this respect. However, anti-corruption measures do not always focus on the real targets and are bogged down by procedural complexities. Corruption control measures, therefore, need to be developed very carefully. The application of information technology in various public offices and processes greatly reduces corruption.

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29. At the global level, good governance includes increased participation of the LDCs in the decision-making of the multilateral institutions and transparency, uniformity and simplicity in the procedures and reporting used by development partners in resource allocation to the LDCs. The issue of voice and representation of LDCs in multilateral financial forums is due for consideration in the World Bank-IMF annual meeting in 2004.

30. In February 2003, in the OECD/DAC meeting in Rome, bilateral and multilateral donors made a commitment to simplify, harmonize and align their policies and practices with partner developing country development frameworks and systems. The harmonization and alignment exercise now calls for the designing of country-based action plans by the LDCs.

Commitment 3 Building human and institutional capacity

31. People are the greatest asset of the LDCs, as both agents and beneficiaries of development, and their potential must be fully realized. The Brussels Programme of Action underscores capacity development as the major objective of the Decade, along with social integration. It accords high priority to access of poor people to health, education, nutrition, sanitation, as well as to fighting the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria, tuberculosis and other communicable diseases. Among the 18 targets of the Millennium Development Goals, 7 are included under commitment 3.

32. *The Least Developed Countries Report, 2004*, published by UNCTAD, provides statistics on the dismal situation with regard to education, maternal and child health, nutrition, sanitation and fertility rates in the least developed countries. The *Social Watch Report 2003* provides graphic information on poverty that needs to be overcome urgently.

33. Eighteen of the reporting LDCs furnished details of their activities in fulfilment of the commitment on capacity-building. Bhutan is devoting 25 per cent of its budgetary resources to the social sector and is confident that Millennium Development Goal targets on educational achievements will be realized. Equatorial Guinea is devoting 20 per cent of its investment to the social sector. Burkina Faso is emphasizing educational achievements, control of meningitis epidemics and HIV/AIDS, and population planning, especially reproductive health care. Lesotho's priorities are health services, primary education, medical drugs and rural water supply. Sierra Leone gives importance to health and education infrastructure, the quality of education and control of HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS features prominently in the programmes of Burundi, Ethiopia, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Control of other epidemics, such as of tuberculosis or malaria are of interest in some other countries, for example, Benin. Cambodia is concerned about the control of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) epidemic. The capacity-building programmes of Maldives and Zambia encompass infrastructure and quality of education, health care and rural water supply. Zambia is also working on the provision of a social safety net. LDC Watch reports that under commitment 3 Angola, Bangladesh and Malawi are developing facilities for primary education and increasing female enrolment. Samoa and Togo are increasing investment in health and education.

34. There has been encouraging progress towards the goal of primary education. The LDCs have reached a net enrolment rate of 61.8 per cent and a primary

completion rate of 45.8 per cent, with a gender parity index of 0.89. The World Bank's Fast Track Initiative for primary education, launched in June 2002, has covered 10 LDCs — Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. In the second phase, another 12 have become eligible¹¹ for Fast Track Initiative financing. Unfortunately, the programme is facing financial constraints at the country level and its sustainability after the conclusion of World Bank support raises doubts.

35. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), UNAIDS, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), IMF, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, UNV, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNCDF all reported their involvement in capacity-building. UNAIDS developed national frameworks in all its client countries and constituted local AIDS authorities. It emphasizes monitoring and evaluation capacity at the country level. UNV deployed 29,000 volunteers to 30 LDCs to undertake education, health care and water supply programmes. UNCDF undertook 75 social investment projects for local capacity-building in 26 LDCs.

36. Canada is doubling its aid for social sector development in the LDCs between 2000 and 2005. The European Commission focused on capacity-building in the education, culture and HIV/AIDS sectors. Portugal's support to the social sector is mainly in the Portuguese speaking LDCs, such as Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe and Timor-Leste, but Portugal also supported education programmes in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Germany gave special attention to fostering public-private partnership in capacity-building in 11 least developed countries in Asia and Africa. Norway is supporting Bangladesh, Nepal, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia in the education and health sectors. The Slovak Republic contributed to training manpower and supporting NGOs of the LDCs. Italy provided more than US\$ 200 million to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in 2002-2003, to fight those diseases in the LDCs. Japan continued with the Kananaskis Basic Education for Growth Initiative (BEGIN), launched in 2002 in support of universal primary education; the Okinawa Infectious Diseases Initiative, launched in 2000 in support of measures against HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and polio; and the Initiative for Japan's ODA on Water, announced in March 2003. These initiatives resulted in human resource development and a substantial flow of aid. United Kingdom assistance to health, education and HIV/AIDS control was particularly robust in Africa. United States assistance was provided in the health sector in the areas of child and maternal health, infectious disease control and the HIV/AIDS global initiative. Half of Sweden's ODA is devoted to capacity-building; 44 per cent of Denmark's ODA is directed to the social sector.

37. The results of the actions by LDCs and the support of the development partners for capacity-building and social capital formation are difficult to assess, particularly from year to year. This is mainly because indicators are not always clear and a statistical compilation system is not in place in most LDCs. It is important, therefore, to develop monitoring capability and statistical systems in the LDCs. Indicators can be revised and updated annually and capacity-building achievements can then be assessed effectively. For this purpose, the following steps are needed:

- The statistical systems in all least developed countries should be strengthened, but it is important that the systems should not be burdened beyond their limits.

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- The development partners need to rise to the challenge and support manpower training and provide assistance for social sector programmes.
- Access to social services, especially by the poor and women, is the most difficult part of the undertaking.
- Another challenge is that of maintaining the quality of the services, for which trained and motivated manpower is crucial.

Commitment 4

Building productive capacities to make globalization work for the LDCs

38. To benefit from an expanding global market, infrastructure development and adaptation of technology are basic first steps. Growth and sustainable development are most often impeded by structural and supply-side constraints. While direct investment in productive capacities is important for the LDCs, it is also necessary to focus on development of human resources for this purpose.

39. Reports received from LDCs and their development partners detail various actions under this commitment. United Nations organizations and agencies and the multilateral banks have programmes focusing on development of the productive capacities of the LDCs in five specific areas: agricultural and rural development and the objective of food security; small and medium-sized enterprise development; development of the ICT sector through human resource and related infrastructure development; development of physical infrastructure; and energy sector development.

40. Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Lesotho, Maldives and Sierra Leone furnished reports on elaborate programmes under commitment 4. Thus, Burkina Faso has a comprehensive programme covering the development of roads, telecommunications, the rural economy, the agro- and food industry, information technology and tourism. Promotion of the private sector and public-private partnership also feature in its programme. Bhutan has a comprehensive programme for road development, airport upgrading, the development and trade of energy resources, rural development, land use planning and tourism development. Benin's programme focuses on SME development and gives special attention to quality control and freedom from bureaucratic control. Benin also intends to become a hub for ICT and the opening of an exchange with TICAD support is a helpful move. Infrastructure development is also at the core of the Maldives development effort. Sierra Leone is focusing on road network, SME development, the ICT sector and both agriculture and manufacturing. Lesotho is setting up industrial estates, undertaking public-private dialogue, emphasizing agricultural development with subsidy and seed policy and inviting foreign direct investment, mainly to take advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act of the United States.

41. Within the context of the Growing Sustainable Business (GSB) for poverty reduction initiative, the United Nations Global Compact and UNDP provided assistance to the LDCs in order to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development by promoting and facilitating sustainable business and investments. A growing number of LDCs have been benefiting from the GSB initiative. In Tanzania, a series of multi-stakeholder workshops was convened and the local GSB was established; sustainable business projects are under development in the areas of solar energy, water and eco-tourism. In Madagascar, a multi-stakeholders working

forum was convened and sustainable business project concepts were developed. In Bangladesh, the United Nations Global Compact fielded a mission to identify potential partners and projects. In Angola, a country approach has been prepared for discussion at a multi-stakeholder forum.

42. Specific targets for infrastructure development have been listed and each LDC needs to set up its own national targets. For transport development in the landlocked and transit developing countries, regional cooperation is also crucial. In addition, it is very necessary to seek standardization of transport regulations. Nowadays, a large part of infrastructure investment comes from the private sector. In fact, the private sector has become so dynamic and innovative that, even for the provision of public goods, it can carry a fairly heavy burden. While private investment must be promoted, however, what needs to be assured is the overarching role of the public sector in ensuring equity and making necessary affirmative action interventions.

43. Rural development holds the key to growth stimulus and employment generation in the LDCs. Seventy per cent of the poor and food-insecure are rural dwellers. Agricultural growth is essential for food security as well as for development of the agro- and food industry. The FAO Special Programme for Food Security is operational in 46 LDCs. The FAO programmes of South-South cooperation and for the development of agro-processing are also very important. Twenty-eight per cent of FAO delivery in 2003 was in the LDCs. The African Development Bank is a strong supporter of rural development for poverty alleviation. The European Commission, Germany, Finland and Japan have been involved in food security and agriculture programmes. As reported by them, rural development, agricultural growth and diversification, and food security are at the core of productive programmes in Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lesotho, Maldives, Togo and Uganda. Rural development, however, must go beyond agricultural growth and focus on the expansion of non-farm activities, so that part of rural income is generated from the non-farm sector.

44. Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mali, Nepal, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania have important programmes for ICT development. A number of LDCs participated in the World Summit on the Information Society, in Geneva in December 2003. UNV assisted ICT development in 20 LDCs and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) concentrated its assistance on ICT development in 14 LDCs in 2003.¹² ESCAP is involved in the promotion of ICT in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal. Denmark has ICT and lifesaving drugs supply as priority items in its bilateral aid programme. The International Chamber of Commerce is also assisting development of the ICT sector.

45. Bangladesh, Benin, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Nepal, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and the United Republic of Tanzania are trying to set up SMEs. SME development needs skills and credit facility, along with linkage with the larger market or vertical production lines. Moreover, as Benin has recognized, quality control and freedom from bureaucratic control are two crucial elements of SME development. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is rightly focusing attention on the transition of 30 single-commodity-dependent LDCs to manufacturing activities. Such a transition can be made possible through SME development and technology diffusion.

46. Energy development is fundamental to production uptake in the energy-starved economies of the LDCs. But it is true at the same time that LDCs endowed with

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hydrocarbon resources have not done very well in the past. From this point of view, plans made by Chad, Equatorial Guinea and Mauritania are highly welcome. Chad's new law on the distribution of income from oil exports is a healthy move. Equatorial Guinea's trust fund for emergencies must firm up its public investment programme expeditiously. Mauritania will be exporting hydrocarbons soon and is now engaged in discussing investment in hydropower generation with Senegal and Mali. Nepal and Bhutan also export energy, as they have the advantage of generating surplus hydroelectricity.

Commitment 5

Enhancing the role of trade in development

47. LDCs account for barely 0.4 per cent of world trade, but they are particularly dependent on trade expansion for boosting their overall output growth. Trade expansion is impeded by single-commodity dependence in 30 LDCs and is hindered by difficulties in production expansion and timely supply. The small island LDCs experience these difficulties more acutely. Limited market access and absence of quality control are other obstacles to trade growth. The landlocked LDCs have added problems with transit transport and transaction costs. Except for some tourism, there is virtually no export of services from LDCs. LDCs are also subject to external economic shocks, which they cannot easily withstand or overcome.

48. The LDCs focused attention on utilizing concessions relating to market access and simultaneously acquiring negotiating skills for succeeding rounds of multilateral trade negotiations. In their endeavour, they were supported by UNDP, UNCTAD, WTO, the International Trade Centre (ITC), IMF and the World Bank. The regional economic commissions, particularly ECA and ESCAP, have been playing a facilitatory role in regional integration initiatives. The Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Africa and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Asia are all engaged in promoting regional integration and free trade zones. South-South cooperation has also become attractive, particularly because of the difference in the stages of development of the LDCs vis-à-vis other developing countries. Following the articulation of the Doha Development Agenda in November 2001, the process of integrating trade issues into national development programmes and implementation of concessions granted to LDCs began. It was agreed unanimously that trade measures should be linked with the Millennium Development Goal of poverty eradication. In the progress reports submitted by the LDCs, 15 countries¹³ gave an account of the trade measures they have adopted or the capacity-building they have undertaken to ease the process of integration into the global market.

49. As for trade-related capacity-building, the LDCs have been beneficiaries of the Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance, which was initiated soon after the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Launched initially as a pilot project in Cambodia, Madagascar and Mauritania, it was later extended to an additional 11 LDCs. In 2003, the second phase of the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme was launched in six LDCs: Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Senegal and Zambia. Over half of the activities under the 2003 Technical Assistance Plan of WTO target the LDCs. Other development partners, such as Canada, Denmark, the European Union, Japan, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden and the United Kingdom are also providing technical

assistance to the LDCs. Capacity-building both for promoting trade and for negotiating in WTO is the sole objective of these technical assistance programmes. The meeting of LDC ministers of trade held in Dhaka in May-June 2003 on the eve of the Cancun negotiations was helpful for coordinated action by the LDCs. The meeting of these ministers in Dakar in May 2004 further strengthened the coordinated action plan of the LDCs on post-Cancun trade negotiations.

50. Effective use of preferential arrangements and general concessions is not an easy task. The EU Everything but Arms initiative, made effective in 2002 is for all LDCs, whereas Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) State concessions were available to only 40 of the LDCs. In the United States, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), passed in 2000 and amended in 2002, gives duty- and quota-free entry to exports of 37 countries, 24 of them LDCs. The United States Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) has a special category of "Least developed beneficiary developing countries" that enjoy duty-free treatment for some 2,000 additional products that other GSP beneficiaries do not receive. Japan extended duty-free quota-free access to cover virtually 93 per cent of LDC products in 2003. Canada has extended such access to 48 LDCs. The Republic of Korea has also granted duty-free quota-free market access for 87 items exported by LDCs, including coffee, cotton and lumber. According to the Director-General of WTO, 28 members of WTO have autonomously improved market access opportunities for LDCs. The United States reports that in 2003 it imported \$1.2 billion of agricultural, fish and forestry products and another \$1.2 billion of apparel from AGOA-eligible countries, a 50 per cent increase over 2002. It is also documented that AGOA concessions resulted in FDI growth in some of the sub-Saharan countries, such as Mali, Sierra Leone, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. But LDCs themselves have considerable difficulties in fully utilizing the concessions. Complex and complicated trade legislation causes difficulties for LDC exporters in utilizing market access. Export business practices, the timely shipment of goods, rapid response to demand, the maintenance of quality and the fulfilment of trade procedures and formalities require painstaking efforts on the part of the exporters. In addition, they have to overcome or bypass bureaucratic restrictions and controls imposed by their own Government and institutions.

51. Agricultural products face various difficulties, although LDCs trade a great deal in agriculture. Subsidization of developed country products, dependence on limited items by the exporting LDCs and the decline in the terms of trade for primary commodities present obstacles. Diversification of exports into manufactures of various products is the usual answer suggested. UNCTAD and UNIDO have had programmes for the promotion of diversification in place for years. The UNCTAD programme covers 43 LDCs. What is warranted is a specific but comprehensive industrialization policy on the part of the LDCs.

Commitment 6

Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment

52. Environmental and natural disasters or adversities regularly confront the LDCs. In addition, poverty forces LDCs to denude forest resources, overutilize water resources and put marginal lands under the plough. Archaic agricultural practices reduce the fertility of land and cause the erosion of top soil. The lack of sanitary facilities results in water and air pollution.

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53. Small island LDCs face a debilitating situation in view of their particular vulnerability to natural and environmental disasters, as well as to climate change and sea level rise.

54. Most of the LDCs have well-articulated environment management plans, developed in the 1990s. Environment plans are followed in Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Maldives, Togo, Uganda and Zambia. Biodiversity is of special concern to Bhutan, Maldives and Uganda. Environmental impact studies are compulsory in Burundi, Bhutan, Lesotho and Samoa. Rwanda considers environmental management in a regional context. A disaster management strategy has been articulated in Lesotho and Sierra Leone. LDC Watch has identified only a few initiatives as noteworthy in 2003, such as the water master plan in Bangladesh, the water bureau set-up in Chad, the economic justice network in Malawi, the construction code and housing policy in Maldives and the environment impact study requirement in Samoa.

55. In 2003, UN-Habitat attended to the issues of cities without slums, water for the African continent, secure land tenure in post-conflict areas and housing in Afghanistan. UNEP has been active in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. In Africa, 25 LDCS¹⁴ were supported by UNEP and poverty eradication featured prominently in these interventions. In Asia, UNEP remained involved in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal and Timor-Leste. It also assisted programmes in all the Pacific LDCs — Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. UNDP has probably the greatest involvement in environment and disaster projects, assisting countries in both policy-making and capacity-building. FAO, ESCAP, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, UNV and WFP also get involved in environment protection projects in LDCs.

56. Norway is essentially involved in capacity-building in the LDCs in this area. The European Commission is interested in water, energy and forest-related programmes. Finland also has interventions in forestry programmes in LDCs. Finland has a long-term partnership with five LDCs, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nepal, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. An evaluation of the results of this partnership will be very instructive.

57. An early warning system, made substantially accurate by developments in space technology, is of great help to LDCs. Relief and rehabilitation mechanisms has been credibly set up in a few LDCs. National preparedness and exit strategies for natural disasters should be a matter for the serious consideration of the LDCs concerned.

Commitment 7. Mobilizing financial resources

58. Resource constraints are a major deficiency in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. Hence, resource mobilization is as important for optimal productivity as the expenditure plan. In recognition of this, the theme for the high-level segment of the 2004 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council focuses on this aspect of the implementation of the Brussels Programme. The report of the Secretary-General on that theme (E/2004/54) addresses this matter at length.

59. Public revenue raising must improve and the financial sector should be so tuned as to promote savings and investment. Thus a private-public balance in

resource raising must be struck. A number of LDCs have adopted medium-term fiscal and/or expenditure plans. They have also introduced or strengthened expenditure oversight through efficient accounting and auditing systems. These are welcome steps in resource management and its efficient use. The main objective should be to improve the investment ratio in a sustained manner. The most productive recommendation can be minimizing waste and reducing transaction costs. This may require devolution or at least decentralization of authority for expenditure.

60. A worthwhile method of resource mobilization is attracting direct foreign investment. Most LDCs have updated their investment laws and given adequate incentives for FDI. UNCTAD has helped in designing investment-friendly regulatory regimes. At present, however, significant FDI flows are limited to only a few LDCs and are restricted to natural resource exploitation and the telecommunication sector. Hydrocarbon exploitation has attracted FDI in Angola, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritania and the Sudan, while gold mining has attracted FDI in Guinea and the United Republic of Tanzania. Telecommunication investment has gone to Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Mozambique and the United Republic of Tanzania. Lesotho has attracted FDI in the apparel industry. Ease of transactions, transport and travel; access to a large market, possibly as a result of market integration; and assured availability of utility services are very important for attracting FDI.

61. Remittance has emerged as a new source of financing development of the LDCs. The World Bank estimates that 175 million people reside outside their country of birth and developing countries received about \$90 billion in remittances from abroad in 2003.¹⁵ Many LDCs receive sizeable remittances; in some the amount is larger than ODA. There are, however, problems associated with remittances. First, a substantial part of them are transferred through informal channels. This transfer fuels the informal market in the receiving country and is not always productively used. The second problem is that this resource input is not put to proper use because of the undeveloped capital market of the LDCs.

62. ODA is an important source of financing the development programmes of LDCs. In the Brussels Programme of Action and, subsequently, in the Monterrey Consensus, development partners reiterated their commitment to provide 0.20 per cent, and in any case not be less than 0.15 per cent, of their gross national product (GNP) as aid to the LDCs. Almost 85 per cent of the overall increase in ODA to LDCs in 2002 came from DAC countries. In 2002 only Norway, Denmark, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Sweden and Ireland provided more than 0.2 per cent and Belgium, Finland, France and Portugal provided 0.1 per cent or more. Others have to make added efforts to move towards the 0.20 per cent target. In absolute terms, the United States, Japan, France, Germany and the Netherlands are the largest donors to LDCs. The five largest beneficiaries in 2002 were Mozambique, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, the United Republic of Tanzania and Bangladesh. The increase in total ODA flow to the LDCs by 26.6 per cent in 2002 is a good sign. The Czech Republic, Italy, Poland and the Slovak Republic gave most of their assistance in terms of debt relief to African LDCs. Replenishment of the soft funds of the World Bank (the fourteenth) and the Asian Development Bank (the ninth) is under way now. The ninth replenishment of the African Development Fund was completed in January 2003. These are valuable sources of assistance to the LDCs and the importance of their timely conclusion is emphasized.

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63. The Brussels Programme of Action envisaged untying aid for the LDCs and increasing the value of aid by other means. Procurement from LDCs with aid money adds to the value of aid. The action programme on the harmonization of donor procedures on the basis of the Rome Agenda is a promising step. The DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness and Donor Practices is due to complete its work by the end of 2004. An early positive decision is needed on the initiative concerning the participation of developing countries in decision-making on international aid policy in the World Bank and IMF forums.

64. The question of debt relief for LDCs under the HIPC Initiative needs special attention, particularly as it covers 30 LDCs. Only 10 of these countries have reached the completion point and 11 have reached the decision point, thus becoming eligible for full or interim debt relief, respectively. The HIPC process has turned out to be slow and cumbersome, although the Bretton Woods institutions have shown some flexibility in the course of its implementation by lowering the original thresholds, providing interim relief immediately after the decision point and “topping-up” debt relief after the completion point. They are also considering extending HIPC initiative beyond 2004. Nonetheless, debt cancellation or forgiveness remains the solution most preferred by the LDCs.

IV. Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

65. During the report period, the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States has been actively and systematically pursuing the fulfilment of its mandate, as provided by General Assembly resolution 56/227.

66. In the context of ensuring the full mobilization and coordination of all parts of the United Nations system, the Office continued to encourage mainstreaming of the Brussels Programme of Action in their respective work programmes and activities. The governing bodies of 19 organizations adopted decisions to that effect. The governing bodies of FAO and UNCTAD have also undertaken regular sectoral reviews of the implementation of the Programme of Action. Given that the national implementation of the Programme of Action is of primary importance, the Office of the High Representative made concerted efforts to increase the number of national focal points and national forums in LDCs. As a result, their numbers increased from 9 to 45 and from 9 to 18, respectively, during the past 12 months.

67. A major endeavour for the Office has been the holding of the Workshop for National Focal Points on the Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries from 17 to 21 May 2004 in New York. It was attended by focal points of LDCs and donors, United Nations missions and United Nations system focal points.

68. The Office engaged actively in providing coordinated support to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. In addition to preparing the annual progress report on the implementation of the Brussels Programme, the Office has been involved actively in all aspects of the preparations for the high-level segment of the 2004 substantive session of the Council on “Resources mobilization and

enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010”.

69. Increased awareness of the Brussels Programme resulted in a substantial increase in the active participation and involvement of more LDCs delegations during the 2003 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in Geneva. Funds for the participation of LDC delegations in the first global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action at that session were generously provided by the Government of Italy.

70. In accordance with its mandate for the group of landlocked developing countries contained in General Assembly resolution 56/227, the Office undertook substantive and organizational preparations for the International Ministerial Conference on transit transport cooperation held in Almaty, Kazakhstan in August 2003 and the preparatory meetings in New York and in Almaty. The Conference galvanized international support for this group of countries. The adoption of the Almaty Declaration and the Almaty Programme of Action, whereby the landlocked developing countries as well as transit developing countries agreed, with the support of their development partners, to undertake specific actions in selected priority areas, was a major step forward for these vulnerable countries. As a follow-up, the Office convened an inter-agency strategy meeting on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in February 2004 in New York. The inter-agency meeting endorsed a road map for the implementation of that Programme of Action.

71. In performance of its mandate and in concert with other United Nations entities, the Office has been engaged in coordinating the preparatory process for the International Meeting for the 10-Year Review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, scheduled to be held in Mauritius in January 2005. The High Representative was designated the Secretary-General of both the Almaty and the Mauritius conferences.

72. Throughout the year, the Office has provided support to group consultations of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. A monthly briefing and interactive meeting with LDCs at the ambassadorial and expert level has been organized by the High Representative.

73. A number of meetings, round tables and special events have been organized by the Office in partnership with civil society, the private sector and NGOs with the aim of raising awareness, advocacy and mobilization of support for the LDCs. These included, but were not limited to, four open forums that served as the primary interface of the Office with all stakeholders, as well as a dialogue with civil society and a round table with the United Nations system on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, during the 2003 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council. A series of four symposiums on population issues were organized by the Office during the General Assembly in collaboration with the Partners for Population and Development, an intergovernmental organization having observer status in the General Assembly and focusing on South-South cooperation. The Office has developed close relations with the International Chamber of Commerce and other private-sector institutions.

74. The Office has used various international forums, such as the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto, Japan in March 2003, the Extraordinary Ministerial

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Conference of the Least Developed Countries in Rabat, Morocco in June 2003, the High-Level Conference on South-South Cooperation in Marrakech, Morocco in December 2003, the sixtieth session of ESCAP in Shanghai, China in April 2004 and the third meeting of LDC ministers of trade in Dakar, Senegal in May 2004, for advocacy and mobilization of international support for the LDCs. The Office is also planning to use UNCTAD XI, scheduled to take place from 13 to 18 June 2004 in Sao Paulo, Brazil, to draw the attention of the international community to the importance of trade and market access for the development of the LDCs and their beneficial integration into the world economy.

V. Conclusions

75. Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action depends to a large extent on the partnership between LDCs and their development partners. However, primary responsibility continues to lie with the LDCs. The development partners can only play a supporting role. First, in their planning and action the LDCs have to demonstrate their firm commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action. Ideally, they should put forward a long-term vision of where they want to see their country 15 or 20 years from now. Poverty eradication must be put into a holistic context.

76. The designation of all but five LDC national focal points is a very positive development. To play an effective role, the National Focal Points need the regular and continuing support of their Governments and development partners. Each LDC Government needs to pay immediate special attention to establishing a national forum, as called for in the Brussels Programme of Action, and to drawing up a charter of its functions. So far, only 18 national forums have been set up. The forums should be holding broad-based inclusive and participatory national dialogue on policy and strategy, providing guidance on necessary adjustment and on partnership development, undertaking advocacy as necessary, monitoring progress in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action and evaluating the performance of the country and its development partners.

77. It is important that a proper tool for the monitoring and evaluation of the Brussels Programme of Action be designed. The Programme of Action incorporates 30 goals and targets, including the Millennium Development Goals. There are also goals and targets that have not been stated in the Programme, such as in the areas of agriculture and food security.

78. While the task of the LDCs is onerous, the development partners also have to intensify their efforts. Innovative resource mobilization efforts discussed under commitment 7 should receive due consideration. For increasing the value of aid, in addition to untying and harmonization, triangulation of aid effort might also be considered. Development partners should, for example, finance South-South cooperation in order to provide least cost and appropriate replicable models. Triangulation also can lead to private-public initiatives.

79. For effective implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, there should perhaps be more focused consideration of some of its elements. Rural development and agriculture should be brought more to the centre of the development efforts of LDCs. In addition, the development of ICT and of health

services, and the production of consumer durables should be actively pursued by LDCs.

VI. Recommendations

80. All LDCs that have not yet done so should articulate their strategy and programme for poverty reduction and sustainable growth, integrating the programmes of all sectors. They should expeditiously set up national forums to guide and monitor the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action at the national level.

81. Along with balanced fiscal and monetary measures and social development orientation, LDCs should give special attention to infrastructure development and policies for the development of manufacturing.

82. Considering their limited opportunities and their difficulties, LDCs need to focus on selected sectors for expansion of their productive capacity and beneficial integration into the global economy. In this respect, sectors requiring special attention could be SME development, agriculture and rural development, ICT development and service industry development.

83. Developed countries should expedite the process of opening up markets for LDC products and take steps to protect these products from the adverse impact of rapid and broad trade liberalization.

84. All development partners, particularly the donor countries, should endeavour to focus on the category of LDC countries in their ODA policy and development support. They should report on development cooperation separately for this group of countries.

85. The completion of the Rome agenda on harmonization should be expedited. In deciding on voice and representation in decision-making processes in the financial institutions, the interests of the LDCs should also be taken into account.

86. Civil society, including NGOs, and the private sector should mobilize their constituencies to enhance the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action both at the national and at the global level.

Notes

¹ A/CONF.191/11.

² For Cambodia and Sierra Leone, inputs were provided by both the Government and the Regional Coordinator.

³ United Nations, *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2004*.

⁴ Ibid., table I.1.

⁵ OECD/DAC 2003.

⁶ Benin, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mali, Nepal, Samoa, the Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia.

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⁷ United Nations, *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2004*.

⁸ *The Least Developed Countries Report, 2002*, published by UNCTAD, indicated that in 1999 seven LDCs — Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Mozambique, and Sao Tome and Principe — invested 25 per cent or more. Nine countries — Bhutan, Cape Verde, Eritrea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mozambique, the Sudan, Tuvalu and Uganda — had growth rates of 5 per cent or more during the decade. According to the World Bank's World Development Indicators 2003, Cambodia, Liberia and Myanmar also grew at more than 5 per cent and in 2001 Angola and Chad also had gross domestic investment of more than 25 per cent of GDP.

⁹ United Nations, *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2004*.

¹⁰ UNDP, *Evaluation of UNDP's Role in the PRSP Process, 2003*.

¹¹ These countries are: Benin, Cambodia, Chad, Djibouti, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, and Senegal.

¹² The ITU supported countries are Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Haiti, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Mali, Kiribati, Somalia, Uganda and Zambia.

¹³ Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lesotho, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

¹⁴ Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Mali, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

¹⁵ James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, note for the sixty-ninth meeting of the Development Committee, Washington, D.C., 25 April 2004.

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**Review and coordination of the
implementation of the Programme of
Action for the Least Developed Countries
for the Decade 2001-2010**

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/276 of 20 December 2002 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/33 of 13 August 2002.

The report chronicles the policies adopted by least developed countries as well as progress made and challenges remaining in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action. The report records and examines the decisions and programmes undertaken by the international development partners, including the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions, other multilateral organizations, the donor community, civil society and the private sector, in mainstreaming the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries.

The conclusions drawn and the recommendations put forward are geared to ensure that monitoring mechanisms and follow-up procedures are put in place that will result in coherent and coordinated implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. Such actions are expected to assist least developed countries in overcoming the challenges that impede implementation of strategies for poverty reduction and sustainable development.

* A/58/50/Res.1 and Corr.1.

** E/2003/100.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 57/276 of 20 December 2002, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it through the Economic and Social Council a comprehensive annual progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010¹ adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels in May 2001. The resolution also called for an adequate allocation of resources for the functioning of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, which has responsibility for 49 least developed countries (LDCs), of which 16 are landlocked developing countries and 11 are small island developing States. In separate resolutions (57/242 and 57/262), the General Assembly requested that separate reports under agenda items relating to the landlocked and small island developing States be submitted at its fifty-eighth session in 2003. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/227 of 24 December 2001, and in keeping with the mandate set out in the report of the Secretary-General on a follow-up mechanism for coordinating, monitoring and reviewing the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action,² the Office of the High Representative commenced its mission to mobilize international support for the Programme of Action, ensuring effective coordination, monitoring, advocacy and review of its implementation.

2. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 2002/33 of 26 July 2002 reaffirmed that global-level follow-up to the Brussels Programme of Action should be primarily concerned with assessing the economic and social performance of the LDCs, and monitoring the implementation of their commitments made in Brussels, as well as the performance of their development partners. In the same resolution the Council requested the High Representative to submit a comprehensive progress report on implementation of the Programme of Action to it at its substantive session of 2003, in an appropriate format, such as a matrix of achievement.

3. The present report is submitted in compliance with the requests contained in General Assembly resolution 57/276 and Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/33.

4. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 55/2 of 18 September 2000, and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, endorsed by the General Assembly on 20 December 2002 and on 9 July 2002 respectively, called on the international community to give special attention to the least developed countries.

5. The Brussels Programme of Action acknowledges that the objectives of the previous two decade-long programmes of action for LDCs remained basically unattained. LDCs, not having been able to take advantage of globalization, enduring capacity constraints, remain marginalized and exposed to an array of vulnerabilities that undermine their own reform efforts. The Brussels Conference differed from its Paris predecessors in a number of important respects. LDC Governments, individually and collectively, were more active prior to and during the Conference. A participatory preparatory process that involved civil society organizations and the private sector at national levels resulted in a wider consensus in Brussels. Also, the

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Brussels Programme of Action was built on goals and targets adopted by United Nations conferences held prior to the Brussels Conference in the 1990s. The need for the establishment of an effective and highly visible follow-up mechanism to oversee coordination, implementation, review, monitoring and advocacy of the Programme of Action was strongly felt by all, particularly the least developed countries, resulting in the subsequent decision of the General Assembly to set up the Office of the High Representative, upon the recommendation of the Secretary-General.

6. The first report chronicles the various activities undertaken by the least developed countries and their international development partners in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action, in terms of mainstreaming the goals and targets within the various programmes and progress in providing support for the seven commitments set out in the Programme of Action. The report reaffirms the importance of assessing the economic and social performance of LDCs, but in the light of the 18-month time frame of this first substantive report and the dearth of LDC-specific information from many international development partners, the present report is based mainly on illustrations. Two matrices are being provided separately as conference room papers, one for LDC activities and the other for the United Nations system and the donor community. The report is based on inputs from LDCs and their development partners,³ including their existent reports.

II. Implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action

7. The Brussels Programme of Action set out seven specific commitments geared to promoting sustained economic growth and integrating LDCs into the world economy. Poverty eradication, gender equality, employment, governance, capacity-building, sustainable development and special problems of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States are singled out as cross-cutting priority issues. The major challenge for the LDCs and their international development partners is for each entity to honour its commitments made in Brussels, coordinating institutional initiatives and resource flows with the Programme of Action.

8. Throughout the Brussels Programme of Action, there are prominent references to the gender dimension and its importance is fully acknowledged as being cross-cutting. In almost every commitment the role and contribution of women to development are emphasized. All parties must therefore take account of the Beijing Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women and of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

9. Over the past four decades, South-South cooperation has focused on issues of trade, participation in the global economy, technology transfer and capacity-building. The Brussels Conference aimed to utilize South-South cooperation by expanding technical assistance, including triangular approaches, building human and productive capacity and exchanging information on best practices in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action.

10. The majority of LDC Governments have adopted policies and pursued strategies to achieve the goals set out in the Brussels Programme of Action. The Governments of Benin, Bhutan and the Sudan, for example, have incorporated non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the national forums established after the Brussels Conference to ensure their continued association with the implementation

and monitoring of the Programme of Action. LDC Watch, which grew out of the Conference, undertook responsibility to monitor implementation of the Programme of Action and to strengthen the capacity of five LDC NGOs⁴ in order to deepen their participation. However, LDCs face three major challenges, in terms of national ownership of the programmes of assistance, development of national capacity to implement those programmes and the cost of implementing them. As international development partners become more active in upstream policy formulation, there is a lingering perception that LDC loss of policy autonomy, combined with capacity constraints, will make achieving the agreed goals of the Programme of Action a more complex task.

11. Although the European Commission (EC) does not explicitly distinguish LDCs as a category in its development assistance, its cooperation activities focus primarily on the same priorities as those set out in the Brussels Programme of Action.⁵ Successful implementation of the Programme of Action will ultimately depend on the spirit of “shared responsibility” that prevailed in the global partnership in the implementation of the Brussels Declaration outcome. Donor decisions to increase official development assistance (ODA), improve investment opportunities for LDCs, harmonize and untie development assistance and strengthen national coordination arrangements will undoubtedly advance the implementation of the Programme of Action.

12. The governing bodies of a number of United Nations organizations⁶ have taken a specific decision to mainstream the Brussels Programme of Action. Other multilateral organizations have taken similar positive steps.⁷

Commitment I

Fostering a people-centred policy framework

13. The commitment of LDCs to pursue policies fostering a people-centred approach to development was intended to ensure that the necessary environment was created in their countries to eradicate poverty. The halving of the proportion of people living in poverty and suffering from hunger by 2015, the promotion of sustainable development, the attainment of a growth rate of at least 7 per cent annually and an investment to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio of 25 per cent were all intended to create an environment in which the poor were to be given priority and LDCs embraced better distribution policies. In the absence of statistics for 2000 for all LDCs, data for the period 1990-1999 suggest that five LDCs⁸ have achieved the growth rate target of 7 per cent and nine⁹ are likely to reach the investment to GDP ratio of 25 per cent.

14. Notwithstanding positive indications of progress from some LDCs, the overall situation remains challenging to many. In Zambia, a committee under the authority of the Ministry of Finance and Planning spearheaded consultations amongst all stakeholders in the design, implementation and monitoring of its development programme and several subcommittees have been charged with specific tasks relating to the Brussels Programme of Action. The Governments of Benin, Bhutan and the Sudan have established national forums to follow up and monitor all governmental activities in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action. In Bhutan, the Five-Year Development Plan: 2002-2007 follows closely the key areas set out for governmental action under the Programme of Action. In Samoa, a new development strategy “Opportunities for All” (2002-2004),

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emphasizes the need for targeting community groups so as to define more clearly their participation in the development process. The Government of Laos has prepared a national poverty eradication programme that takes account of major fiscal and financial sector reforms to boost economic growth and facilitate development. An interim poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP) has been elaborated in Guinea-Bissau with a participatory process that includes civil society, the regions, employers and NGOs.

15. The Brussels Programme of Action reaffirmed the significance of poverty reduction strategies for growth and sustainable development. Donors emphasize that ownership and governance are necessary conditions for effective partnership in implementing poverty reduction and sustainable development strategies. This position is reinforced by the advocacy of the Government of Sweden for empowerment and rights-based development, particularly for women, the advocacy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Department for International Development (DFID) for involving the poor in the development process, the organization by the Government of Italy of a public awareness workshop, the underwriting by the Government of France of microcredit schemes and the support provided by the Government of Portugal to women and local NGOs. These actions coincided with a call by the Government of Germany for flexibility in the policy dialogue following an international conference (May 2002) on the PRSP process.¹⁰ With 22 African LDCs having produced or being close to finalizing nationally owned PRSPs, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) points to capacity constraints in project identification, formulation, implementation and financing.¹¹

16. With the heightened policy dialogue involving LDCs and their development partners around PRSPs, the resources that the process attracts and the introduction of innovative dimensions by a number of United Nations entities, the image of the PRSP continues to improve as a vital tool for macroeconomic policy and structural reform. The ECA policy dialogue involving ministers of finance, development practitioners and civil society, manifest in the Big Table¹² and PRSP Learning Group¹³ initiatives, encourage African ownership, including African LDCs, of poverty-reduction strategies by focusing inter alia on public expenditure management, participatory processes, capacity requirements and donor policies and modalities. The World Health Organization (WHO) Commission on Macroeconomics and Health along with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) subgroup on poverty and health work to integrate comprehensive health sector programmes in PRSPs. Guidelines of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) that seek to incorporate human rights in poverty reduction strategies, the initiation by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in four LDCs¹⁴ of a Decent Work Pilot Programme, focusing on a coherent set of policies that address the effects of globalization, poverty eradication and employment, the methodological work of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) combining national accounts and household survey statistics and providing internationally comparable data on poverty, and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) support for fiscal decentralization, empowerment, capacity-building and the Africa 2000 network in eight LDCs,¹⁵ as well as participatory approaches that link PRSPs and the Millennium Development Goals, all contribute to cementing the PRSP as a national policy instrument.

Resources mobilized, for example through the IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility and the World Bank Social Funds that finance small community-managed projects that empower the poor and the vulnerable are aimed at overcoming financial constraints.

Commitment II

Good governance at the national and international levels

17. Many LDCs fully accept the universality of good governance. In embracing democratic reforms, African LDCs have increased popular participation: 30 countries have carried out multiparty legislative and/or presidential elections in which women played an important role. In Mali and Cape Verde, international agencies supported political reforms that were necessary for the creation of a more democratic society in those countries. Democratic changes have taken place in Afghanistan, Bhutan and Cambodia. In the other Asian LDCs (Myanmar, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Nepal) it seems that a gradual approach is being applied. In building capacity for governance functions identified in the Brussels Programme of Action, international development partners will need to provide financial and technical support for enhancing the capacity of LDCs to organize democratic institutions and processes, as well as for national human rights mechanisms. Equally, by donors' building open and transparent systems of global governance LDCs will benefit directly. Some noteworthy illustrations of undertakings to strengthen LDC capacity to manage governance functions are United Kingdom DFID funding of a local government reform programme in the United Republic of Tanzania, G-8 support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which includes 34 LDCs, Italian participation in the African Regional Technical Assistance Center (AFRITAC), the introduction by OECD/DAC of the "peer review mechanism" for aid effectiveness and global governance, donor contributions to the Africa Governance Forum, as well as seminars on democratization, human rights and the rule of law offered by the Governments of Japan and Sweden.

18. The Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat has sponsored a number of workshops in LDCs on parliamentary processes and the working of the judiciary with the aim of building up the capacity of women in leadership positions. Equality Now is active in promoting women's rights around the world. Most donors channel resources to gender-oriented programmes, recognizing that the empowerment of women in productive activities is beneficial in terms of equality of opportunity, access to assets, leadership and decision-making. Mainstreaming gender equality is a fundamental requirement of EC development cooperation.

19. The United Nations system provides support to a wide selection of governance programmes, some predating the Brussels Programme of Action, but clearly responding to the needs of LDCs. With the aim of strengthening institutional capacity and deepening processes that reinforce democratization, the World Bank anti-corruption strategy¹⁶ addresses regulatory frameworks. The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) promotion of the rule of law for greater access to justice (Haiti), decentralization (Mali and Laos) and human rights (Uganda) places emphasis on the protection of individual rights at various levels of government, as do the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) pilot of projects in its Human Dignity Initiative and workshops in Cambodia and Nepal. ECA and UNDP

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have organized consultative processes involving Governments, civil society, private sector and research institutions that seek to inculcate the principles of good governance firmly within societies through multi-stakeholders national and international consultations. Twenty-three LDCs have participated in the UNDP Africa Governance Forum, launched in 1997, covering such themes as accountability and transparency, conflict management, parliamentary processes and local governance for poverty reduction, with funding from the Governments of Italy, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom DFID and the European Commission. The ECA governance project, comprising political representation, economic management and corporate governance, developed indicators in a number of African countries, the majority of them LDCs, to measure and monitor governance in sub-Saharan Africa. These indicators will be presented in the first Africa Governance Report. There is extensive LDC representation on the UNAIDS Programme Coordination Board, which has responsibility for policy development and rule setting. Zambia currently has the Presidency of the Board. Transparency in the design of major development programmes is promoted through participatory national AIDS commissions.

20. During 2002, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) provided special assistance to 12 countries that are emerging from war, utilizing the Telecom Surplus Fund that finances sector reform and reconstruction of telecommunications infrastructure. The majority of the participating countries are LDCs.

21. Donors, notably the Governments of Japan, Germany, Portugal and Sweden, often working through NGOs, have prominent activities in the area of conflict prevention, as well as supporting confidence-building, post-conflict peace-building, reintegration, reconstruction and humanitarian interventions. Many LDCs are in crisis, facing conflict or emerging from recent wars. Action Aid, Franciscans-International and CARE International have been actively involved in the areas of conflict management, peace-building and livelihood security in Sierra Leone, the Central African Republic and Nepal, respectively. International support has been crucial for Burundi in organizing follow-up activities to peace agreements in the context of the Arusha Peace Accord. The experience of Cambodia is similar: international assistance was vital in reconstituting governmental authority, setting a path for reconstruction and rehabilitation.

22. These activities go well beyond the OECD category of "emergency aid", but correspond to some extent to the areas covered by the United Nations Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) in which donor support is crucial. Of the 25 appeals for humanitarian assistance launched by the United Nations in 2002, 16 directly addressed the needs of LDCs, accounting for \$3.7 billion (84 per cent) of a total of \$4.4 billion. Overall, the donor response rate to these appeals was within a range of from 11.5 to 95 per cent, depending on the country or region for which aid was sought.¹⁷ While these numbers primarily reflect donors' response to acute humanitarian needs, they also indicate funding for the reintegration and recovery aspects of complex emergencies, which are increasingly part and parcel of the appeals process. In this regard, attention should also be paid to the response of the donor community to special appeals outside of the annual CAP, such as for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, where the response has been quite positive. The major contributions made by some donors in support of United Nations peacekeeping and peace-building operations are noteworthy.

Commitment III**Building human and institutional capacities**

23. The primary difficulty for LDCs in realizing this commitment arises from a paucity of data, partially offset by the World Development Indicator Database (April 2002),¹⁸ and limited capacity. Data on all social indicators relevant to the Brussels Programme of Action is available only up to the year 2000. The Programme of Action has 13 human development goals that could be measured and monitored in quantitative terms, but measurement at this early stage seems impossible considering that this has not yet been accomplished for the Millennium Development Goals. The DAC 2002 report¹⁹ points to incomplete geographic coverage as an impediment in providing global estimates for Millennium Goal indicators and to the need for increased national capacity to produce data. Some data showing developments from 1990 to 2000 set out the challenges in reaching the agreed targets in the time frames set. The situation facing sub-Saharan Africa seems especially acute.

24. The tasks to be accomplished in the areas of health, education, sanitation and nutrition are simply overwhelming for many LDCs. Available figures show that 19 out of 33 African LDCs have maternal mortality rates of above 1 per 100 live births.²⁰ One quarter of the children in 33 out of 43 LDCs are undernourished. Net primary school enrolment figures for 22 LDCs show that less than half the children are in school in 10 of those countries.²¹ Another difficulty is the cost of programmes. Many LDCs continue to rely heavily on development assistance to finance their social sectors, such as basic services in hospitals and health centres, building schools, designing curricula and training workers. Japan's Basic Education for Growth Initiative (BEGIN) as well as EC assistance directed to universal primary education, Portugal's support to education at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels for six LDCs²² and Canada's commitment to double basic investments in education in Africa are positive contributions to LDC attempts to meet Brussels Programme of Action targets. Many NGOs are also active in these sectors, showing that with limited funds it is possible to make a difference in the lives of the poor. For example, CARE International manages to reach 23,000 students in Afghanistan, of whom 46 per cent are girls, through a community-based education project that is low-cost and sustainable as it respects local norms.

25. Samoa indicates that it devotes 75 per cent of its total annual development assistance package to the social sectors. Working together, the Government and the private sector have provided health and education services to the population, such as early childhood and special education, increased immunization (95 per cent) and improved access to clean and safe water (85 per cent). In the case of Burkina Faso, the Government collaborated with local small businesses, with German private sector support, in providing a high-quality, low-cost water supply to poor communities in Ouagadougou. Similarly, resources from German companies are being actively used in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in southern Africa. Uganda and Germany have mounted an education campaign in cooperation with the pharmaceutical industry to raise awareness of malaria prevention through the use of nets.

26. The global estimate of people living with HIV was 42 million in 2002. LDCs are among the worst affected countries and their domestic resources are woefully inadequate to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis at the same time. Together with donor agencies, the Government of Ethiopia has tested new ways of fighting

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the epidemic. The approach has blended the use of clinical trials with civic education so as to change people's attitude to the disease. The Government of Madagascar has elaborated a strategy for disaster management and has in place a plan to combat HIV/AIDS and to improve health services. Through South-South cooperation, networks have been established and experience shared on the management of HIV/AIDS programmes, with special attention to lowering the price of related drugs. Action AIDS launched a three-year programme in Burundi, Ethiopia and Rwanda to scale up the response of the Governments and civil society to the crisis. The case for building human and institutional capacities remains urgent. The emphasis placed by the Government of Canada on HIV/AIDS and health and nutrition, the United Kingdom DFID-funded programme in Mozambique promoting the National Strategic Plan against the epidemic and the contribution of the Government of Italy and that of EC to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as well as the collaboration of the Government of Italy with WHO in 10 sub-Saharan countries, including 7 LDCs,²³ address resource and capacity constraints.

27. UNAIDS has placed international advisers in 23 LDCs²⁴ and, working through United Nations theme groups, leads the system-wide collaboration, with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) as co-sponsors. Its advocacy for equitable access to basic services including health care and education, and public awareness campaigns to combat the disease and other related illnesses has been rewarded by a fivefold increase in ODA spending on HIV/AIDS over the past five years. Coordination efforts and joint planning have resulted in reduced transaction costs. Collaboration between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and WHO during 2002 resulted in the introduction of a health and nutrition framework for combating HIV/AIDS and a manual on nutritional care but, clearly, more resources and innovative partnerships are needed, especially for the manufacture, distribution and purchase of more affordable drugs.

28. In response to the Brussels Programme of Action, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) established an LDC Unit that accords priority to deliverables for LDCs. The WIPO Global Information Network for intellectual data exchange and automating business functions of WIPO offices worldwide also expanded Internet connectivity in 11 LDCs.²⁵ The Worldwide Academy administers training and provides research and advisory services in patent and trademark matters, and collective management of copyright of music and culture in three African countries²⁶ and a regional initiative in the Pacific islands.

29. Further opportunities for improving human and institutional capacities in various aspects of development management are available through targeted assistance by United Nations organizations. Actions regarding this commitment has strong political support on the basis of the World Summit for Social Development, held in 1995 in Copenhagen, which included meeting the needs of LDCs as one of the 10 commitments to which it agreed. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) support to the Network of African Women Economists based in Senegal and to the Digital Diaspora Network for Africa to increase women's access to information and communications technology; the endorsement by the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in May 2002 of the Africa Capacity Building Initiative strengthening Governments' domestic capacity in economic

governance, and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) strengthening and maintenance of basic meteorological infrastructure are crucial to LDCs in addressing Brussels Programme of Action priorities.

Commitment IV

Building productive capacities to make globalization work for LDCs

30. This commitment is of major importance to LDCs as it contains the key building blocks for economic growth and development (i.e. infrastructure,²⁷ technology utilization, enterprise development, energy, manufacturing, mining, agriculture and agro-industries, food security, rural development and tourism). The World Bank underscores this view, pointing out that well-implemented infrastructure investments have positive effects on local enterprises and community-based initiatives, leading to direct increases in income for poor communities. For instance, the Lesotho roads rehabilitation and maintenance project that developed a pool of small local entrepreneurs for rural road rehabilitation, including women entrepreneurs, and the Mali energy project that engaged local communities in the management of forests and community energy systems have demonstrated that point.

31. Despite the paucity of relevant information for 2001 and 2002, a few countries have been able to report some progress. Niger has developed an ambitious industrial development plan that supports a number of private sector activities designed to reduce poverty. Madagascar has set up a network of enterprises engaged in the production of edible oils, construction materials, fruits and vegetables. Through this network, support is given to strengthening managerial skills of entrepreneurs. In 2002, Mauritania developed a plan to combat desertification and devised an industrial strategy that will support private sector development. Enterprise Uganda was officially launched in 2001 as part of the UNCTAD technical assistance programme for productive enterprises, namely, the Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EMPRETEC). Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique commenced similar programmes in 2002. In Samoa, the country's physical infrastructure continues to be well maintained and the private sector has been given a greater role in agricultural production. Village workshops and training centres have been established to raise the knowledge and skills of the rural population. In May 2002, the Government of Cambodia took a decision to diversify the economy,²⁸ building industries on the basis of the country's natural resources, such as meat, fish, cotton, sugar, palm oil, rubber, cassava and fruits.

32. The United Nations system utilized technical assistance to build capacity in investment promotion and, by means of multi-targeted training, introduced new technologies, reinforced technical services and expanded the usage of information and communications technology. The Investment Advisory Council for LDCs, launched by 18 LDC ministers and a number of business executives, received support from Sweden. The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) was actively involved during the Brussels Conference and in follow-up at the Monterrey and Johannesburg meetings. Public-private partnerships for investment in LDCs are attractive and gaining support in a number of donor countries, for example in Portugal and Sweden. Many LDCs participated in EMPRETEC, which with funds from the Government of Germany supported women entrepreneurs. The UNDP regional programme reinforced advocacy for the empowerment of women and gender equity through targeted workshops on global access to inter alia investment

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promotion and market intelligence. Training in management of microfinance projects and in budgeting is available through the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations. ECA and UNV encouraged information and communications technology expansion, the former through the establishment of national information and communications infrastructure in 11 LDCs, with plans for an additional 13, and the latter by placing United Nations Volunteers in 16 LDCs to network public services at the national and decentralized levels, linking scattered small islands belonging to the same country (for example, Maldives), and to enable national campaigns on HIV/AIDS to reach isolated rural communities.

33. The Universal Postal Union (UPU) and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) introduced new technologies to improve the quality of service and raise overall performance. Postal reform led to the realization of efficiency gains and personnel upgrading. With 80 per cent of the technical assistance budget of UPU directed to Africa, the continent with the majority of LDCs, mainstreaming of the Brussels Programme of Action by UPU is well attainable. Similarly, in 2002, ITU introduced new technologies in wireless utilization (in Bhutan), information and communications technology (in Haiti and Djibouti), reform and restructuring (in the Central African Republic and Djibouti) and expanded multipurpose telecentres (in Mali and Malawi). Reinforced by training, these activities began to yield positive results, reflected in improved teledensities and greater Internet penetration throughout LDCs.

34. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) renewable energy projects promoting solar, wind and biomass in six countries²⁹ have attracted Global Environment Facility funding. They are complemented by an institutional capacity-building project on renewable energy training for LDCs in the Pacific launched by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in 2002, which provides advisory services on energy efficiency in industry and renewable energy development to Cambodia and Vanuatu. Similarly, United Kingdom DFID investment in the gas sector in Bangladesh has the aim of improving efficiency in the management of production and distribution. With funding from UNDP, UNIDO has promoted simple diesel engine generation of electricity for lighting, refrigeration, water pumps and other tools in the regional multi-functional platform programme. Employment of rural women in viable income-generating opportunities has improved their management experience and raised their social status, with the added benefit that girls' attendance at school has increased, as they no longer have to help in the home when they should be in school. Platforms have been installed in Burkina Faso, Guinea and Mali and plans are moving ahead for Senegal.

35. FAO has placed emphasis on the two priority areas of agro-industries and food security. With respect to the first, best practices in forest management in Central Africa that were the subject of 14 case studies were a key input to a regional workshop in 2002 at which information and experiences were exchanged.³⁰ The Special Programme for Food Security, which addresses increased and sustainable food production, was expanded in 2002 to 39 LDCs, with support from the Governments of Italy and Japan. FAO utilized a South-South approach to food security³¹ by providing experts from developing countries to work with farmers in rural communities in LDCs. In March 2002, 22 agreements³² relating to food security were signed between other developing countries and LDCs. Additionally, the Trust Fund for Food Security and for Emergency Prevention of Transboundary

Pests and Diseases of Animals and Plants was established, with an initial target of US\$ 500 million. Pilot projects in Burkina Faso, Haiti and Madagascar on the Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping System will seek to improve access to information for decision-making and policy and programme formulation and monitoring. Several LDCs benefited from the joint FAO/WHO Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators in 2002.

Commitment V

Enhancing the role of trade in development

36. LDCs view this commitment within the context of globalization and more specifically in relation to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations system. Prior to the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Doha, in November 2001, the LDCs had taken advantage of technical cooperation offers in capacity-building and training from several United Nations organizations. In collaboration with United Nations system partners and African institutions, ECA organized a series of workshops for LDCs on trade policy formulation and negotiations. UNCTAD provided training in trade negotiations, market access and competitiveness aimed at building national and regional capacity for diversification of export commodities in preparation for WTO meetings. FAO clarified negotiating positions on agriculture-related issues for improved access. International Trade Centre (ITC) industry-level briefings on phasing out the quota system, provision of advisory and training services in competitiveness were incorporated in action plans for four LDCs,³³ addressing such issues as supply chain management, productivity improvement, product development, marketing and performance benchmarking. In Doha, the developed countries agreed to decrease significantly or scrap tariffs on imports from LDCs. Accordingly, EC policy orientation favoured mainstreaming of trade policies in LDC development policies (for example, PRSPs) and development assistance programmes. Agreement has also been reached to fast-track negotiations for LDC accession to and membership of WTO. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and UNCTAD conducted a workshop on procedures for Yemen's accession. Of signal importance was the first World Trade Organization (WTO) seminar on LDC accession, convened in Geneva in July 2002, which submitted guidelines to the WTO General Council.

37. The flagship project "Integrated Framework for Trade Related Technical Assistance for LDCs", as a partnership framework of core agencies (IMF, ITC, UNCTAD, UNDP, the World Bank and WTO), bilateral donors (EC and OECD/DAC) and the LDCs, is well positioned to ensure the integration of trade into development policies, a coordinated response and resources for LDCs in the context of the Brussels Programme of Action. Evidently, the Governments of Canada, Italy and Japan and the EC share this view. However, in view of the opportunities and challenges, a pilot phase was launched in three countries³⁴ and subsequently extended to 11 with ITC support,³⁵ with follow-up projects with Integrated Framework Trust Fund financing in five others.³⁶ The EC and member States contribute euro 2.3 million, more than half of the total bilateral contribution to the Integrated Framework Trust Fund.³⁷ The World Bank has taken the lead in testing the remodelled Integrated Framework — a diagnostic trade integration study, an action matrix of policy recommendations and priority technical assistance needs and trade policy priorities — as a mechanism for mainstreaming trade in national development plans and poverty reduction strategies. A monitoring and evaluation

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process has been put in place through periodic heads of agency meetings to endorse good practices and address constraints.

38. Effective utilization of preferential arrangements is an even more serious problem for LDCs. The European Union's "Everything But Arms" initiative providing duty- and quota-free access, the United States of America Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, under which in December 2002 the Government approved the designation of 38 sub-Saharan African countries, including 25 LDCs,³⁸ as eligible for tariff preferences, and Japan's revised General System of Preferences scheme, as well as those of Canada and Switzerland, offer the LDCs large preferential margins for many agricultural and industrial products. Poland, Hungary and the Slovak Republic, new EU members, classified as emerging donors, have been equally forthcoming. Yet, the rates at which the preferences are utilized are extremely low owing to weak export supply capacity. Management of trade in many LDCs is inefficient, hence the low utilization rates. Asian LDCs such as Bangladesh and Nepal tend to register rates higher than those for African LDCs.³⁹ This institutional weakness has to be addressed by the LDCs through proper training and investments in modern technology.

39. Economic diversification is a critical component of trade policy for LDCs as a way of increasing exports of goods and services. The Common Fund for Commodities has been supporting LDCs that wished to pursue diversification policies through the identification of suitable projects and has provided finance for research in productivity improvements, market expansion and vertical diversification.⁴⁰ The UNCTAD technical cooperation project on capacity-building for diversification assists 37 LDCs in Africa, 6 in Asia and 5 small island developing States in Oceania. In September 2001, UNCTAD organized a regional training workshop in Fiji on the challenges and prospects for commodity-based diversification in Pacific island economies. In July 2002, the Government of Guinea held a workshop on horticultural development. During the period under review, many Governments have taken advantage of technical cooperation programmes, but many more need to act expeditiously and resolutely. Good programmes on competition law and policy, on market access (rules of origin in particular), on transport, trade facilitation and customs systems are on offer from many international agencies. They will help government and private sector officials improve their skills in respect of trade management and prepare them for globalization. LDC Governments need to be more proactive in taking advantage of the many programmes currently offered by UNCTAD and ITC. Both the Asian Development Bank and the African Development Bank should consider funding diversification programmes on a grant basis for their LDC member States.

40. ITC "match-making" programmes are of major significance in building partnerships. These programmes enable enterprises in developed countries to locate potential partners in developing countries and, through a set of financial and technical arrangements, engage them in the production and distribution of specified goods and services. LDC Governments need to locate niche markets, especially in the South, adopt new technology and turn their comparative advantages into business opportunities which would allow them to produce tradable goods and services. Understanding the modalities of commercial diplomacy within UNCTAD and WTO must translate into LDC capacities to produce, package, distribute and sell high-value goods and services to the rest of the world, on a non-discriminatory basis.

41. According to DAC,⁴¹ the major contribution by the donor partners and multilateral agencies since the launching of the Doha Development Agenda has been the commitment to place trade matters in the context of poverty reduction and development strategies and to strengthen trade capacity-building through two concrete undertakings. Many donors⁴² have undertaken to increase resources for both multilateral and bilateral activities and have firmly linked trade to poverty reduction and economic development, thereby promoting greater participation in the multilateral trading system. DAC and WTO have jointly developed a Trade Capacity-Building Database with the aim of providing a user-friendly tool for information-sharing, coordination and monitoring of the implementation of commitments made at Doha. Data from 28 bilateral donor countries and multilateral agencies show an increase in commitments (in the areas of trade policy and regulations, trade development, infrastructure) approximating 2.4 per cent of total assistance in 2001. A regional workshop, "Trade capacity-building: experiences in an African context", jointly organized by DAC with ECA, was attended by 86 participants, one third of them women, from East African countries. The workshop discussed trade capacity-building in Africa, participatory trade policies and their mainstreaming in national development and poverty reduction strategies, the role of donors in supporting trade policy process and methods for strengthening trade policy process and trade capacity. Although neither activity is specifically LDC-focused they both address priority issues contained in the Brussels Programme of Action and the lessons drawn from the workshop would certainly apply to the majority of LDCs.

Commitment VI

Reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment

42. The objective of reducing vulnerability to natural disasters and providing protection from environmental degradation remains a formidable challenge to most LDCs. Natural shocks, the adverse effects of climate and the loss of biological diversity are serious obstacles to sustainable development. As with the issue of trade, the solution to many of the environmental problems in the LDCs is bound to be global. It is through global partnerships such as the Brussels Programme of Action that LDCs can take advantage of recent momentum and international commitments reached during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002. A high-level Asian and Pacific regional meeting in preparation for the World Summit was organized by the Asian Development Bank, ESCAP, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Phnom Penh in November 2001. Although some achievements were acknowledged, the meeting recognized that a number of countries continued to experience deterioration in environmental quality and depletion of natural resources. It was concluded that solutions were to be found in poverty reduction and more effective participatory development management involving civil society in decision-making. The need to consolidate best practices in priority areas of Agenda 21 was reaffirmed.

43. The Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development resolved to pay attention to the developmental needs of LDCs. A number of positive developments have taken place, but limited LDC capacity and resources continue to impede the attainment of desired goals. Many of the environmental actions of LDCs were reflected in country reports to the Johannesburg World Summit. The reports

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influenced much of the debate, as well as the final outcome at the Summit. Important linkages were made between environment, poverty and the use of natural resources, and support was obtained for a world solidarity fund for the eradication of poverty. The work of EC, UNDP, the World Bank and the United Kingdom DFID examining the linkages between poverty and the environment should be helpful. Major commitments were entered into based on Agenda 21 issues, such as access to safe water, proper sanitation and clean, modern energy services. Follow-up meetings are planned by the Commission on Sustainable Development to track implementation of the Summit's key decisions. At the Third World Water Forum, held in Kyoto, Japan, in March 2003, a forceful case was made on water issues in LDCs by the Office of the High Representative in a report entitled "Critical importance of water issues for LDCs".

44. Examples of LDC action in this regard are worthy of mention. The Government of Chad elaborated a programme of action that included the setting up of a water bureau to help reduce vulnerability to repeated droughts. The Government of Madagascar launched a two-phase national programme on coastal zone development and biodiversity that has been incorporated in the PRSP. Ethiopia's national programme has resulted in the formation of local seed banks for farmers, increasing yields for wheat and millet. A water sector development plan costing \$7 billion birr has been drawn up and Ethiopia is also active in an inter-country project in the Nile Basin initiative, together with nine other countries. The strategic plan of the Government of Mauritania focuses on biodiversity, whereas that of Mali concentrates on the exploitation of the Kita forest. The national plan of the Lao People's Democratic Republic sets out a blueprint for land, forestry and water resource management. That of Cambodia deals with floods, typhoons and drought within a framework devised by the National Committee for Disaster Management. The Government of Portugal provided training and capacity-building support in the formulation of national environmental policies and an environment database for four LDCs.⁴³

45. Although experiencing scarcity of resources, NGOs are active in promoting environmental sustainability through collaborative research, policy studies, networking and knowledge dissemination, often attracting funding from donor partners. For example, Environmental Development Action based in Senegal, the International Institute for Environment and Development and the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies conducted a study on mainstreaming adaptation to climate change in LDCs, based on the experience in Bangladesh and Mali that brought out the vulnerability of those countries in terms of food security, human health and agricultural production.

46. In the light of the United Nations focus on capacity-building, ESCAP provided training and advisory services in strategic environmental planning for LDCs in the Pacific in 2002. Attention has also been directed to the prevention of urban disasters caused by flooding and groundwater contamination (Bangladesh), urban and industrial environmental management (Vanuatu), natural hazards management and sustainable development, for example, climate change and water resource management (Lao People's Democratic Republic). As a member of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, FAO established nine regional wildfire networks, disseminated information, prepared guidelines and model arrangements and directed training for building management capacity. In reducing the vulnerability of agricultural communities to natural disaster, countries are assisted in developing

national food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping systems. FAO prevention and mitigation measures include drought-mitigation and management strategies, multi-stakeholder disaster management strategies and mechanisms, and community-based risk alleviation strategies. The Global Information and Early Warning System for food and agriculture monitors food supply and provides up-to-date information on crop prospects and imminent food crises. UNV established an internal facility for the speedy deployment of United Nations Volunteers for emergency relief and humanitarian assistance, as was the case for the Mozambique floods, Cyclone Mitch in Central America and the severe drought in Malawi.

47. In November 2001, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change approved programmes to assist LDCs in preparing national adaptation programmes of action to address the immediate issues relating to climate change. In 2002, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) organized a consultation with invited experts, including members of the LDC Expert Group, in Tanzania to reach agreement on expedited GEF guidelines for these national adaptation programmes of action. Individual country efforts are ongoing and are supported by a special LDC Trust Fund on Climate Change, with contributions of US\$ 8.7 million from nine donor countries and additional pledges of US\$ 6.1 million as of 31 March 2003. To access these funds, a number of countries have elaborated proposals for developing their national adaptation programme of action with support from the GEF, through UNDP and UNEP.

48. As the United Nations system's regulatory agency for maritime matters, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) covers a range of activities, from shipping for sustainable development to environmental protection, inter alia. In the area of environmental protection, the IMO programme entails strengthening national and regional capacity to prevent and mitigate marine pollution, in particular through the implementation of training programmes and expert advisory services. LDCs have been the main beneficiaries, through the development, revision and updating of national legislation in seven LDCs.⁴⁴ South Asian countries, including Maldives, received assistance in oil spill contingency planning.

Commitment VII

Mobilizing financial resources

49. Illustrations of progress achieved by LDCs in mobilizing domestic resources serve to demonstrate their determination to fulfil commitments to the Brussels Programme of Action. Tanzania's PRSP shows that the country expects to finance 70 per cent of its total expenditure for fiscal 2000/2001-2002/2003, with 30 per cent coming from external sources. The Government's Medium-Term Expenditure Framework monitoring and controlling government expenditure has the desired effect of minimizing costs and maximizing savings. Zambia's Integrated Finance Management Information System, a managerial tool for its PRSP, accentuates budgetary control and monitors public expenditure. A broad-based system of fiscal and financial reforms is being implemented to improve government revenues and reduce the country's dependence on foreign aid (now 67 per cent of total capital expenditure). In the Gambia, projections in the PRSP suggest that gross domestic investment will increase from 18 to 22 per cent of GDP between 2002 and 2005, reflecting a higher rate of domestic savings.⁴⁵ Cambodia's Medium-Term Expenditure Framework emphasizes revenue enhancement and cost control. The country's 2003 budget provides for improvements in social spending and in resource

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mobilization, with the aim of increasing the ratio of domestic revenue to GDP from 9 per cent in 1998 to 14 per cent by 2005. Nevertheless, it will finance its PRSP (2003-2006) of \$1.5 billion with \$208 million from government revenue, \$1.08 billion from ODA and \$250 million from foreign direct investment (FDI).⁴⁶

50. In recent years many LDCs have redoubled their efforts to improve the investment climate in their countries in order to attract more substantial flows of foreign direct investment. According to UNCTAD, global FDI for developing countries has increased dramatically over the past decade, from \$209 billion in 1990 to more than \$1.3 trillion in 2000. Yet, only 0.5 per cent of this amount has been invested in the 49 LDCs.⁴⁷ FDI rose from an annual average of \$0.6 billion in LDCs during the period 1986-1990 to an annual average of \$3.7 billion during the period 1996-2000. One third of this amount, however, was directed to four major oil-exporting States, leaving \$2.5 billion for the remaining 45 countries.⁴⁸ The Brussels Programme of Action introduced a sense of urgency by stressing the significance of national ownership and responsibility. Many LDCs have prepared investment reviews, entered into important international investment treaties and have benefited from technical assistance from UNCTAD, the World Bank and the Asian and African Development Banks. Political stability, the right macroeconomic policies, a favourable legal framework (for example, laws that ensure equal treatment of foreign and domestic investors, and double taxation treaties), adequate infrastructure and productive human capital constitute the main determinants for attracting FDI. According to the World Bank, the experience of LDCs like the United Republic of Tanzania, Mozambique and Uganda bears this out: the ratio of FDI to GDP in those countries rose by 35 per cent, 33 per cent and 81 per cent respectively between 1992 and 1997.⁴⁹ For South Asia, FDI rose to \$4.2 billion in 2001, of which approximately 10 per cent went to Bangladesh. The current top 10 LDC recipients of FDI are pursuing successful policies.⁵⁰

51. In preparation for the Conference on Financing for International Development, held in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002, ECA organized several workshops and meetings pressing the case for faster debt relief and more ODA for the poor and indebted countries of Africa. The final outcome of the Conference struck an optimistic chord, calling for particular attention to the special needs of African LDCs, small-island developing States and landlocked developing countries. Adopting its Consensus by acclamation, participants in the Conference reaffirmed their commitment to the Brussels Programme of Action, emphasizing their resolve to mobilize domestic resources, attract international flows, promote international trade as an engine for development, increase development cooperation and address the need for sustainable debt financing and debt relief. In that context, the Conference stressed the continued importance of ODA and urged developed countries that had not done so "to make concrete efforts towards the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) as ODA to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of GNP of developed countries to least developed countries".⁵¹

52. At present, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden are above the 0.20 per cent target. DAC members announced increases in ODA commitments in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and to eradicate poverty and, if these increases are realized, the DAC total ODA/gross national income (GNI) ratio could rise to 0.26 per cent in 2006, with some extra US\$ 15 billion ODA compared to 2001. The Governments of Canada, Norway and Switzerland have announced generous increases. Shortly before the Conference, the

Government of the United States announced a new foreign aid programme called "Millennium Challenge Account" designed to provide substantial assistance to low-income countries, under which United States core development assistance will be increased by 50 per cent. The large majority of DAC members have untied all categories of LDC ODA according to set criteria, while some others (Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) have exceeded those criteria. Similarly, in 2002 eight members of the European Union had already met the ODA/GNI target of 0.33 per cent and in 2003 another 10 States are expected to so.⁵²

53. A few organizations in the United Nations system utilized the Brussels Programme of Action to mobilize additional resources through special trust funds or other extrabudgetary resources. For example, the Consultative Committee of UNIFEM approved a doubling of core resources for Africa with its majority of LDCs, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) launched a special appeal, as did ECA and UNESCO, while FAO, ITU, UPU and WMO sought to build LDC focused trust funds. Reports on the success of these initiatives are not yet forthcoming. The Trust Fund for the support of the activities of the Office of the High Representative has attracted contributions from the Governments of Austria, Bhutan, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland and Kuwait, but more are needed. Data from the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) on operational activities for development for 1999 to 2001 show that UNDP has registered declines in both main programmes and administered funds, as has the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the former declines of from 19 to 16 per cent and from 27 to 19 per cent and the latter of from 33 to 29 per cent. UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) have both shown increases for the same period of from 43 to 45 per cent and 50 to 54 per cent respectively, the increase for WFP attributed largely to food emergencies.⁵³ Undoubtedly the downturn in ODA in the recent past accounts for this somewhat dismal picture, although in the case of UNDP the decline in ODA to LDCs is significantly lower than to other countries. With some donors reporting planned increases in ODA, there is a reasonable expectation that a portion of these funds would be directed to LDCs through multilateral institutions, including the United Nations system.

54. UNCDF, as a small-scale multilateral organization having LDCs as its primary target constituency, plays a unique role in the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action by providing over 70 per cent of its resources to LDC programmes through microfinance and decentralized public investment for local governance. The poverty orientation of UNCDF is well established. The Brussels Declaration afforded UNCDF a platform from which to launch a special appeal for increased resources to meet LDC demands.

55. The Brussels Programme of Action called for quantitative increases and qualitative improvements in ODA, and recognized that the latter can best be achieved through effective aid delivery systems. LDCs were called upon to adopt national development strategies with appropriate auditing and accounting systems, install reliable information systems and enhance administrative arrangements that facilitate greater coordination. The development partners were expected to be unambiguous in their commitment to national ownership, to honour agreements made in Brussels, to encourage wide participation and to exercise transparency in support of LDCs. Existing policy review mechanisms such as the World Bank's Consultative Group and UNDP round tables are important in the process of helping

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LDCs coordinate their development assistance efforts. As PRSP is now becoming the primary mechanism for building policy coherence in national development strategies and in delivering development assistance, increased usage, simplification of preparation, wider participation and national ownership and control over the process and content of the document could result in rationalization and realignment with other planning tools and could have a positive impact on donor financing.

56. For many LDCs, debt continues to be a major domestic stumbling block. High levels of debt and debt service payments are draining away development resources. Many LDCs that have designed debt reduction strategies, 14 at the last count,⁵⁴ have been helped by UNCTAD through its Debt Management and Financial Analysis System. However, this is not the only solution to the debt problem. Continued improvements have to be made in fiscal and financial management within the LDCs. Changes in the external environment (heavily indebted poor country (HIPC) initiatives and donor debt forgiveness schemes), will also help, as there is a pressing need in the LDCs for much deeper debt relief. Many Governments will have to review their levels of indebtedness and seriously consider whether they need to borrow as much as they currently do. The endless cycle of using new monies to pay for old debt will keep the LDCs in a poverty trap for a long time to come. Obviously, individual country efforts would be significantly enhanced within regional development frameworks, where collective measures could improve negotiating strengths in international financial circles.

57. In some quarters the HIPC process is considered unduly lengthy and access procedures burdensome. At the end of 2002, of the 32 LDCs that are in the HIPC programme or are potential candidates (Angola and Yemen), only five⁵⁵ have reached "completion point", 15 have reached the "decision point" or intermediate benchmark⁵⁶ and 10 are still to be considered.⁵⁷ Collaboration between IMF and the World Bank has resulted in debt-reduction packages under the enhanced HIPC removing over US\$ 40 billion in debt from 26 countries, the majority (20) being LDCs in Africa. A number of donors, for example Canada, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom, have announced additional debt relief and, in view of the shortfall in the HIPC Trust Fund, some have agreed to increase their contribution to it. The Government of Morocco has announced the cancellation of the debt of African LDCs and duty-free access for their exports.⁵⁸ In the interest of sustained development efforts, additional post-HIPC debt relief will be considered on a case-by-case basis. World Bank International Development Association (IDA) helps LDCs reduce poverty by providing "credits", zero interest loans with a 10-year grace period and maturities of from 35 to 40 years. IDA 13⁵⁹ replenishment will make available an estimated US\$ 23 billion to poor IDA members for three years from July 2002. A new results-based measurement system will link IDA programmes to countries' development outcomes.

III. Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

58. As a member of UNDG and the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the High Representative participates in decision-making at senior levels of the United Nations system, including setting the priority strategy of

advocacy and outreach for coordination of the Brussels Programme of Action implementation. The Office holds frequent consultations with LDCs and their national partners in civil society and the private sector, multilateral organizations and the donor community on how best to proceed with the implementation of the Programme of Action. Resident Coordinators' reporting from individual LDCs is particularly useful. Consultations in New York and elsewhere, for example at the Ministerial Conference of the least developed countries in Benin, in August 2002, which approved the Cotonou Declaration, are mutually beneficial, providing a platform for advocacy by the Office of the High Representative in support of the Brussels Programme of Action. In concert with other United Nations organizations, the Office is also coordinating the preparatory process for the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, to be held in Kazakhstan in August 2003, as well as the preparatory process for the international meeting to undertake a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, scheduled to be held in Mauritius in 2004.

59. In order to assist LDCs in undertaking some of the tasks for the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, the Office of the High Representative plans to organize workshops for LDCs and United Nations system focal points in close collaboration with the United Nations Development Group Office and other relevant multilateral organizations. Support from Member States for these workshops will be welcomed.

IV. Conclusions

60. LDC actions to fulfil Brussels Programme of Action commitments are yet to materialize, considering the limited time since the Brussels Conference, the paucity of data, the complexity of the issues involved and capacity constraints. Ownership is a critical component for LDCs in the context of implementation of the Programme of Action. Through their many pronouncements, LDC Governments have shown a willingness to undertake the necessary measures to reverse the fortunes of their people. The right economic and social policies must be pursued and suitable international conditions, both in economic and governance terms, must prevail in order for them to make meaningful progress towards the achievement of the targets of the Programme of Action. Quantifiable and qualitative targets present challenges for the LDCs, as indicators are necessary for the purpose of constructing benchmarks against which progress can be measured. There is still much to be done as LDC Governments continue to improve their economic management processes and foster the development of viable democratic institutions. At the same time, LDCs must be given the opportunity to compete on a fair and equitable basis.

61. The implementation of, follow-up to and reporting on the Brussels Programme of Action at the national level are of primary importance. The national arrangements, including the establishment of a national forum, are critical for conducting regular and systematic follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of the commitments at the national level. In this context, the designation of a national focal point is crucial. Only nine LDCs have set up national forums, as reported to the Office of the High Representative, and very few LDCs (10 out of 49)

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have designated focal points within their respective Governments to monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action and to serve as a contact point for development partners. National arrangements are the most effective means of ensuring national ownership of the programme. Only nine LDCs out of 49 submitted inputs for the preparation of the present report.

62. Partnership is an integral component of the Brussels Programme of Action. Although LDCs are primarily responsible for designing and sustaining their development strategies, it is through genuine partnerships, including with civil society and the private sector, generously supported by the international community, that significant gains will be made. The United Nations system has demonstrated the effectiveness of inter-agency partnership in generating system-wide coherence and coordination, as reported in earlier sections of the present report. However, most LDCs experience great difficulty in coping with the plethora of demands from various partners that have an impact on the opportunity and transaction costs. Nevertheless, these instruments and frameworks, for example, PRSP, the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework combined with individual donor requirements, are burdensome. LDCs plead for more effective realignment and/or rationalization in order to lessen the process demands and reconcile them with LDC operational and capacity realities. Most LDCs have neither the requisite national capacity to implement the measures that would allow them to reach the targets set out in the various frameworks and programmes, nor the resources to pay for them. The United Nations system and international partners could support one nationally driven analytical process and one nationally driven process to set up the poverty reduction strategies and priorities. The response of the United Nations system and other international entities to these processes should be harmonized and prepared, placing a minimum burden on Governments.

V. Recommendations

63. **A number of challenges must be met for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries. First, strong commitment and concerted efforts on the part of LDCs require unstinting support from the international community. Second, a clearly defined operational plan must be drawn up designating the roles of stakeholders, sequenced priorities and coordinated actions at the national, regional/subregional and global levels. Third, arrangements for continuous reporting and follow-up, coordination, monitoring and review of the progress of implementation must function effectively. The recommendations outlined below address these challenges, seek to overcome critical constraints and delays in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action and set a positive and realistic course for the future. The final outcome will depend on the resolve of all stakeholders in the Brussels Declaration to make this decade exemplary with respect to the achievements of the LDCs in terms of growth and sustainable development.**

(a) LDCs should continue with policy reforms, including the strengthening of governance and democratization mechanisms that will improve their capacity to implement programmes of assistance. Coordination of important political, economic and social action in concert with regional economic groupings should be pursued as a matter of priority.

(b) LDC Governments are encouraged to take positive steps to create the necessary mechanisms for the implementation and follow-up of activities related to the Brussels Programme of Action and may wish to seek the assistance of the United Nations Resident Coordinator and country team in these endeavours.

(c) LDCs should include a reference to the need for implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in their poverty reduction strategy papers.

(d) Monitoring and reporting of the Brussels Programme of Action by LDCs is an important element of the annual review and LDCs should submit their inputs on a timely basis.

(e) Consistent with the spirit of the Brussels Programme of Action, donor countries should continue their efforts to open up their markets to the LDCs and reduce internal subsidies, as well as tariffs, to allow the LDCs to compete on an equal basis. In this context, donors should continue to provide technical support and resources to LDCs to assist them in achieving the goals of the Programme of Action.

(f) Donor countries should consider setting aside adequate funds to support post-conflict recovery and reconstruction efforts in LDCs emerging from conflict, so that special appeals made for sudden crises with wide global visibility do not negatively affect funding for the alleviation of less visible but equally deserving complex emergencies.

(g) Donor countries may wish to consider establishing a specific category for LDCs, so that their development cooperation reports can incorporate all information relevant to those countries.

(h) Member States are encouraged to make voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund established to support the activities of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, as called upon by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/276.

(i) Regional development banks are encouraged to increase their support to LDCs for the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, including the provision of resources and appropriate technical expertise.

(j) South-South activities, including triangular cooperation, as well as linkages that allow LDCs to take greater advantage of preferential arrangements, should be pursued in implementing the Brussels Programme of Action. In their cooperation programmes the developing countries in a position to do so should provide special support and assistance to the LDCs.

(k) International/multilateral organizations that have not already done so are encouraged to consider establishing a specific category for LDCs in their annual reporting and other activities.

(l) Civil society/NGOs and the private sector, as important development partners of LDCs, should mobilize their constituencies to enhance the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels.

Notes

¹ A/CONF.191/11.

² A/56/645.

³ Inputs were received from:

Least developed countries: Bhutan, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Samoa, Somalia, Togo, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia;

Members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD): Canada, the European Commission, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovak Republic, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;

United Nations bodies and organizations: DESA/DAW, DPA, ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, FAO, GEF/UNDP, Global Compact, ILO, IMF, ITC, ITU, UNAIDS, UNCDF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNIFEM, UNV, WHO, WIPO, WMO, World Bank and WTO;

Other multilateral organizations: African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, ASEAN, SAARC;

Civil society/NGOs and the private sector: Franciscans-International, ICC, LDC Watch and the United Nations Non-governmental Liaison Service (NGLS).

⁴ From Bangladesh, Nepal, Malawi, Togo and Zambia.

⁵ European Commission contribution to the present report, 17 April 2003.

⁶ FAO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, WFP, WIPO and WTO.

⁷ The Asian Development Bank, the African Development Bank, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

⁸ Bhutan, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Mozambique and Rwanda. UNCTAD, Report of the Commission on Investment Technology and Related Issues on its fifth session (TD/B48/4).

⁹ Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Mozambique, and Sao Tome and Principe. UNCTAD, *World Investment Report 2002*.

¹⁰ Government of Germany communication to the Office of the High Representative dated 2 April 2003, "Beyond Review: sustainable development and PRSP: challenges for developing countries and development cooperation". LDC participants in the conference included Ethiopia, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Senegal, Uganda and Yemen.

¹¹ ECA, Report on the progress of implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action for African LDCs, April 2003.

¹² The Big Table is an initiative designed by ECA to promote frank and constructive dialogue between African finance ministers and their OECD counterparts.

¹³ The PRSP Learning Group is a forum sponsored by ECA to facilitate African peer learning from the experience with PRSPs.

¹⁴ Cambodia, Ethiopia, Mali and Nepal.

¹⁵ Burundi, Burkina Faso, Lesotho, Mauritania, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.

¹⁶ Political accountability, civil society participation, a competitive private sector, institutional restraints on power, public sector management.

- ¹⁷ United Nations, *Hope for the Future, Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals 2003*, table I: 2002 United Nations consolidated inter-agency humanitarian assistance appeals, summary of requirements and contributions by affected country/region as of 14 March 2003, www.reliefweb.int.
- ¹⁸ See www.developmentgoals.org.
- ¹⁹ DAC Journal 2002, vol. 3, No. 2.
- ²⁰ P. Svedberg, "841 million undernourished?", *World Development*, vol. 27, No. 12.
- ²¹ UNCTAD, *The Least Developed Countries 2002 Report*.
- ²² Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, and East Timor.
- ²³ Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- ²⁴ Angola, Bangladesh, Benin, Burundi, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Rwanda, Togo, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.
- ²⁵ Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mauritania, Nepal and Togo.
- ²⁶ Chad, Guinea-Bissau and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- ²⁷ The UNCTAD publication *The Least Developed Countries 2002 Report*, "Escaping the poverty trap", refers to five quantifiable goals (omitting ports and airports) that are included in the six goals and targets of the Brussels Programme of Action.
- ²⁸ Cambodian national poverty reduction strategy, 2003-2005.
- ²⁹ Bhutan, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Myanmar and Zambia.
- ³⁰ LDCs involved in the workshop included Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, and Sao Tome and Principe.
- ³¹ TCDC/13/1.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Cambodia, Lesotho, Malawi and Nepal.
- ³⁴ Cambodia, Madagascar and Mauritania.
- ³⁵ Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Senegal and Yemen.
- ³⁶ Bangladesh, Haiti, Gambia, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda.
- ³⁷ EC contribution to the present report.
- ³⁸ Benin, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.
- ³⁹ UNCTAD, LDC report, op. cit.
- ⁴⁰ A/48/914, annex, Common Fund for Commodities.
- ⁴¹ DAC Journal 2002, vol. 3, No. 2.
- ⁴² Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- ⁴³ Angola, Cape Verde, Mozambique, and Sao Tome and Principe.

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- ⁴⁴ Angola, Benin, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Mauritania and Mozambique.
- ⁴⁵ Government of the Gambia: Strategy for Poverty Alleviation (SPAII).
- ⁴⁶ Kingdom of Cambodia: National Poverty Reduction Strategy 2003-05.
- ⁴⁷ United Nations Hope for the Future, Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals 2003, op. cit.
- ⁴⁸ UNCTAD, FDI in Least Developed Countries at a Glance: 2002, United Nations, New York and Geneva, 2002.
- ⁴⁹ World Bank, *Global Development Finance, 2002: Analysis and Summary Tables*.
- ⁵⁰ Angola, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Lesotho, Mozambique, Myanmar, the Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. Source: various UNCTAD and World Bank reports (2001-2002).
- ⁵¹ UNCTAD, FDI in Least Developed Countries at a Glance, op. cit.
- ⁵² Contribution of EC to the present report.
- ⁵³ Report of the Secretary-General on comprehensive statistical data on operational activities for development for the year 2001 (E/2003/57).
- ⁵⁴ Angola, Bangladesh, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Haiti, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, the Sudan, Yemen, Uganda and Zambia.
- ⁵⁵ Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mozambique, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda.
- ⁵⁶ Benin, Chad, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Zambia.
- ⁵⁷ Burundi, the Central African Republic, Comoros, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Liberia, Myanmar, Somalia, the Sudan and Togo.
- ⁵⁸ Statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco at a Group of 77 meeting in New York, 16 January 2003.
- ⁵⁹ In July 2002, donor representatives concluded negotiation of the 13th replenishment of IDA and agreed on a framework for the projected IDA13 programme and its associated financing needs.
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General Assembly

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25 February 2004



Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 102

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/492)]

58/228. Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/279 of 12 July 2001, in which it endorsed the Brussels Declaration¹ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,² and its resolution 57/276 of 20 December 2002 on the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,

Reaffirming its resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, by which it adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in particular paragraph 15 thereof, in which the heads of State and Government undertook to address the special needs of the least developed countries,

Recalling Economic and Social Council decision 2001/320 of 24 October 2001, in which the Council decided to establish a regular sub-item entitled "Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010",

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/17 of 22 July 2003, in which the Council took note of the progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries,³

Taking note also of Economic and Social Council decision 2003/287 of 24 July 2003, in which the Council adopted the theme "Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010" as the theme of its high-level segment of 2004,

Taking note further of the report of the Secretary-General,³

¹ A/CONF.191/13, chap. I.

² Ibid., chap. II.

³ A/58/86-E/2003/81.

II

1. *Expresses its deep concern* over the weak implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010,² and expresses its expectation of more vigorous implementation by all partners;

2. *Reiterates* that the Programme of Action offers a framework for partnership, based on mutual commitments by the least developed countries and their development partners to undertake concrete actions in a number of interlinked areas, as set out in the Programme of Action;

3. *Calls upon* the least developed countries to continue, with the support of their development partners, to fulfil their commitments and to promote the implementation of the actions contained in the Programme of Action by translating them into specific measures within their national development frameworks and poverty eradication strategies, in particular poverty reduction strategy papers, where they exist, with the involvement of civil society, including the private sector, on the basis of a broad-based inclusive dialogue, as well as to continue to promote an enabling environment for the effective mobilization and utilization of resources consistent with paragraph 82 of the Programme of Action;

4. *Calls upon* the development partners of the least developed countries, including the multilateral financial institutions, to fulfil their commitments regarding the effective and expeditious implementation of the Programme of Action, and urges the developed countries that have not yet done so to make concrete efforts to effectively implement their commitments on official development assistance to the least developed countries, as contained in paragraph 83 of the Programme of Action;

5. *Urges* the least developed countries and their development partners to make the Programme of Action an effective tool for the implementation of the poverty reduction strategies at the national level for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

6. *Invites* the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, and all other international organizations, within their respective mandates, to support as a priority the implementation of the Programme of Action, including programmes of financial and technical cooperation devoted to the least developed countries in support of their national development programmes, including their poverty reduction strategies;

7. *Stresses* the need for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action and its annual assessment at the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, and recognizes in this regard the critical importance of the participation of the least developed countries in the assessment process of the Programme of Action;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to facilitate the participation of government representatives from the least developed countries in the annual assessment by the Economic and Social Council of the Programme of Action within the context of the overall financial provisions established by the General Assembly in its resolution 1798 (XVII) of 11 December 1962 and subsequent amendments;

9. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures, within existing resources and with the full participation of the regional commissions and relevant United Nations bodies, to support the participation of the least developed

countries in international meetings, as well as in their preparation and consultation processes;

10. *Emphasizes* the importance of coordinating action within the United Nations system for the implementation of the Programme of Action, and calls upon the Secretary-General to take appropriate measures to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to fulfil its functions in accordance with General Assembly resolution 56/227 of 24 December 2001;

11. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to submit, through the Economic and Social Council, an annual progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action in a more analytical and results-oriented way by placing greater emphasis on concrete results and indicating the progress achieved in its implementation.

*78th plenary meeting
23 December 2003*

L

Micro finance

58/221

23 December 2003

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of Microcredit, 2005..... 490



Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/488)]

58/221. Programme of Action for the International Year of Microcredit, 2005

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/197 of 15 December 1998, by which it proclaimed 2005 the International Year of Microcredit and requested that the observance of the Year be a special occasion for giving impetus to microcredit programmes in all countries, particularly the developing countries,

Recalling also its resolution 52/194 of 18 December 1997, in which it emphasized the role of microcredit and microfinance as an important anti-poverty tool that promotes asset creation, employment and economic security and empowers people living in poverty, especially women,

Stressing that people living in poverty in rural and urban areas need access to microcredit and microfinance that enhance their ability to increase income, build assets and mitigate vulnerability in times of hardship,

Bearing in mind the importance of microfinance instruments such as credit, savings and related business services in providing access to capital for people living in poverty,

Recognizing the need to facilitate the access of people living in poverty, especially women, to microcredit and microfinance to enable them to undertake microenterprises so as to generate self-employment and contribute to achieving empowerment,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General containing the draft programme of action for the International Year of Microcredit, 2005;¹

2. *Emphasizes* that the observance of 2005 as the International Year of Microcredit will provide a significant opportunity to raise awareness of the importance of microcredit and microfinance in the eradication of poverty, to share good practices and to further enhance financial sector developments that support sustainable pro-poor financial services in all countries;

¹ A/58/179.

3. *Invites* the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat and the United Nations Capital Development Fund to jointly coordinate the activities of the United Nations system regarding the preparations for and observance of the Year;

4. *Recognizes* the importance of scaling up microcredit and microfinance services and of using the Year as a platform to find ways of enhancing development impact and sustainability through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned;

5. *Invites* Member States to consider establishing national coordinating committees or focal points with responsibility for promoting the activities related to the preparations for and observance of the Year;

6. *Invites* Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society to collaborate in the preparations for and observance of the Year and to raise public awareness and knowledge about microcredit and microfinance;

7. *Recognizes* that access to microcredit and microfinance can contribute to achieving the goals and targets of major United Nations conferences and summits, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,² in particular the targets relating to poverty eradication, gender equality and the empowerment of women;

8. *Encourages* the holding of regional and subregional events on microcredit and microfinance, and, in this regard, welcomes the holding of the Asia-Pacific Region Microcredit Summit Meeting of Councils, in Dhaka, from 16 to 19 February 2004;

9. *Encourages* Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and foundations to make voluntary contributions and/or to lend other forms of support to the Year, in accordance with the guidelines for international years;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the preparations for the International Year of Microcredit, 2005, in consultation with Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society, and to submit it to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session under the item entitled "Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)".

*78th plenary meeting
23 December 2003*

² See resolution 55/2.

M

Mountains

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General Assembly

Distr.: General
8 March 2006

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 52 (e)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/488/Add.5)]

60/198. Sustainable mountain development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/24 of 10 November 1998, by which it proclaimed 2002 the International Year of Mountains,

Recalling also its resolutions 55/189 of 20 December 2000, 57/245 of 20 December 2002 and 58/216 of 23 December 2003,

Recalling further its resolution 59/238 of 22 December 2004 on rendering assistance to poor mountain countries to overcome obstacles in socio-economic and ecological areas,

Recognizing chapter 13 of Agenda 21¹ and all relevant paragraphs of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”),² in particular paragraph 42 thereof, as the overall policy frameworks for sustainable development in mountain regions,

Noting the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions (“Mountain Partnership”), launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development, with benefits from the committed support of forty-four countries, fourteen intergovernmental organizations and sixty-eight organizations from major groups, as an important approach to addressing the various interrelated dimensions of sustainable development in mountain regions,

Noting also the Bishkek Mountain Platform,³ the outcome document of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, held at Bishkek from 28 October to 1 November 2002, which was the concluding event of the International Year of Mountains,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General entitled “Sustainable mountain development”,⁴

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

³ A/C.2/57/7, annex.

⁴ A/60/309.

2. *Notes with appreciation* that a growing network of Governments, organizations, major groups and individuals around the world recognize the importance of sustainable development of mountain regions for poverty eradication, as well as the global importance of mountains as the source of most of the Earth's freshwater, as repositories of rich biological diversity, as popular destinations for recreation and tourism and as areas of important cultural diversity, knowledge and heritage;

3. *Notes with concern* that there remain key challenges to achieving sustainable development, eradicating poverty in mountain regions and protecting mountain ecosystems, and that populations in mountain regions are frequently among the poorest of a given country;

4. *Notes* that the growing demand for natural resources, including water, the consequences of erosion, deforestation and other forms of watershed degradation, the occurrence of natural disasters, as well as increasing outmigration, the pressures of industry, transport, tourism, mining, agriculture and the consequences of global climate change are some of the key challenges in fragile mountain ecosystems to implementing sustainable development and eradicating poverty in mountains, consistent with the Millennium Development Goals;

5. *Expresses its deep concern* at the number and scale of disasters and their increasing impact within recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world, in particular in mountain regions, especially those in developing countries;

6. *Underlines* that action at the national level is a key factor in achieving progress in sustainable mountain development, welcomes its steady increase in recent years with a multitude of events, activities and initiatives, and invites the international community to support the efforts of developing countries to develop and implement strategies and programmes, including, where required, enabling policies and laws for the sustainable development of mountains, within the framework of national development plans;

7. *Encourages* the further establishment of committees or similar multi-stakeholder institutional arrangements and mechanisms at the national level to enhance intersectoral coordination and collaboration for sustainable development in mountain regions;

8. *Also encourages* increased involvement of relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, in the development and implementation of programmes and activities related to sustainable development in mountains;

9. *Underlines* the need for improved access to resources for women in mountain regions as well as the need to strengthen the role of women in mountain regions in decision-making processes that affect their communities, cultures and environments;

10. *Stresses* that indigenous cultures, traditions and knowledge, including in the field of medicine, are to be fully considered, respected and promoted in development policy and planning in mountain regions, and underlines the importance of promoting full participation and involvement of mountain communities in decisions that affect them and of integrating indigenous knowledge, heritage and values in all development initiatives;

II

11. *Recognizes* that many developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition need to be assisted in the formulation and implementation of national strategies and programmes for sustainable mountain development, through bilateral, multilateral and South-South cooperation, as well as through other forms of collaborative approaches;

12. *Notes* that funding for sustainable mountain development has become increasingly important, especially in view of the greater recognition of the global importance of mountains and the high level of extreme poverty, food insecurity and hardship facing mountain communities;

13. *Invites* Governments, the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility, all relevant United Nations conventions and their funding mechanisms, within their respective mandates, and all relevant stakeholders from civil society and the private sector to consider providing support, including through voluntary financial contributions, to local, national and international programmes and projects for sustainable development in mountain regions;

14. *Underlines* the importance for sustainable development in mountains of exploring a wide range of funding sources, such as public-private partnerships, increased opportunities for microfinance, including microinsurance, small housing loans, savings, education and health accounts, and support for entrepreneurs seeking to develop small and medium-sized businesses and, where appropriate, on a case-by-case basis, debt for sustainable development swaps;

15. *Underlines also* the importance of enhancing the sustainability of ecosystems that provide essential resources and services for human well-being and economic activity and developing innovative means of financing for their protection;

16. *Notes with satisfaction* the recent adoption by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity,⁵ of the programme of work on mountain biological diversity, the overall purpose of which is the significant reduction of the loss of mountain biological diversity by 2010 at the global, regional and national levels, and its implementation, which aims at making a significant contribution to poverty eradication in mountain regions;

17. *Recognizes* that mountain ranges are usually shared among several countries, and in this context encourages transboundary cooperation approaches, where the States concerned agree, to the sustainable development of mountain ranges and information-sharing in this regard;

18. *Notes with appreciation* in this context the Convention on the Protection of the Alps,⁶ which promotes constructive new approaches to integrated, sustainable development of the Alps, including through its thematic protocols on spatial planning, mountain farming, conservation of nature and landscape, mountain forests, population and culture, tourism, soil protection, energy and transport, and welcomes the recent membership of the Convention in the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions;

⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 1917, No. 32724.

19. *Also notes with appreciation* the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians,⁷ adopted and signed by the seven countries of the region to provide a framework for cooperation and multisectoral policy coordination, a platform for joint strategies for sustainable development and a forum for dialogue between all involved stakeholders;

20. *Stresses* the importance of capacity-building, institutional strengthening and educational programmes in order to foster sustainable mountain development at all levels and to enhance awareness of good practices in sustainable development in mountain regions and of the nature of relationships between highland and lowland areas;

21. *Encourages* the development and implementation of global, regional and national communication programmes to build on the awareness and momentum for change created by the International Year of Mountains and the opportunity provided annually by International Mountain Day on 11 December;

22. *Also encourages* Member States to collect and produce information and to establish databases devoted to mountains so as to capitalize on knowledge to support interdisciplinary research, programmes and projects and to improve decision-making and planning;

23. *Further encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to further enhance their constructive efforts to strengthen inter-agency collaboration to achieve more effective implementation of relevant chapters of Agenda 21,¹ including chapter 13 and paragraph 42 and other relevant paragraphs of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,² taking into account the inter-agency group on mountains and the need for the further involvement of the United Nations system, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations University, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, as well as international financial institutions and other relevant international organizations;

24. *Recognizes* the efforts of the Mountain Partnership implemented in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/61 of 25 July 2003, invites the international community and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to consider joining the Mountain Partnership, and invites the Partnership Secretariat to report on its activities and achievements to the fourteenth meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2006, including in regard to the thematic cluster issues of energy, climate change, air pollution and atmosphere and industrial development;

25. *Notes with appreciation* in this context the efforts of the Mountain Partnership to cooperate with existing multilateral instruments relevant to mountains, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa,⁸ the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,⁹ the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

⁷ Available from www.carpathianconvention.org/text.htm.

⁸ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1954, No. 33480.

⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

and mountain-related regional instruments such as the Convention on the Protection of the Alps and the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians;

26. *Takes note* of the conclusions of the second global meeting of the members of the Mountain Partnership, held in Cusco, Peru, on 28 and 29 October 2004, at the invitation of the Government of Peru;

27. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session on the implementation of the present resolution, under a sub-item entitled “Sustainable mountain development” of the item entitled “Sustainable development”.

*68th plenary meeting
22 December 2005*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 February 2005



Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 85 (h)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/483/Add.8)]

59/238. Rendering assistance to poor mountain countries to overcome obstacles in socio-economic and ecological areas

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/24 of 10 November 1998, by which it proclaimed 2002 the International Year of Mountains,

Recalling also its resolutions 55/189 of 20 December 2000, 57/245 of 20 December 2002 and 58/216 of 23 December 2003,

Recalling further the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted on 8 September 2000,¹

Recalling chapter 13 of Agenda 21² and all relevant paragraphs of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”),³ in particular paragraph 42 thereof, as the overall policy frameworks for sustainable development in mountain regions,

Decides to consider at its sixtieth session, under the item entitled “Sustainable development”, a sub-item entitled “Rendering assistance to poor mountain countries to overcome obstacles in socio-economic and ecological areas”, bearing in mind its resolution 58/216.

*75th plenary meeting
22 December 2004*

¹ See resolution 55/2.

² *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

³ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.



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Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 94 (g)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/484/Add.7)]

58/216. Sustainable development in mountain regions

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 53/24 of 10 November 1998, by which it proclaimed 2002 the International Year of Mountains,

Recalling also its resolutions 55/189 of 20 December 2000 and 57/245 of 20 December 2002,

Recognizing chapter 13 of Agenda 21¹ and all relevant paragraphs of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),² in particular paragraph 42 thereof, as the overall policy frameworks for sustainable development in mountain regions,

Noting the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions ("Mountain Partnership"), launched during the World Summit on Sustainable Development with the committed support of thirty-eight countries, fifteen intergovernmental organizations and thirty-eight organizations from major groups, as an important approach to addressing the various interrelated dimensions of sustainable development in mountain regions,

Taking note of the Bishkek Mountain Platform,³ the outcome document of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit, held in Bishkek from 28 October to 1 November 2002, which was the concluding event of the International Year of Mountains,

1. *Takes note* of the report transmitted by the Secretary-General on the International Year of Mountains, 2002;⁴

2. *Welcomes* the significant results achieved during the Year, which substantially increased awareness of and strengthened interest in sustainable

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

² *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

³ A/C.2/57/7, annex.

⁴ A/58/134.

development and poverty eradication in mountain regions, as well as acting as a catalyst for long-term effective action to implement chapter 13 of Agenda 21¹ and paragraph 42 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;²

3. *Notes with appreciation* that a growing network of Governments, organizations, major groups and individuals around the world know that mountains are globally important as the source of most of the Earth's freshwater, as repositories of rich biological diversity, as popular destinations for recreation and tourism and as areas of important cultural diversity, knowledge and heritage;

4. *Also notes with appreciation* the effective role played by Governments, as well as major groups, academic institutions and international organizations and agencies, in the activities related to the Year, including the establishment of seventy-eight national committees or similar mechanisms;

5. *Appreciates* the work undertaken by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as the lead agency for the Year, as well as the valuable contributions made by the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations University, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children's Fund;

6. *Underlines* the fact that there remain key challenges to implementing sustainable development and eradicating poverty in mountain regions as well as challenges in the areas of national involvement, international cooperation, support for partnerships and mobilization of financial resources, and against this background:

(a) Encourages the United Nations system to enhance efforts to strengthen inter-agency collaboration to achieve more effective implementation of chapter 13 of Agenda 21 and paragraph 42 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

(b) Also encourages the continued establishment and development of mountain-related national committees, focal points and other multi-stakeholder mechanisms at the national level for sustainable development in mountain regions;

(c) Supports national efforts, within the framework of national development plans, to develop goals and strategic plans for the sustainable development of mountains, as well as enabling policies and laws, programmes and projects;

(d) Encourages transboundary approaches, where the States concerned agree, to the sustainable development of mountain ranges and information-sharing in this regard;

(e) Also encourages Member States to collect and produce information and to establish databases devoted to mountains so as to capitalize on knowledge to support interdisciplinary research, programmes and projects and to improve decision-making and planning;

(f) Supports the development and implementation of global, regional and national communication programmes to build on the awareness and momentum for change established by the Year;

(g) Stresses the importance of capacity-building and educational programmes to enhance awareness of good practices in sustainable development in mountain regions and the nature of relationships between highland and lowland areas;

(h) Calls for the improvement of mountain women's access to resources and the strengthening of their role in their communities and cultures, and in this context

takes note of the recommendations of the Thimpu Declaration adopted at the Celebrating Mountain Women conference, held at Thimpu from 1 to 4 October 2002;

7. *Notes* the entry into force of the nine Protocols to the Convention on the Protection of the Alps as a contribution to regional cooperation for sustainable development in that mountain region;

8. *Notes also* the adoption and signing of the Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians by the countries of the region;

9. *Notes further* that a consultative process has been conducted with all Mountain Partnership stakeholders, in particular donor countries, with a view to determining the best options for further assisting all stakeholders in the implementation of the Partnership;

10. *Takes note* of the conclusions of the first global meeting of the members of the Mountain Partnership, held in Merano, Italy, on 5 and 6 October 2003,⁵ at the invitation of the Government of Italy;

11. *Notes* that the next global meeting of the members of the Mountain Partnership will be organized during the second half of 2004, and welcomes in this context the offer of the Government of Peru to host the meeting;

12. *Also notes* in this context that the Mountain Partnership is a cooperation mechanism that is dynamic, transparent, flexible and participatory in nature and that it is open to all Governments, including local and regional authorities, as well as to intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations whose objectives and activities are consistent with the vision and mission of the Partnership;

13. *Further notes* that Mountain Partnership members committed themselves to implement the Partnership in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/61 of 25 July 2003, and calls upon them to comply with the criteria and guidelines agreed in the decision taken by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session;⁶

14. *Invites* the international community and other relevant partners to consider joining the Mountain Partnership;

15. *Encourages* all relevant entities of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to continue their constructive collaboration in the context of the follow-up to the Year, taking into account the inter-agency group on mountains and the need for the further involvement of the United Nations system, in particular the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations University, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Children's Fund, international financial institutions and other relevant international organizations, taking into account the recommendations formulated in the Bishkek Mountain Platform;³

16. *Encourages* Governments, the United Nations system, the international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility and other relevant United Nations funding mechanisms, such as the Global Mechanism of the United Nations

⁵ A/C.2/58/8, annex.

⁶ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 9 (E/2003/29)*, chap. I, sect. A.

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Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, as well as all relevant stakeholders from civil society organizations and the private sector, to provide support, including through voluntary financial contributions, to local, national and international programmes and projects for sustainable development in mountain regions;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the status of sustainable development in mountain regions, including an overall analysis of the challenges that lie ahead and appropriate policy recommendations, under a sub-item entitled “Sustainable development in mountain regions” of the item entitled “Environment and sustainable development”.

*78th plenary meeting
23 December 2003*

N

Outer space

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General Assembly

Distr.: General
25 January 2005

Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 74

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee
(Fourth Committee) (A/59/469)]

59/116. International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/122 of 13 December 1996, 54/68 of 6 December 1999 and 58/89 of 9 December 2003,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and also of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space in order to meet emerging new challenges, especially for developing countries,

Seriously concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, and bearing in mind the importance of article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies,¹

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Considering that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and applications as well as in various national and cooperative space projects, which contributes to international cooperation, and the importance of

¹ Resolution 2222 (XXI), annex.

further developing the legal framework to strengthen international cooperation in this field,

Convinced of the importance of the recommendations in the resolution entitled “The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development”, adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999,² and the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration,³

Convinced also that the use of space science and technology and their applications, in such areas as telemedicine, tele-education and disaster management, and environmental protection as well as other Earth observation applications, contribute to achieving the objectives of the global conferences of the United Nations that address various aspects of economic, social and cultural development, inter alia, poverty eradication,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-seventh session,⁴

1. *Endorses* the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-seventh session;⁴

2. *Urges* States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space⁵ to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties as well as incorporating them in their national legislation;

3. *Notes* that, at its forty-third session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/89;⁶

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to send to the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of States that have not yet become parties to the above-mentioned international treaties, the letter⁷ and document,⁷ as endorsed by the Legal Subcommittee, encouraging their States to participate in those treaties, and to send a similar letter to intergovernmental organizations that have not yet declared their acceptance of the rights and obligations under those treaties;⁸

5. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-fourth session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

² See *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19–30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

³ See resolution 55/2.

⁴ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/59/20)*.

⁵ Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 2222 (XXI), annex); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 2345 (XXII), annex); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (resolution 2777 (XXVI), annex); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex); and Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 34/68, annex).

⁶ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/59/20)*, chap. II.D.

⁷ A/AC.105/826, annex I, appendix I.

⁸ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/59/20)*, chap. II.D, para. 150.

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- (a) Consider the following as regular agenda items:
 - (i) General exchange of views;
 - (ii) Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space;
 - (iii) Information on the activities of international organizations relating to space law;
 - (iv) Matters relating to:
 - a. The definition and delimitation of outer space;
 - b. The character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union;
 - (b) Consider the following single issues/items for discussion:
 - (i) Review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;⁹
 - (ii) Examination of the preliminary draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment, opened for signature at Cape Town, South Africa, on 16 November 2001:
 - a. Considerations relating to the possibility of the United Nations serving as supervisory authority under the future protocol;
 - b. Considerations relating to the relationship between the terms of the future protocol and the rights and obligations of States under the legal regime applicable to outer space;
 - (c) Consider the practice of States and international organizations in registering space objects in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Committee;¹⁰
6. *Notes* that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-fourth session, will submit its proposals to the Committee for new items to be considered by the Subcommittee at its forty-fifth session in 2006;
7. *Also notes* that, in the context of paragraph 5 (a) (ii) above, the Legal Subcommittee at its forty-fourth session will reconvene its Working Group and review the need to extend the mandate of the Working Group beyond that session of the Subcommittee;
8. *Further notes* that, in the context of paragraph 5 (a) (iv) a. above, the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its Working Group on the item only to consider matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space;
9. *Notes* that the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its Working Group to consider the questions reflected in paragraphs 5 (b) (ii) a. and b. above separately;
10. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Legal Subcommittee, in the context of paragraph 5 (b) (ii) a. above, to establish an open-ended ad hoc working group to

⁹ See resolution 47/68.

¹⁰ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20)*, para. 199.

continue between the forty-third and forty-fourth sessions of the Subcommittee, the consideration of the question of the appropriateness of the United Nations acting as supervisory authority, and notes that the working group would prepare a report, including the text of a draft resolution, to be submitted to the Subcommittee for consideration at its forty-fourth session;¹¹

11. *Agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 5 (c) above, the Legal Subcommittee should establish a working group in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Committee;¹⁰

12. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-first session, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/89;¹²

13. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-second session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(a) Consider the following items:

(i) General exchange of views and introduction to reports submitted on national activities;

(ii) United Nations Programme on Space Applications;

(iii) Implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III);

(iv) Matters relating to remote-sensing of the Earth by satellite, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth's environment;

(b) Consider the following items in accordance with the work plans adopted by the Committee:¹³

(i) Space debris;

(ii) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space;

(iii) Space-system-based telemedicine;

(iv) Near-Earth objects;

(v) Space-system-based disaster management support;

(c) Consider the following single issues/items for discussion:

(i) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/59/20), para. 170.

¹² *Ibid.*, chap. II.C.

¹³ See A/AC.105/761, para. 130, and *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/59/20)*, paras. 141 and 144, for item (i); A/AC.105/804, annex III, for item (ii); *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20)*, para. 138, for item (iii); A/AC.105/823, annex II, para. 18, for item (iv); and A/AC.105/823, annex II, para. 15, for item (v).

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developments in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries;

(ii) Support to proclaim the year 2007 the International Geophysical and Heliophysical Year;

14. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-second session will submit its proposal to the Committee for a draft provisional agenda for the forty-third session of the Subcommittee, in 2006;

15. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Committee on Space Research and the International Astronautical Federation, in liaison with member States, be invited to arrange a symposium to address high-resolution and hyperspectral satellite data integration for precision farming, environmental monitoring and possible new applications, with as wide a participation as possible, to be held during the first week of the forty-second session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee;

16. *Agrees* that, in the context of paragraphs 13 (a) (ii) and (iii) and 14 above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-second session should reconvene the Working Group of the Whole;

17. *Also agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 13 (b) (i) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-second session, should reconvene the Working Group on Space Debris to consider, as necessary, the proposals of the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee on space debris mitigation and any related comments that might be received;¹⁴

18. *Further agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 13 (b) (ii) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-second session, should reconvene its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;

19. *Endorses* the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2005, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications and endorsed by the Committee;¹⁵

20. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in accordance with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the African regional centres for space science and technology education, in the French language and in the English language, located in Morocco and Nigeria, respectively, as well as the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, continued their education programmes in 2004, that all the above regional centres have entered into an affiliation agreement with the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat, and that the Office is providing technical support to the Government of Jordan for the establishment of the regional centre for space science and technology education for Western Asia;

21. *Welcomes* the memorandum of understanding between the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat and the Pro Tempore Secretariat of the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, under which the parties demonstrated their

¹⁴ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/59/20)*, paras. 141 and 144.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 70; see also A/AC.105/815, sects. II-IV.

intention to collaborate in promoting and implementing joint activities, and invites the Pro Tempore Secretariat to inform the Committee of the work accomplished;

22. *Notes with satisfaction* that the Government of Ecuador is considering positively hosting the Fifth Space Conference of the Americas, to be held in Quito in the second half of 2005 or in 2006, and that the convening of the Conference will be in accordance with the desire of Member States in the Latin American and Caribbean region to institutionalize the Space Conference of the Americas;

23. *Also notes with satisfaction* that concerning the report on the review of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, the Committee, at its forty-seventh session, approved the draft report of the Committee as finalized by the Working Group which was reconvened at that session to prepare the report, and submitted the report to the General Assembly for use in its review and appraisal of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III at its fifty-ninth session;¹⁶

24. *Recommends* that more attention be paid and political support be provided to all matters relating to the protection and the preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth's environment;

25. *Considers* that it is essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, calls for the continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, also considers that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and agrees that international cooperation is needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions;

26. *Urges* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

27. *Emphasizes* the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, including mitigation of the consequences of disasters, in particular in the developing countries;

28. *Notes* that space science and technology and their applications could make important contributions to economic, social and cultural development and welfare as indicated in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",² notes with satisfaction the convening of a conference entitled "International Conference on Space and Water: Towards Sustainable Development and Human Security" in the context of the International Air and Space Fair, held at Santiago de Chile from 29 March to 4 April 2004, and also notes that the next Fair will be held in 2006;

¹⁶ See A/59/174.

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29. *Notes with satisfaction* the convening of the International Seminar on Satellite Technology Applications in Communications and Remote Sensing in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, in October 2004 in cooperation with the Inter-Islamic Network on Space Sciences and Technology Applications;

30. *Agrees* that the benefits of space technology and its applications should be prominently brought to the attention of conferences organized within the United Nations system to address global issues relating to social, economic and cultural development and that the use of space technology should be promoted towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;³

31. *Notes with satisfaction* the increased efforts of the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to promote the use of space science and technology and their applications in carrying out actions recommended in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation")¹⁷ and the joint initiative taken by the Committee and the Inter-Agency Meeting to compile a list of space-related initiatives and programmes that correspond to recommendations contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;¹⁸

32. *Notes* that space technology could play a central role in disaster reduction and that both the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee could contribute to the follow-up to the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to be held in Kobe, Japan, in January 2005;

33. *Urges* entities of the United Nations system, particularly those participating in the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, to examine, in cooperation with the Committee, how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration, particularly in the areas relating to, inter alia, food security and increasing opportunities for education;

34. *Invites* the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to continue to contribute to the work of the Committee and to report to the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work conducted at its annual session;

35. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, and agrees that during its consideration of the matter, the Committee could consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conference of the Americas and the role space technology could play in the implementation of recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

36. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider a report on the activities of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue as a part of its consideration of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications under the

¹⁷ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

¹⁸ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/59/20)*, para. 28; and A/AC.105/2004/CRP.8.

agenda item entitled “Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee”, and invites Member States to report on their activities regarding the System;

37. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-eighth session, its agenda item entitled “Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status”;

38. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-eighth session, its agenda item entitled “Space and society” under the special theme for the focus of discussions for the period 2004–2006 entitled “Space and education”, in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Committee;¹⁹

39. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider, at its forty-eighth session, its agenda item entitled “Space and water” and urges entities of the United Nations system and invites other intergovernmental entities dealing with issues relating to the use and management of water resources as well as space agencies to contribute to the work of the Committee by, inter alia, sharing their experience in the use of space-related technology for water resources management;

40. *Also agrees* that a symposium on space and archaeology should be held during the forty-eighth session of the Committee;

41. *Notes* that in accordance with the agreement reached by the Committee at its forty-sixth session on the measures relating to the future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,²⁰ on the basis of the measures relating to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,²¹ the Group of African States, the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States and the Group of Western European and Other States nominated their candidates for the offices of Second Vice-Chairman/Rapporteur of the Committee, Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee and Chairman of the Committee, respectively, for the period 2006–2007, at the forty-seventh session of the Committee, for its consideration;

42. *Urges* the Group of Asian States and the Group of Eastern European States to reach a consensus agreement on their candidates for the offices of Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the First Vice-Chairman of the Committee, respectively, before the forty-eighth session of the Committee;

43. *Agrees* that the Committee should reach agreement on all the officers of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the period 2006–2007 and that, for this purpose, the Committee should include in the agenda of its forty-eighth session an item on the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for that period;

44. *Decides* that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Thailand shall become members of the Committee;

45. *Requests* the Committee to consider ways to improve participation in its work by member States and entities with observer status, with a view to agreeing on specific recommendations in that regard at its forty-eighth session;

¹⁹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20)*, para. 239.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, annex II, paras. 4–9.

²¹ *Ibid.*, *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/52/20)*, annex I; see also *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20)*, annex II, appendix III.

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46. *Notes* that each of the regional groups has responsibility to actively promote the participation in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies of the member States of the Committee that are also members of the respective regional group, and agrees that the regional groups should consider this Committee-related matter among their members;

47. *Invites* the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to consider at its twenty-fifth session, in 2005, the question of the enhancement of the participation of the entities of the United Nations system in the work of the Committee and its Subcommittees, and requests the Office for Outer Space Affairs, in its capacity as the secretariat of the Inter-Agency Meeting, to report to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and the Legal Subcommittee, at their sessions in 2005, on the outcome of the discussions of the Inter-Agency Meeting;

48. *Agrees* that the Legal Subcommittee should, at its forty-fourth session, address the level of participation of the entities having permanent observer status with the Committee and report to the Committee, at its forty-eighth session, on means of enhancing their participation in the work of the Legal Subcommittee;

49. *Urges* the Committee to expand the scope of international cooperation relating to the social, economic, ethical and human dimension in space science and technology applications;

50. *Requests* entities of the United Nations system and other international organizations to continue and, where appropriate, to enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with reports on the issues dealt with in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies;

51. *Requests* the Committee to identify and consider new areas and mechanisms of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space to strengthen multilateralism, in accordance with the preamble to the present resolution, and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session, including its views on which subjects should be studied in the future.

*71st plenary meeting
10 December 2004*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 December 2003

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda item 82

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

*[on the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee
(Fourth Committee) (A/58/471)]*

58/89. International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/122 of 13 December 1996, 54/68 of 6 December 1999 and 57/116 of 11 December 2002,

Deeply convinced of the common interest of mankind in promoting and expanding the exploration and use of outer space, as the province of all mankind, for peaceful purposes and in continuing efforts to extend to all States the benefits derived therefrom, and also of the importance of international cooperation in this field, for which the United Nations should continue to provide a focal point,

Reaffirming the importance of international cooperation in developing the rule of law, including the relevant norms of space law and their important role in international cooperation for the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes, and of the widest possible adherence to international treaties that promote the peaceful uses of outer space in order to meet emerging new challenges, especially for developing countries,

Seriously concerned about the possibility of an arms race in outer space, and bearing in mind the importance of article IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies,¹

Recognizing that all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, should contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion and strengthening of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Considering that space debris is an issue of concern to all nations,

Noting the progress achieved in the further development of peaceful space exploration and applications as well as in various national and cooperative space projects, which contributes to international cooperation, and the importance of

¹ Resolution 2222 (XXI), annex.

further developing the legal framework to strengthen international cooperation in this field,

Convinced of the importance of the recommendations in the resolution entitled “The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development”, adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999,² and the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration,³

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III,⁴

Convinced that the use of space science and technology and their applications, in such areas as telemedicine, tele-education and Earth observation, contribute to achieving the objectives of the global conferences of the United Nations that address various aspects of economic, social and cultural development, inter alia, poverty eradication,

Having considered the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-sixth session,⁵

1. *Endorses* the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space on the work of its forty-sixth session;⁵

2. *Urges* States that have not yet become parties to the international treaties governing the uses of outer space⁶ to give consideration to ratifying or acceding to those treaties as well as incorporating them in their national legislation;

3. *Notes* that, at its forty-second session, the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued its work, as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/116;⁷

4. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-third session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

(a) Consider the following as regular agenda items:

(i) General exchange of views;

(ii) Status and application of the five United Nations treaties on outer space;

² See *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

³ See resolution 55/2.

⁴ A/58/174.

⁵ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20).

⁶ Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 2222 (XXI), annex); Agreement on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 2345 (XXII), annex); Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (resolution 2777 (XXVI), annex); Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (resolution 3235 (XXIX), annex); and Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (resolution 34/68, annex).

⁷ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20* (A/58/20), chap. II.D.

- (iii) Information on the activities of international organizations relating to space law;
 - (iv) Matters relating to:
 - a. The definition and delimitation of outer space;
 - b. The character and utilization of the geostationary orbit, including consideration of ways and means to ensure the rational and equitable use of the geostationary orbit without prejudice to the role of the International Telecommunication Union;
 - (b) Consider the following single issues/items for discussion:
 - (i) Review and possible revision of the Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;⁸
 - (ii) Examination of the preliminary draft protocol on matters specific to space assets to the Convention on International Interests in Mobile Equipment, opened for signature at Cape Town, South Africa, on 16 November 2001:
 - a. Considerations relating to the possibility of the United Nations serving as supervisory authority under the preliminary draft protocol;
 - b. Considerations relating to the relationship between the terms of the preliminary draft protocol and the rights and obligations of States under the legal regime applicable to outer space;
 - (iii) Contributions by the Legal Subcommittee to the Committee for the preparation of its report to the General Assembly for its review of the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III);
 - (c) Consider the practice of States and international organizations in registering space objects in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Committee;⁹
5. *Notes* that the Legal Subcommittee, at its forty-third session, will submit its proposals to the Committee for new items to be considered by the Subcommittee at its forty-fourth session, in 2005;
6. *Notes also* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (a) (ii) above, the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its Working Group with the terms of reference as agreed upon by the Legal Subcommittee,¹⁰ to meet for three years, from 2002 to 2004;
7. *Notes further* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (a) (iii) above, the Group of Experts on the Ethics of Outer Space, invited by the Committee at its forty-fourth session to identify which aspects of the report of the World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization might need to be studied by the Committee and

⁸ See resolution 47/68.

⁹ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20)*, para. 199.

¹⁰ See A/AC.105/763 and Corr.1, para. 118, and A/AC.105/787, para.138.

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to draft a report, in consultation with other international organizations and in close liaison with the World Commission, presented its report to the Legal Subcommittee, and agrees that the report should be transmitted to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization with the request that it keep the Committee and its subcommittees informed about its activities relating to outer space;

8. *Notes* that, in the context of paragraph 4 (a) (iv) above, the Legal Subcommittee will reconvene its Working Group on the item only to consider matters relating to the definition and delimitation of outer space;

9. *Agrees* that the Legal Subcommittee should reconvene its Working Group to consider the questions reflected in paragraphs 4 (b) (ii) a. and b. above separately;

10. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in accordance with paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 57/116, the Government of Austria continued to convene and facilitate intersessional informal consultations on the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the third term, and that consensus agreement was reached, before the forty-sixth session of the Committee, on the extension of the term of office of the current bureaux of the Committee and the future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies;

11. *Endorses* the agreement reached by the Committee on the extension of the term of office of the current bureau of the Committee and future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,¹¹ on the basis of the measures relating to the working methods of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies,¹² which were endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/56 of 10 December 1997, and notes that, in accordance with paragraph 14 of General Assembly resolution 57/116, the Committee conducted the election of its officers at its forty-sixth session;

12. *Agrees* that the Committee and its subcommittees, at the beginning of their sessions in 2004, should conduct the election of the officers agreed upon by the Committee at its forty-sixth session;¹³

13. *Also agrees* that, in accordance with the measures relating to the future composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies indicated in paragraph 11 above, the Committee at its forty-seventh session, in 2004, should reach agreement on all the officers of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the next term and that, for this purpose, the Committee should include in the agenda at its forty-seventh session an item on the composition of the bureaux of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies for the period 2006-2007;

14. *Urges* each of the five regional groups to ensure that agreement within the group on the officer to be determined for the period 2006-2007 is reached before the forty-seventh session of the Committee;

15. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its fortieth session, continued its work as mandated by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/116;¹⁴

¹¹ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20), annex II, paras. 4-9.*

¹² *Ibid.*, *Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/52/20), annex I.* See also *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20), annex II, appendix III.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, *Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20), para. 241.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. II.C.

16. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-first session, taking into account the concerns of all countries, in particular those of developing countries:

- (a) Consider the following items:
 - (i) General exchange of views and introduction to reports submitted on national activities;
 - (ii) United Nations Programme on Space Applications;
 - (iii) Implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III;
 - (iv) Matters relating to remote-sensing of the Earth by satellite, including applications for developing countries and monitoring of the Earth's environment;
- (b) Consider the following items in accordance with the work plans adopted by the Committee:¹⁵
 - (i) Space debris;
 - (ii) Use of nuclear power sources in outer space;
 - (iii) Space-system-based telemedicine;
- (c) Consider the following single issues/items for discussion:
 - (i) Examination of the physical nature and technical attributes of the geostationary orbit and its utilization and applications, including, inter alia, in the field of space communications, as well as other questions relating to developments in space communications, taking particular account of the needs and interests of developing countries;
 - (ii) Implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system;
 - (iii) Solar-terrestrial physics;

17. *Notes* that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-first session will submit its proposal to the Committee for a draft provisional agenda for the forty-second session of the Subcommittee, in 2005;

18. *Endorses* the recommendation of the Committee that the symposium to strengthen the partnership with industry should be organized during the first week of the forty-first session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and should address small satellite applications in agriculture, health and human security;

19. *Agrees* that, in the context of paragraphs 16 (a) (ii) and (iii) and 17 above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-first session should reconvene the Working Group of the Whole;

20. *Also agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 16 (b) (i) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, at its forty-first session, could establish a working group to consider comments from member States of the Committee on the proposals on debris mitigation presented by the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee to the Subcommittee at its fortieth session;¹⁶

¹⁵ See A/AC.105/761, para. 130, for item (i); A/AC.105/804, annex III, for item (ii); and *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20)*, para. 138, for item (iii).

¹⁶ See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20)*, para. 126.

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21. *Further agrees* that, in the context of paragraph 16 (b) (ii) above, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee at its forty-first session should reconvene its Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space;

22. *Endorses* the United Nations Programme on Space Applications for 2004, as proposed to the Committee by the Expert on Space Applications;¹⁷

23. *Notes with satisfaction* that, in accordance with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 50/27 of 6 December 1995, the African regional centres for space science and technology education, in the French language and in the English language, located in Morocco and Nigeria, respectively, and the Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific continued their education programmes in 2003, that the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education for Latin America and the Caribbean became affiliated to the United Nations and began its education programme, and that the United Nations Programme on Space Applications is providing technical support to the Government of Jordan for the establishment of the regional centre for space science and technology education for Western Asia;

24. *Also notes with satisfaction* the success of the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, held at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, from 14 to 17 May 2002, which adopted the Declaration of Cartagena de Indias and the Plan of Action,¹⁸ and notes the desire of Member States in the Latin American and Caribbean region to institutionalize the Space Conference of the Americas;

25. *Welcomes* the memorandum of understanding between the Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat and the Pro Tempore Secretariat of the Fourth Space Conference of the Americas, under which the parties demonstrated their intention to collaborate in promoting and implementing joint activities, and invites the Pro Tempore Secretariat to inform the Committee of the work accomplished;

26. *Urges* all Governments, entities of the United Nations system as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental entities conducting space-related activities to take the necessary action for the effective implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III, in particular its resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",² bearing in mind the need to promote the use of space technology towards implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;³

27. *Agrees* that, in accordance with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 55/122 of 8 December 2000, the Committee should include in the agenda of its forty-seventh session an item on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III;

28. *Notes with satisfaction* the work conducted by the twelve action teams that the Committee had established at its forty-fourth and forty-sixth sessions under the voluntary leadership of Member States to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III,¹⁹ and urges Member States to provide full support to the action teams in conducting their work;

¹⁷ See A/AC.105/790 and Corr.1, sects. II-IV.

¹⁸ *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/57/20)*, annex II.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, *Fifty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 20* and corrigendum (A/56/20 and Corr.1), paras. 50 and 55; *ibid.*, *Fifty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/57/20)*, paras. 42 and 43; and *ibid.*, *Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20)*, para. 62.

29. *Also notes with satisfaction* that the Committee made further progress in the preparation of its report under the agenda item on the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III for submission to the General Assembly, in order for the Assembly to review and appraise, at its fifty-ninth session, in 2004, in accordance with paragraph 16 of its resolution 54/68, the implementation of the outcome of UNISPACE III and to consider further actions and initiatives, and agrees that, in this context, the Working Group established by the Committee to prepare the above-mentioned report should be reconvened at the forty-seventh session of the Committee to complete its work;

30. *Notes* that in order to advance the preparation of the report of the Committee, mentioned in paragraph 29 above, the Working Group of the Committee could hold informal consultations during the forty-first session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as well as the forty-third session of the Legal Subcommittee;

31. *Urges* all Member States to contribute to the Trust Fund for the United Nations Programme on Space Applications to support activities to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III, in particular the priority project proposals as recommended by the Committee at its forty-third session;²⁰

32. *Recommends* that more attention be paid and political support be provided to all matters relating to the protection and the preservation of the outer space environment, especially those potentially affecting the Earth's environment;

33. *Considers* that it is essential that Member States pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources, with space debris, and other aspects of space debris, calls for the continuation of national research on this question, for the development of improved technology for the monitoring of space debris and for the compilation and dissemination of data on space debris, also considers that, to the extent possible, information thereon should be provided to the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and agrees that international cooperation is needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the impact of space debris on future space missions;

34. *Urges* all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the goal of preventing an arms race in outer space as an essential condition for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes;

35. *Emphasizes* the need to increase the benefits of space technology and its applications and to contribute to an orderly growth of space activities favourable to sustained economic growth and sustainable development in all countries, including mitigation of the consequences of disasters, in particular in the developing countries;

36. *Notes* that space science and technology and their applications could make important contributions to economic, social and cultural development and welfare as indicated in the resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development",² and notes also that the International Fair on Air and Space to be held at Santiago de Chile early in 2004

²⁰ Ibid., Fifty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/55/20), para. 87.

will address in an international conference the question “Space and water: towards sustainable development and human security”;

37. *Agrees* that the benefits of space technology and its applications should be prominently brought to the attention of conferences organized within the United Nations system to address global issues relating to social, economic and cultural development and that the use of space technology should be promoted towards achieving the objectives of those conferences and implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration;

38. *Notes with satisfaction* the increased efforts of the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to promote the use of space science and technology and their applications in carrying out actions recommended in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”);²¹

39. *Urges* entities of the United Nations system, particularly those participating in the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, to examine, in cooperation with the Committee, how space science and technology and their applications could contribute to implementing the United Nations Millennium Declaration, particularly in the areas relating to, inter alia, food security and increasing opportunities for education;

40. *Invites* the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities to continue to contribute to the work of the Committee and to report to the Committee and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on the work conducted at its annual session;

41. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, as a matter of priority, ways and means of maintaining outer space for peaceful purposes and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, and agrees that during its consideration of the matter, the Committee could consider ways to promote regional and interregional cooperation based on experiences stemming from the Space Conference of the Americas and the role space technology could play in the implementation of recommendations emerging from the World Summit on Sustainable Development;

42. *Agrees* that the Committee should continue to consider a report on the activities of the International Satellite System for Search and Rescue as a part of its consideration of the United Nations Programme on Space Applications under the agenda item entitled “Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee”, and invites Member States to report on their activities regarding the System;

43. *Notes* that in connection with the consideration of the implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system, under the agenda item entitled “Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee”, during the forty-seventh session of the Committee, a one-day workshop for industry would be organized with the participation of Member States and communications satellite operators to discuss how satellite-based communications could be used during natural disasters;

²¹ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

44. *Requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-seventh session, its agenda item entitled “Spin-off benefits of space technology: review of current status”;

45. *Also requests* the Committee to continue to consider, at its forty-seventh session, its agenda item entitled “Space and society”, and agrees that a special theme for the focus of discussions for the period 2004-2006 should be “Space and education”, in accordance with the work plan adopted by the Committee;²²

46. *Agrees* that a new item entitled “Space and water” should be included in the agenda of the Committee at its forty-seventh session, and urges entities of the United Nations system and invites other intergovernmental entities dealing with issues relating to the use and management of water resources as well as space agencies to contribute to the work of the Committee in this field;

47. *Welcomes* the continued interest of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya in becoming a member of the Committee, and, to this end, requests that constructive consultations be conducted as soon as possible within the Committee as well as among regional groups, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution, with a view to reaching a positive and final decision on the membership of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya at the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly;

48. *Requests* the Committee to consider ways to improve participation by member States and entities with observer status in its work, with a view to agreeing on specific recommendations in that regard at its forty-eighth session;

49. *Endorses* the decision of the Committee to grant permanent observer status to the Regional Centre for Remote Sensing of the North African States and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis;

50. *Invites* the Committee to expand the scope of international cooperation relating to the social, economic, ethical and human dimension in space science and technology applications;

51. *Requests* entities of the United Nations system and other international organizations to continue and, where appropriate, to enhance their cooperation with the Committee and to provide it with reports on the issues dealt with in the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies;

52. *Requests* the Committee to consider and identify new mechanisms of international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space to strengthen multilateralism, in accordance with the preamble to the present resolution, and to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, including its views on which subjects should be studied in the future.

*72nd plenary meeting
9 December 2003*

²² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20), para. 239.*



Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

*[on the report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee
(Fourth Committee) (A/58/471)]*

58/90. Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 54/68 of 6 December 1999, 55/122 of 8 December 2000, 56/51 of 10 December 2001 and 57/116 of 11 December 2002, concerning the review and appraisal by the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held at Vienna from 19 to 30 July 1999,¹

Taking note with satisfaction of the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies, in particular the action teams established by the Committee at its forty-fourth and forty-fifth sessions under the voluntary leadership of Member States, to implement the recommendations of UNISPACE III,

Noting the progress made by the Committee through its Working Group in preparing a report for submission to the General Assembly for the review, in accordance with paragraph 31 of Assembly resolution 55/122,

1. *Decides* to conduct the review of the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III) in plenary meeting(s) at its fifty-ninth session, under a separate agenda item entitled “Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space”;

2. *Requests* the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to submit its report on the review of the implementation of the recommendations of UNISPACE III to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session in plenary meeting(s);

¹ See *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3), chap. I, resolution 1.

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3. *Decides* that the plenary meeting(s) for the review shall be held in October 2004;

4. *Invites* Member States to participate in the plenary meeting(s) at the ministerial level or at the highest level possible.

*72nd plenary meeting
9 December 2003*

III

II

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-eighth Session
Supplement No. 20 (A/58/20)

Report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space



United Nations • New York, 2003

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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113. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had endorsed proposals to strengthen inter-agency cooperation in the use of outer space within the United Nations system, based on recommendations from the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities. Those proposals included: holding a half-day open informal session to which member States of the Committee would be invited to participate, for the purpose of promoting exchange of information between member States of the Committee and the members of the Inter-Agency Meeting; inviting United Nations entities to submit annual reports to the Subcommittee on specific themes; and inviting member States of the Committee to complete a list of space-related initiatives and programmes that they would carry out in response to specific action recommended in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Committee endorsed those proposals, which were reflected in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/804, paras. 93-95).

114. The Committee also noted with satisfaction that the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities had held its twenty-third session in Vienna from 22 to 24 January 2003 and that the report of the Inter-Agency Meeting on that session (A/AC.105/791 and Corr.1) and the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system: programme of work for 2003 and 2004 and future years (A/AC.105/792) were before the Committee.

115. The Committee noted that the twenty-fourth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting would be hosted by the World Meteorological Organization in Geneva in early 2004, before the forty-first session of the Subcommittee.

116. The Committee agreed that the Inter-Agency Meeting should continue to report to the Committee and the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its annual session.

5. Implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system

117. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/116, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had continued its consideration of an item on implementation of an integrated, space-based global natural disaster management system. The Committee noted that, in accordance with the three-year work plan adopted by the Subcommittee at its thirty-seventh session (A/AC.105/736, annex II, para. 41), the Subcommittee had reviewed possible global operational structures to handle natural disaster management, making maximum use of existing and planned space systems. The Committee took note of the discussion of the Subcommittee on this item, as reflected in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/804, paras. 97-115).

118. The Committee stressed the importance of operational access to global satellite databases for preventing natural disasters, especially in developing countries, and the need to identify and close gaps in the coverage of remote sensing satellites so that reliable information could be provided to all disaster-affected areas.

119. The Committee noted that the Charter on Cooperation to Achieve the Coordinated Use of Space Facilities in the Event of Natural or Technological

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Disasters had been activated 15 times in 2002, the latest in connection with the earthquake that had struck Algeria on 21 May 2003.

120. The Committee requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to convene a one-day workshop for industry during its forty-seventh session, in 2004, inviting all major communications satellite operators to participate, presenting the capabilities of their systems and airing their views on how satellite-based communications could be used during natural disasters.

6. Space debris

121. The Committee noted that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/116, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee had continued its consideration of the item on space debris in accordance with the work plan adopted at its thirty-eighth session (A/AC.105/761, para. 130). The Committee took note of the discussion of the Subcommittee on space debris, as reflected in the report of the Subcommittee (A/AC.105/804, paras. 116-135).

122. The Committee heard a presentation by C. Portelli of Italy, entitled "Space debris: the BeppoSAX experience".

123. The Committee agreed with the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee that consideration of space debris was important, that international cooperation was needed to expand appropriate and affordable strategies to minimize the potential impact of space debris on future space missions and that Member States should pay more attention to the problem of collisions of space objects, including those with nuclear power sources on board, with space debris and to other aspects of space debris (A/AC.105/804, para. 125), in accordance with General Assembly resolution 57/116.

124. The Committee noted with satisfaction that, in accordance with the Subcommittee's work plan on space debris, the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) had presented its proposals on debris mitigation (A/AC.105/C.1/L.260), based on consensus among the IADC members, at the fortieth session of the Subcommittee. According to its work plan, the Subcommittee had begun its review of the IADC proposals and discussed means of endorsing their utilization.

125. The Committee requested all its member States to study the IADC proposals and to provide their comments to the Office for Outer Space Affairs before the forty-first session of the Subcommittee, in 2004.

126. The Committee agreed that the Subcommittee at its forty-first session, based on the scope of comments received, could establish a working group to consider comments from member States on the IADC proposals and to consider further progress on the subject, including continuing discussions on means of endorsing utilization of the IADC space debris mitigation guidelines (A/AC.105/C.1/L.260, annex).

127. The view was expressed that mitigation of space debris was also complicated by the fact that there was no official information available on which satellites were active and which had already come to the end of their active lives. In the view of that delegation, only launching States could designate a specific object officially inactive and they should be encouraged to announce that change in the status of

O
Poverty



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General Assembly

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Sixtieth session
Agenda item 56 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/492/Add.1)]

60/209. Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997–2006)

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 47/196 of 22 December 1992, 48/183 of 21 December 1993, 50/107 of 20 December 1995, 56/207 of 21 December 2001, 57/265 and 57/266 of 20 December 2002, 58/222 of 23 December 2003 and 59/247 of 22 December 2004,

Recalling also the United Nations Millennium Declaration, adopted by Heads of State and Government on the occasion of the Millennium Summit,¹ and their commitment to eradicate extreme poverty and to halve, by 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger,

Recalling further the 2005 World Summit Outcome,²

Underlining the priority and urgency given by the Heads of State and Government to the eradication of poverty, as expressed in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in economic and social fields,

Bearing in mind the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development³ and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly,⁴

Expressing its deep concern that the number of people living in extreme poverty in many countries continues to increase, with women and children constituting the majority and the most affected groups, in particular in the least developed countries and in sub-Saharan Africa,

Encouraged by reductions in poverty in some countries in the recent past and determined to reinforce and extend this trend to benefit people worldwide,

¹ See resolution 55/2.

² See resolution 60/1.

³ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6–12 March 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II.

⁴ Resolution S-24/2, annex.

Acknowledging the contribution of full and productive employment to poverty eradication and to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

Recognizing that microcredit and microfinance programmes can generate productive self-employment and assist people in eradicating poverty and reducing their social and economic vulnerability,

Expressing deep concern that the number of women and girls living in poverty has increased disproportionately to the number of men, particularly in developing countries, and that the majority live in rural areas where their livelihoods are dependent on subsistence agriculture,

Aware that, to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development, women and men must participate fully and equally in the formulation of macroeconomic and social policies and strategies for the eradication of poverty,

Recognizing that the empowerment of women is a critical factor in the eradication of poverty and that the implementation of special measures aimed at empowering women can help to achieve this,

Recognizing also that improving women's economic status also improves the economic status of their families and their communities and thereby creates a multiplier effect for economic growth,

Recognizing further that mobilizing financial resources for development at the national and international levels and the effective use of those resources are central to a global partnership for development in support of the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals,

Recognizing the ongoing international efforts, contributions and discussions, such as the Action against Hunger and Poverty initiative, aimed at identifying and developing possible innovative and additional sources of financing for development from all sources, public and private, domestic and external, to increase and supplement traditional sources of financing within the context of the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development, and recognizing that some of the sources and their use fall within the realm of sovereign action,

Noting with interest the International Conference on Poverty Alleviation and Development, to be hosted by the Government of Mauritius in 2006,

Reiterating the need to strengthen the leadership role of the United Nations in promoting development,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;⁵
2. *Reiterates* that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, in particular for developing countries;
3. *Underlines* the fact that each country has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and poverty eradication, that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized, and that concerted

⁵ A/60/314.

and concrete measures are required at all levels to enable developing countries to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development;

4. *Acknowledges* that sustained economic growth, supported by rising productivity and a favourable environment, including for private investment and entrepreneurship, is necessary to eradicate poverty, achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and realize a rise in living standards;

5. *Reaffirms* the importance of the contributions and assistance made by developing countries to the other developing countries in the context of South-South cooperation in order to achieve development and eradicate poverty;

6. *Recognizes* that, for developing countries to reach the targets set in the context of national development strategies for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the goal on the eradication of poverty, and for such poverty eradication strategies to be effective, it is imperative that developing countries be integrated into the world economy and share equitably in the benefits of globalization;

7. *Reaffirms* that, within the context of overall action for the eradication of poverty, special attention should be given to the multidimensional nature of poverty and the national and international conditions and policies that are conducive to its eradication, fostering, inter alia, the social and economic integration of people living in poverty and the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, including the right to development;

Global response for the eradication of poverty

8. *Stresses* the importance of the follow-up to the outcomes of the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and calls for the full and effective implementation of the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development⁶ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”),⁷ as well as the outcomes of other major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields;

9. *Reaffirms* that good governance at the international level is fundamental for achieving poverty eradication and sustainable development; also reaffirms that, in order to ensure a dynamic and enabling international economic environment, it is important to promote global economic governance through addressing the international finance, trade, technology and investment patterns that have an impact on the development prospects of developing countries; to that end, reiterates that the international community should take all necessary and appropriate measures, including ensuring support for structural and macroeconomic reform and a comprehensive solution to the external debt problem and increasing market access for developing countries; and also reaffirms that a universal, rule-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system, as well as meaningful trade

⁶ *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18–22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

⁷ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

liberalization, can substantially stimulate development worldwide, benefiting countries at all stages of development;

10. *Also reaffirms* the commitment to broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in international economic decision-making and norm-setting, and to that end stresses the importance of continuing efforts to reform the international financial architecture, noting that enhancing the voice and participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the Bretton Woods institutions remains a continuous concern;

11. *Further reaffirms* that good governance at the national level is essential for poverty eradication and sustainable development; that sound economic policies, solid democratic institutions responsive to the needs of the people and improved infrastructure are the basis for sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and employment creation; and that freedom, peace and security, domestic stability, respect for human rights, including the right to development, and the rule of law, gender equality, market-oriented policies and an overall commitment to just and democratic societies are also essential and mutually reinforcing;

12. *Welcomes* the outcomes of the eleventh session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, held in São Paulo, Brazil, from 13 to 18 June 2004, and the adoption of The Spirit of São Paulo,⁸ and the São Paulo Consensus;⁹

13. *Reaffirms* the need for the United Nations to play a fundamental role in the promotion of international cooperation for development and the coherence, coordination and implementation of development goals and actions agreed upon by the international community, and also reaffirms the need to strengthen coordination within the United Nations system in close cooperation with all other multilateral financial, trade and development institutions in order to support sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and sustainable development;

14. *Stresses* that together with coherent and consistent domestic policies, international cooperation is essential in supplementing and supporting the efforts of developing countries to utilize their domestic resources for development and poverty eradication and in ensuring that they will be able to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

15. *Recalls* that Member States redirected and recommitted themselves to fulfilling the development dimensions of the Doha Development Agenda, which places the needs and interests of developing countries at the heart of the Doha work programme,¹⁰ and recognizes the major role that trade plays as an engine of growth and development and in eradicating poverty;

16. *Recognizes* that fighting corruption at all levels is a priority and that corruption is a serious barrier to effective resource mobilization and allocation and diverts resources from activities that are vital for poverty eradication, the fight against hunger and economic and sustainable development;

⁸ TD/412, part I.

⁹ Ibid., part II.

¹⁰ See A/C.2/56/7, annex.

II

17. *Reaffirms* the Monterrey Consensus, and recognizes that mobilizing financial resources for development and the effective use of those resources in developing countries and countries with economies in transition are central to a global partnership for development in support of the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. In this regard:

(a) Welcomes the increased resources that will become available as a result of the establishment of timetables by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance by 2015 and to reach at least 0.5 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance by 2010 as well as, pursuant to the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010,¹¹ 0.15 per cent to 0.20 per cent for the least developed countries no later than 2010, and urges those developed countries that have not yet done so to make concrete efforts in this regard in accordance with their commitments;

(b) Recognizes the importance of official development assistance as an important source of financing development for many developing countries, and stresses the need to translate increases in official development assistance into real increases in resources for national development strategies, to achieve their national development priorities as well as the internationally agreed development goals and objectives including the Millennium Development Goals, taking into account the need for resource predictability including budget support mechanisms where appropriate; also, welcomes recent efforts and initiatives to enhance the quality of aid and increase its impact, including the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and resolves to take concrete, effective and timely action in implementing all agreed commitments on aid effectiveness, with clear monitoring and deadlines, including through further aligning assistance with countries' strategies, building institutional capacities, reducing transaction costs and eliminating bureaucratic procedures, making progress on untying aid, enhancing the absorptive capacity and financial management of recipient countries and strengthening the focus of development results; also encourages the broadest possible participation of developing countries in future work on aid effectiveness;

(c) Recognizes the importance of developing innovative sources of financing for development, provided that such sources do not unduly burden developing countries, notes that some countries will launch the International Financial Facility, have launched its immunization pilot, and that some countries, utilizing their national authorities, will implement in the near future a contribution on airline tickets as a "solidarity contribution" to enable financing for development projects, and notes that other countries are considering whether and to what extent they will participate in those initiatives;

(d) Emphasizes the importance of microcredit and microfinance in the eradication of poverty and highlights that the observance of the International Year of Microcredit 2005 has provided a significant opportunity to raise awareness, to share best practices and to further enhance financial sectors that support sustainable pro-poor financial services in all countries, in this regard urges member countries to put best practices into action, and invites the international community, including the United Nations system, to build on the momentum created by the Year;

¹¹ A/CONF.191/13, chap. II.

(e) Acknowledges the vital role the private sector can play in generating new investments, employment and financing for development;

18. *Resolves* to continue to support the development efforts of middle-income developing countries by working, in competent multilateral and international forums and also through bilateral arrangements, on measures to help them meet, inter alia, their financial, technical and technological requirements;

19. *Also resolves* to address the development needs of low-income developing countries by working in competent multilateral and international forums, to help them meet, inter alia, their financial, technical and technological requirements;

20. *Recognizes* that an enabling domestic environment is vital for mobilizing domestic resources, increasing productivity, reducing capital flight, encouraging the private sector and attracting and making effective use of international investment and assistance, and that efforts to create such an environment should be supported by the international community;

21. *Emphasizes* that creditors and debtors must share responsibility for preventing unsustainable debt situations, and stresses that debt relief can play a key role in liberating resources that should be directed towards activities consistent with poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable development and the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and, in this regard, urges countries to direct those resources freed through debt relief, in particular through debt cancellation and reduction, towards these objectives;

22. *Calls upon* the developed countries, by means of intensified and effective cooperation with developing countries, to promote capacity-building and facilitate access to and transfer of technologies and corresponding knowledge, in particular to developing countries, on favourable terms, including concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights, as well as the special needs of developing countries;

23. *Recognizes* the crucial role that microcredit and microfinance could play in the eradication of poverty, the promotion of gender equality, the empowerment of vulnerable groups and the development of rural communities, encourages Governments to undertake policies to facilitate the expansion of microcredit and microfinance institutions in order to service the large unmet demand among poor people for financial services, including the identification and development of mechanisms to promote sustainable access to financial services, the removal of institutional and regulatory obstacles and the provision of incentives to microfinance institutions that meet established standards for delivering such financial services to the poor;

24. *Also recognizes* the potential of information and communication technologies to serve as a powerful tool for development and poverty eradication and to help the international community to maximize the benefits of globalization, and, in this regard, welcomes the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society at its

Tunis phase,¹² and recalls the Geneva Declaration of Principles and the Geneva Plan of Action adopted by the Summit at its Geneva phase;¹³

Policies for the eradication of poverty

25. *Reaffirms* that the eradication of poverty should be addressed in a multisectoral and integrated way, as set out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, taking into account the importance of the need for the empowerment of women and sectoral strategies in such areas as education, the development of human resources, health, human settlements, rural, local and community development, productive employment, population, environment and natural resources, water and sanitation, agriculture, food security, energy and migration and the specific needs of disadvantaged and vulnerable groups in such a way as to increase opportunities and choices for people living in poverty and to enable them to build and to strengthen their assets so as to achieve development, security and stability, and, in that regard, encourages countries to develop their national poverty reduction policies in accordance with their national priorities, including, where appropriate, through poverty reduction strategy papers;

26. *Underlines*, in this context, the importance of further integration of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in the national development strategies and plans, including the poverty reduction strategy papers where they exist, and calls upon the international community to continue to support developing countries in the implementation of those development strategies and plans;

27. *Strongly supports* fair globalization, and resolves to make the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for women and young people, a central objective of the relevant national and international policies, as well as national development strategies, including poverty reduction strategies, as part of efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, resolves that these measures should also encompass the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, as defined in International Labour Organization Convention No. 182, and forced labour; and also resolves to ensure full respect for the fundamental principles and rights at work;

28. *Recognizes* the importance of disseminating best practices for the reduction of poverty in its various dimensions, taking into account the need to adapt those best practices to suit the social, economic, cultural and historical conditions of each country;

29. *Reaffirms* that all Governments and the United Nations system should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes aimed at the eradication of poverty, at both the national and international levels, and encourages the use of gender analysis as a tool for the integration of a gender dimension into planning the implementation of policies, strategies and programmes for the eradication of poverty;

30. *Also reaffirms* that all Governments and the United Nations system should emphasize the importance and encourage the mainstreaming of poverty eradication in all policies, at both the national and international levels;

¹² See A/60/687.

¹³ See A/C.2/59/3, chap. I.

31. *Further reaffirms* that poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are overarching objectives of, and essential requirements for, sustainable development;

32. *Emphasizes* the critical role of both formal and non-formal education, in particular basic education and training, especially for girls, in empowering those living in poverty, reaffirms in that context the Dakar Framework for Action adopted at the World Education Forum,¹⁴ and recognizes the importance of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization strategy for the eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty, in supporting the Education for All programmes as a tool with which to achieve the Millennium Development Goal on universal primary education by 2015;

33. *Recognizes* the devastating effect of HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious and contagious diseases on human development, economic growth, food security and poverty reduction efforts in all regions, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, and urges Governments and the international community to give urgent priority to combating those diseases;

34. *Also recognizes* that armed conflict results in the loss of human lives and the destruction of economic resources, and that countries emerging from conflict are faced with damaged physical and social infrastructure, scarce employment opportunities, reduced foreign investment and increased capital flight, and, in this regard, stresses that strategies, programmes and international assistance for reconstruction and rehabilitation should, inter alia, create employment and eradicate poverty;

35. *Emphasizes* the link between poverty eradication and improving access to safe drinking water, and stresses in that regard the objective to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water and the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation, as reaffirmed in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

36. *Recognizes* that the lack of adequate housing remains a pressing challenge in the fight to eradicate extreme poverty, particularly in the urban areas in developing countries, expresses its concern at the rapid growth in the number of slum-dwellers in the urban areas of developing countries, particularly in Africa, stresses that, unless urgent and effective measures and actions are taken at the national and international levels, the number of slum-dwellers, who constitute one third of the world's urban population, will continue to increase, and emphasizes the need for increased efforts, with a view to significantly improving the lives of at least 100 million slum-dwellers by 2020;

37. *Also recognizes* that the eradication of rural poverty and hunger is crucial for the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and that rural development should be an integral part of national and international development policies;

38. *Further recognizes* that access to microcredit and microfinance can contribute to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the goals relating to poverty eradication, gender equality and the empowerment of women;

¹⁴ See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Final Report of the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26–28 April 2000* (Paris, 2000).

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39. *Emphasizes* the important contribution the observance of the International Year of Microcredit, 2005, has made in raising awareness of the importance of microcredit and microfinance in the eradication of poverty, in sharing good practices and in enhancing financial sectors that support sustainable financial services for the poor, and calls upon Member States, the United Nations system and other international organizations to consolidate and further build on the momentum created by the Year with a view to providing microcredit and microfinance services to the poor;

40. *Recognizes* the important contribution that the observance of the International Year of Rice, 2004, has made in drawing world attention to the role that rice can play in providing food security and eradicating poverty in the attainment of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;

Specific initiatives in the fight against poverty

41. *Also recognizes* the important potential contribution of the World Solidarity Fund to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the objective to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day and the proportion of people who suffer from hunger;

42. *Resolves* to operationalize the World Solidarity Fund established by the General Assembly, and invites Member States, international organizations, the private sector, relevant institutions, foundations and individuals in a position to do so to make voluntary contributions to the Fund;

43. *Recalls* that, in the Millennium Declaration,¹ the Heads of State and Government, inter alia, identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values that should underlie relations between peoples in the twenty-first century, and in that regard decides to proclaim 20 December of each year International Human Solidarity Day;

44. *Invites* Governments and relevant stakeholders to utilize entrepreneurship, taking fully into account national interests, priorities and development strategies, to contribute to poverty eradication;

45. *Recognizes* that natural disasters remain a major impediment to sustainable development and poverty eradication, and, in this regard, invites Member States, the United Nations system, including international financial institutions, regional bodies and international organizations, as well as relevant civil society organizations, to support, implement and follow up the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters,¹⁵ adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005;

Africa, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

46. *Stresses*, as recognized in the Millennium Declaration and reiterated in the 2005 World Summit Outcome,² the importance of meeting the special needs of Africa, where poverty remains a major challenge and where most countries have not

¹⁵ See A/CONF.206/6 and Corr.1, chap. I, resolution 2.

benefited fully from the opportunities of globalization, which has further exacerbated the continent's marginalization;

47. *Reaffirms* its support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development,¹⁶ encourages further efforts in the implementation of the commitments contained therein in the political, economic and social fields, and calls upon Member States and the international community, and invites the United Nations system, to continue to support the implementation of the Partnership, the primary objective of which is to eradicate poverty and promote sustainable development on the basis of African ownership and leadership and enhanced partnerships with the international community, in accordance with the principles, objectives and priorities of the Partnership;

48. *Notes* the continuing role of the International Labour Organization in assisting African countries in implementing the Plan of Action for Promotion of Employment and Poverty Alleviation in Africa adopted at the extraordinary summit of the African Union on employment and poverty alleviation, held in Ouagadougou from 3 to 9 September 2004;¹⁷

49. *Resolves* to promote a comprehensive and durable solution to the external debt problems of African countries, including through the cancellation of 100 per cent of multilateral debt consistent with the recent Group of Eight proposal for the heavily indebted poor countries, and, on a case-by-case basis, where appropriate, significant debt relief, including, inter alia, cancellation or restructuring for heavily indebted African countries not part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative that have unsustainable debt burdens;

50. *Calls upon* the Governments of the least developed countries and their development partners to implement fully the commitments contained in the Brussels Declaration¹⁸ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001–2010,¹¹ adopted at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, held in Brussels from 14 to 20 May 2001;

51. *Recognizes* the special needs and vulnerabilities of small island developing States, reaffirms the commitment to take urgent and concrete action to address those needs and vulnerabilities through the full and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,¹⁹ the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,²⁰ and the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly,²¹ and undertakes to promote greater international cooperation and partnership for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy through, inter alia, the mobilization of domestic and international resources, the promotion of

¹⁶ A/57/304, annex.

¹⁷ African Union, document EXT/ASSEMBLY/AU/4(III)Rev.4.

¹⁸ A/CONF.191/13, chap. I.

¹⁹ *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10–14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

²⁰ *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April–6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

²¹ Resolution S-22/2, annex.

international trade as an engine for development and increased international financial and technical cooperation;

52. *Also recognizes* the special needs of and challenges faced by landlocked developing countries, and therefore reaffirms the commitment to urgently address those needs and challenges through the full, timely and effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries²² and the São Paulo Consensus, encourages the work undertaken by the regional commissions and United Nations organizations towards establishing a time-cost methodology for indicators to measure the progress made in the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action, and recognizes the special difficulties and concerns of landlocked developing countries in their efforts to integrate their economies into the multilateral trading system and that, in this regard, priority should be given to the full and timely implementation of the Almaty Declaration²³ and Almaty Programme of Action;

The United Nations and the fight against poverty

53. *Calls for* the full implementation of General Assembly resolution 57/270 B of 23 June 2003 on the integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields, which provides a comprehensive basis for the follow-up to the outcomes of those conferences and summits and contributes to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the eradication of poverty and hunger;

54. *Reaffirms* the role of United Nations funds and programmes, in particular the United Nations Development Programme and its associated funds, in assisting the national efforts of developing countries, inter alia, in the eradication of poverty, and the need for their funding in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations;

55. *Welcomes* the observance of the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, established by the General Assembly in its resolution 47/196 of 22 December 1992 in order to raise public awareness to promote the eradication of poverty and extreme poverty in all countries, and in this regard recognizes the useful role the observance of the Day continues to play in raising public awareness and mobilizing all stakeholders in the fight against poverty, and requests the Secretary-General to undertake a review of the observance of the Day in order to identify lessons learned and ways to promote the mobilization of all stakeholders in the fight against poverty;

56. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the item entitled "Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997–2006)".

*68th plenary meeting
22 December 2005*

²² *Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003 (A/CONF.202/3), annex I.*

²³ *Ibid.*, annex II.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

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Sixtieth session
Agenda item 52 (b)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/488/Add.2)]

60/194. Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Declaration of Barbados¹ and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,² adopted by the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and recalling its resolution 49/122 of 19 December 1994 on the Global Conference,

Reaffirming also the Mauritius Declaration³ and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (“Mauritius Strategy for Implementation”),⁴ adopted by the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States on 14 January 2005, and recalling its resolution 59/311 of 14 July 2005, in which it endorsed the outcomes of the International Meeting,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,⁵

Welcoming the decision taken by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session⁶ to devote one day of its review sessions to the review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, focusing on that

¹ *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April–6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

² *Ibid.*, annex II.

³ *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10–14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

⁴ *Ibid.*, annex II.

⁵ See resolution 60/1.

⁶ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 9 (E/2005/29)*, resolution 13/1.

year's thematic cluster, as well as on any new developments in the sustainable development efforts of small island developing States using existing modalities, and to request the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Commission at its review session on progress in and obstacles to sustainable development in small island developing States, including recommendations to enhance the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation,

Recognizing that it is crucial to mobilize resources from all sources for the effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;⁷
2. *Welcomes* the renewed commitment of the international community to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;²
3. *Urges* Governments and all relevant international and regional organizations, United Nations funds, programmes, specialized agencies and regional commissions, international financial institutions and the Global Environment Facility, as well as other intergovernmental organizations and major groups, to take timely action for the effective implementation of and follow-up to the Mauritius Declaration³ and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation,⁴ including the further development and operationalization of concrete projects and programmes;
4. *Calls for* the full and effective implementation of the commitments, programmes and targets adopted at the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and, to this end, for the fulfilment of the provisions for the means of implementation, as contained in the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, and encourages small island developing States and their development partners to continue to consult widely in order to develop further concrete projects and programmes for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation;
5. *Encourages* the implementation of partnership initiatives, within the framework of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, in support of the sustainable development of small island developing States;
6. *Notes with interest* the convening by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, pursuant to resolution 59/311, of regional meetings of small island developing States, held in Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa and Seychelles, as well as the interregional meeting of small island developing States, held in Rome in November 2005, and requests the Secretary-General to transmit the reports of the regional and interregional meetings to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourteenth session;
7. *Notes* the recent efforts to strengthen the Small Island Developing States Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and urges the Secretary-General to ensure that the Unit is sufficiently and sustainably staffed to undertake its broad range of mandated functions with a view to ensuring the full and effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation, within existing resources, including by redeploying resources;

⁷ A/60/401.

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8. *Requests* the relevant agencies of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, to mainstream, as appropriate, the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation in their work programmes and to establish a focal point for matters related to small island developing States within their respective secretariats;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session on the follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation;

10. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session, under the item entitled “Sustainable development”, the sub-item entitled “Follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States”.

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Sustainable development: Follow-up and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

The present report summarizes actual and proposed programming to support further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, within the framework of the respective mandates and work plans of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system. The report represents an interim response to the mandate of General Assembly resolution 59/311, in which the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in consultation with the relevant bodies of the United Nations system, is requested to articulate a plan for the coherent implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

The report also describes a comprehensive approach to promote and strengthen implementation of the Mauritius Strategy by all stakeholders, national, regional and international.

* Submission of the present report was delayed in order to facilitate inter-agency consultation.

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I. Introduction

1. The unique challenges facing small island developing States within the context of sustainable development were first formally recognized by the international community when it articulated at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, the special case of small island developing States in chapter 17 of Agenda 21. The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of small island developing States, adopted two years later in Barbados, hailed as the first concrete expression of international partnership for sustainable development, advanced a multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral programme detailing priority actions which should be implemented to respond to the special challenges faced by small island developing States.

2. The International Meeting to Review Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of small island developing States, held in Port Louis, Mauritius, from 10 to 14 January 2005, presented a significant opportunity 10 years later not only to assess progress achieved in the implementation of the Programme of Action, but, more important, to consider how best to invest future effort for more effective implementation of the broad framework for the sustainable development of small island developing States.

3. Convened in the very region devastated by a tsunami only two weeks earlier, on 26 December 2004, the International Meeting brought into stark relief the vulnerability of low-lying island and coastal States to environmental hazards, infusing the debate and decision-making with a sense of urgency and resolve that contributed to the pragmatic and productive outcome of the meeting.

4. The Mauritius Declaration reaffirms the continued validity of the Programme of Action as the blueprint for action in support of small island developing States, while taking account of new and emerging issues, and it invokes renewed political commitment to support the sustainable development strategies of small island developing States through technical and financial cooperation, regional and interregional institutional assistance and an improved international enabling environment. The importance of capacity-building, technology transfer and human resource development to building the resilience of small island developing States and to advancing implementation of the Programme of Action is also recognized.¹

5. The Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of small island developing States responds directly to the assessed need for a more focused approach to implementation of the Programme of Action. To that end, it identifies critical areas for further attention within the established sectors of the Programme of Action, and highlights new and emerging issues which must be taken onboard if more effective implementation of the Programme of Action is to be achieved. These include HIV/AIDS and other health-related issues which constitute a fundamental development challenge; security concerns; the impact of the erosion of trade preferences on small island developing States and the consequent need for improved market access and an international trading system that promotes economic growth, employment and development for all; support for information and communication technology (ICT) development; and the importance of protecting cultural diversity and promoting cultural industries as a vital component of sustainable development strategy in small island developing States.²

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6. Beyond specific sectoral issues identified for continued attention, the Mauritius Strategy promotes the fullest participation of civil society and other stakeholder groups, advocates greater South-South and small island developing States-small island developing States cooperation and articulates a range of cross-sectoral measures, regional and interregional mechanisms and strategies for enhanced inter-institutional consultation and coordination, particularly within the United Nations system, as essential tools to be employed in strengthening implementation of the Programme of Action.

7. With the adoption of the Mauritius Declaration and Strategy and the contributions from the Panel discussions, high-level round tables and civil society forums, including a youth dialogue, the international community renewed and enhanced its understanding and appreciation of the economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities of small island developing States, and sought to bring greater coherence and strategic focus to the implementation of the small island developing States agenda at the national, regional and international levels.

II. Framework of action to strengthen implementation and follow-up

8. In its resolution 59/311, in which it endorsed the outcomes of the Mauritius International Meeting, the General Assembly set markers to promote comprehensive implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the Mauritius Strategy. In addition to exhorting all relevant actors at the national, regional and international levels to take timely actions to ensure effective implementation of the Mauritius outcomes and encouraging partnership initiatives, it mandated the mainstreaming of the Mauritius Strategy in the work programmes of the relevant agencies of the United Nations system, within the framework of their respective mandates; it requested the preparation of a plan for the coordinated implementation of the Mauritius Strategy by the United Nations system; and it supported the convening in 2005/06 of regional meetings of small island developing States in partnership with relevant stakeholders to address follow-up of implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The General Assembly also welcomed the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session to devote one day of the review sessions of the Commission to the review of the Mauritius Strategy, and reiterated its request for strengthening of the Small Island Developing States Unit in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

9. These mandates, addressed in further detail below, form the basis for the fashioning of a broad framework of action for promoting, strengthening and monitoring implementation of the Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy.

A. Enhancing United Nations system response

1. Mainstreaming small island developing States in the United Nations system

10. A significant achievement of the Mauritius Strategy was its effort to ensure the mainstreaming of small island developing States in the programming of the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, within their respective

mandates and areas of expertise. The small island developing States agenda, which hitherto had gone unremarked and unaccounted for in broader development agendas and plans of action, must now be incorporated into the respective programmes of work from the planning stage. To that end, focal points for small island developing States should be designated in all relevant agencies.

11. The Commission on Sustainable Development will continue to be the primary intergovernmental body responsible for oversight of the implementation and follow-up to the commitments related to small island developing States. This mandate, adopted at Mauritius, was reaffirmed at the thirteenth session of the Commission, which established the modalities whereby it would monitor implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The Commission decided to devote one day of its review sessions (every other year) to a review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, focusing on that year's thematic cluster and on any new developments on sustainable development efforts for small island developing States. To that end, the Secretary-General has been requested to submit a report to the Commission review session on progress and obstacles to sustainable development in small island developing States and to make recommendations to enhance its implementation.

12. It should be noted that at the fourteenth session of the Commission which convenes in April 2006, a review of progress achieved in the implementation in the thematic cluster on the theme "Energy, atmosphere, climate change and industrial development" will be undertaken. That session will receive a report analysing the progress in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy in the context of the thematic cluster as it applies to small island developing States. That report will also consider any pressing new and emerging issues with implications for the broader sustainable development agenda of small island developing States.

2. United Nations system coordination and collaboration

13. The Mauritius Strategy mandate improved coordination and rationalization of all work towards implementation of the Programme of Action within the United Nations system. In its resolution 59/311, the General Assembly reiterated that, assigning to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in consultation with the relevant United Nations specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, responsibility for articulating a plan with recommendations for action for the coordinated and coherent implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

14. The present report responds to that mandate in section III. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 59/311 in July 2005, inaugurated an inter-agency consultative group comprising all relevant United Nations bodies. All members of the group were invited to submit their contributions to develop a matrix of activities representing a programme to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy, indicating those activities in which their organization would participate in support of small island developing States, on the basis of either established or prospective mandates and programmes of work. Through ongoing consultation within that newly established group and through rationalization of the operationalization programme the Department of Economic and Social Affairs will seek to ensure a more coordinated approach to the implementation of small island developing States sustainable development issues within the United Nations system.

3. United Nations Secretariat support

15. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through its Small Island Developing States Unit, will continue to bear central substantive responsibility for the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Work of the Department in the exercise of that responsibility has so far focused on annual reporting on the implementation of the Programme of Action, ad hoc technical and advisory assistance in response to requests of small island developing States and management of the Small Island Developing States net (SIDSnet).

16. In order to effectively respond to the new thrust and the mandates and directions set out in the Mauritius Strategy and General Assembly resolution 59/311, new or expanded activities are proposed below for consideration by the General Assembly. They relate to four areas highlighted in the Strategy:

(a) System-wide coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the Strategy, including through management of a plan of operationalization, working with the newly created inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States;

(b) Support for comprehensive intergovernmental review of, and reporting on, Implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, in accordance with the biennial cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

(c) Strengthened information activities for decision-making by the small island developing States;

(d) Facilitation of networking among small island developing States stakeholders to enhance multilateral consultations and cooperation towards the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, particularly the development and implementation of an information management network.

17. Effective management of the plan of operationalization, in accordance with resolution 59/311, will be key to enhancing system-wide coordination and monitoring of Mauritius Strategy implementation. This will entail review and monitoring of the programmes supporting Programme of Action and Mauritius Strategy implementation within the agencies of the United Nations system through regular consultation with the respective small island developing States focal points represented in the inter-agency consulting group. It will also require the Small Island Developing States Unit to act as an interface with the networks of regional organizations that support and implement national, subregional and regional activities within the framework of the Mauritius Strategy.

18. Regarding the intergovernmental oversight of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, the Commission on Sustainable Development will devote part of each of its review sessions to a review of the small island developing States agenda, with particular focus on the thematic cluster of issues under consideration. Biennial reviews of the small island developing States agenda by the Commission will require the preparation of analytical papers on relevant thematic issues, as well as coordination of and reporting on system-wide initiatives, regional and national activities within the thematic clusters.

19. The Mauritius Strategy also calls for more effective use of ICT to support timely and broad access to economic, social and environmental information to

facilitate decision-making by the small island developing States.³ In that context, it is proposed that the Small Island Developing States Unit develop and implement an integrated information system that will serve as a knowledge management platform for systematic information-sharing among all small island developing States stakeholders and the international community at large. This approach will contribute to effective coordination and implementation of activities under the Mauritius Strategy, and will facilitate partnership building at the local, regional and international levels.

20. To facilitate networking among all stakeholders, it is proposed that the Small Island Developing States Unit develop and introduce a series of new ICT-based tools such as discussion forums, an island development portal and an island newswire, and develop a small island developing States roster of experts and integration of e-mail accessibility, which are particularly important for small remote small island developing States with limited internet infrastructure.⁴ The new knowledge management framework will support a range of services to the small island developing States communities, the United Nations system and the wider international community: enhanced ICT-driven core groups for intra/interregional communication by sector; capacity-building workshops through Decision Support System; the establishment of an information clearing house and support of interactive communities; facilitation of community involvement utilizing the Content Management System and the Learning Management System; promoting wider knowledge and awareness of the small island developing States agenda; and mechanisms to facilitate resource mobilization for small island developing States projects.

B. Strengthening national ownership

1. National implementation

21. Small island developing States ownership of the Programme of Action and assumption of principal responsibility for its implementation was reaffirmed at Mauritius. In order to strengthen the indigenous capacity of Governments to assume effective leadership in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, much attention will be given to supporting small island developing States efforts to devise national sustainable development strategies and to ensuring the establishment of appropriately coordinated councils or inter-institutional mechanisms to secure the commitment of local and national decision makers for more integrated, interdisciplinary planning and programming, and for more effective monitoring of and reporting on sustainable development. Promoting synergy with other major development frameworks, including the Millennium Development Goals, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the Monterrey Consensus, the Doha trade agenda and the multilateral environment agreements, will be addressed through capacity-building and institutional strengthening with the support of the United Nations system.

2. Civil society participation

22. Broad stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy was also identified as a critical element in ensuring widest possible national ownership of the sustainable development agenda in small island

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developing States. Strategies to promote greater awareness, knowledge and understanding of the objectives of the Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy, including promotional campaigns, community-based initiatives and national workshops, will be designed. Mechanisms to facilitate the full, meaningful participation of civil society and other stakeholder groups, including the private sector, will also be considered.

3. Partnership initiatives

23. Much attention will be given to the exploration of partnership initiatives as an integral part of the strategy to harness resources at all levels and to engage traditional and non-traditional partners in the sustainable development effort. Partnership proposals will be prepared for consideration by the Governments of small island developing States, civil society, the United Nations system and the wider donor community at the regional follow-up meetings on Mauritius Strategy implementation, to be held in October 2005. Among the important initiatives to be considered are the small island developing States University Consortium and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sponsored small island developing States Resilience Building Facility, both of which were launched at the Mauritius International Meeting.

24. Both are excellent examples of small island developing States-small island developing States, South-South cooperation, with a focus on fostering solidarity among small island developing States and on building capacity to address the unique challenges of small island developing States through shared information and expertise. The Small Island Developing States University Consortium will offer postgraduate courses at designated small island developing States universities, on campus and through distance education on subjects of direct relevance to small island developing States. The Resilience Building Facility is a much-needed mechanism to help small island developing States implement technological, administrative and even market-oriented innovations to strengthen resilience and reduce vulnerability. For these and other partnership initiatives to be successful, investment of financial resources by the donor community is crucial.

C. Regional and international support

1. Strengthening regional frameworks

25. The Mauritius Strategy ascribes a more integral role to regional technical and intergovernmental organizations in support of implementation of the Programme of Action, acknowledging economies of scale and the concentration of regional expertise to be found in these institutions. The strengthening of the respective regional institutional frameworks to support more coordinated, efficient support for the implementation of priorities for the three small island developing States regions will therefore be given focused attention. This will include the respective regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations, the regional commissions, the network of regional offices of agencies of the United Nations system and other regional technical agencies.

26. An enhanced and more integral role for the relevant regional commissions, notably the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, is envisaged, not least

because their associate members comprise the non-independent island Territories, which are an important part of the expanded family of small island developing States. Their efforts at implementation of the Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy will therefore be facilitated principally through the regional commissions.

27. Small island developing States-small island developing States cooperation was one of the mechanisms identified in the Mauritius review process as having been underutilized. Strong emphasis will therefore be placed on enhancing intraregional and interregional consultation among small island developing States, employing as key facilitators the regional institutions, regional intergovernmental organizations and the appropriate United Nations regional commissions found in the small island developing States of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas (AIMS) and the Caribbean and Pacific small island developing States. By extension, wider South-South cooperation and partnership arrangements with other stakeholders and international institutions should be promoted and fostered by the small island developing States network of regional organizations. Ongoing consultation with the members of the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States will also be pursued.

2. Convening regional follow-up meetings

28. Pursuant to the mandate of General Assembly resolution 59/311, three regional meetings to focus on measures to advance implementation of the Mauritius Strategy have been scheduled as follows:

- Caribbean Regional Meeting in St. Kitts and Nevis, 5 to 7 October 2005;
- Pacific Regional Meeting in Samoa, 17 to 19 October 2005;
- AIMS Regional Meeting in the Seychelles, 26 to 28 October 2005.

These meetings will facilitate broad consultation on the national and regional mechanisms and strategies addressed above, and will afford an opportunity for the pursuit of partnership initiatives with civil society, regional institutions, the United Nations system and the wider donor community.

3. International support and advocacy

29. At the global level, limited international awareness and appreciation of the specific social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities of the small island developing States was a concern often expressed during the review process of the Mauritius International Meeting. The importance of sustaining international attention on the Programme of Action was underscored. A consistent campaign at a high level by the United Nations was deemed necessary in order to maintain prominence of small island developing States issues on the international agenda. The review also made clear the inadequacy of international cooperation and support for the small island developing States agenda, reflected in their limited access to external resources and appropriate technologies, as well as capacity constraints. The role of advocacy was thus strongly emphasized.

30. The mandate of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, within the framework of the Mauritius Strategy and General Assembly resolution

56/227, assigns a continuing role for both advocacy and mobilization of support and resources for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The Office therefore continues to take steps to advocate and seek support and resources on behalf of small island developing States to achieve the objectives set out in the Mauritius Strategy.

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III. Summary of programmes to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy

31. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in consultation with the relevant agencies members of the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States, has begun preparation of a draft programme to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy of implementation. All organizations and bodies of the United Nations system were invited to indicate those activities for which, by virtue of their respective mandate, they would assume responsibility in implementation.

32. The output should describe a coordinated, streamlined plan to provide broadest United Nations system support to the small island developing States in implementation of the Mauritius Strategy, clearly stipulating the responsibilities of different actors, minimizing duplication and promoting most effective synergy among the agencies. It is anticipated that the plan, when complete and fully operational, will facilitate the implementation of sectoral and cross-sectoral activities at the regional, national and local levels within the framework of the Mauritius Strategy, support the exploration of opportunities for partnerships with civil society and other stakeholder groups to advance the sustainable development of small island developing States, and support the strengthening of both regional and national institutional mechanisms as well as a strategy to enhance advocacy and promote wider awareness and understanding of the imperatives on the sustainable development agenda of small island developing States.

33. Considering that the mandate for that exercise was received on 14 July 2005, with the adoption of resolution 59/311, there has been little time for fuller debate and exchange of views among the members of the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States on the optimal approach for preparing the plan. Indeed, the initial response of a number of agencies to the matrix circulated has yet to be received. For the purpose of this report, therefore, a summary of existing and prospective programmes is presented below under the respective headings contained in the Mauritius Strategy. This summary is based on responses to the matrix on actionable mandates of Mauritius so far received from members of the inter-agency consultative group on small island developing States.

Climate change

34. The overall framework of regulations and support for action falls within the purview of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change secretariat. National and regional initiatives on adaptation are supported by information and advice from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, while their implementation is financed through the Global Environment Facility, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Regional organizations play an important role in several projects. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United

Nations Human Settlements Programme also offer support. One example of such cooperation is the UNESCO programme on minimizing biodiversity loss through research and capacity-building for ecosystem management. While the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provides information on the guidelines and formats for clean development mechanism projects, their formulation have been supported by UNEP, UNDP, UN-Habitat and regional organizations such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme. Similarly, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provides information on relevant technologies for adaptation and mitigation, with supportive activities provided by UN-Habitat, UNESCO and UNDP through a variety of programmes. Important institutional support and technical assistance has also been extended to regional organizations by UNEP, notably the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre.

Energy resources

35. Energy efficiency and renewable energy, long identified as key interventions for small island developing States, have been prioritized through a number of UNEP and UNDP/Global Environment Facility supported activities in all small island developing States regions. The UNESCO programme on renewable energy sources for development should contribute to these goals. The need for awareness-raising and capacity-building has been incorporated into most of these activities. There is scope for linkages between the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) international bio-energy programme and UNDP supported regional projects. UNDP and UNEP also support South-South cooperation initiatives in biofuels in the Caribbean region, in collaboration with a number of Latin American partners. UNEP contributes to financial innovation for the development of the cleanest mix of energy sources and technologies. UNDP supports public awareness and other programmes to change traditional attitudes to the use of energy and to promote wider use of renewable energy sources.

Natural and environmental disasters

36. The leadership of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, in coordinating system-wide response to national and environmental disasters, is defined by the Hyogo Framework for Action. Synergy with the Mauritius Strategy should be promoted. Support for small island developing States in building their human, technical and managerial capacities for disaster reduction and prevention is a key component of UNDP, UN-Habitat and UNESCO activities. FAO also provides support for emergencies and rehabilitation. Capacity-building and awareness-raising are addressed by UNEP programming for awareness and preparedness for emergencies at the local level and will be addressed through the proposed tsunami early warning system, to be developed under the UNESCO International Oceanographic Commission. Similar activities are also supported by UNDP and regional organizations, including the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency, the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and the University of the West Indies, and national disaster management offices. Review and reform of the insurance sector to strengthen response to natural disasters is supported by the Foundation for International Environmental Law and Development and UNDP, and it is expected that the outcomes of that work will also have

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implications for United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change decisions on climate change-related insurance.

Management of waste

37. Management of waste through cost-effective and environmentally sound management systems have benefited from partnership projects facilitated by UNDP and regional and national organizations. UN-Habitat should be encouraged to promote waste management linkages with its work on sanitation and freshwater, given the interest in cost-effective and affordable sanitation technologies in small island developing States, as well as UN-Habitat expertise in the design of interdisciplinary environmental management strategies. UNESCO has indicated a willingness to support reduction, re-use and recycling strategies through its inter-island and interregional cooperation for sustainable development of small island developing States. Examination of other potentially supportive activities by other United Nations agencies in the integration of waste management with agriculture, tourism, sanitation and freshwater resources should be pursued.

Coastal and marine resources

38. Many small island developing States benefit from technical assistance for the development of national programmes of action on land-based activities sponsored by UNEP. UNEP also provides training programmes on the legal implementation of regional seas agreements and related multilateral environment agreements in the Caribbean and Pacific regions. FAO offers guidance on the development of legal frameworks for more effective fisheries management and support for cooperation among fisheries and maritime control agencies. These efforts also complement the work of regional organizations such as the Forum Fisheries Agency, the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. There are a number of agencies involved in the design and implementation of policies for the management of marine protected areas, coral reefs and related marine ecosystems. There is scope for optimizing the effectiveness of these interventions, for example, the FAO guidance on legal frameworks for marine protected areas and UNESCO support for capacity of small island developing States to implement integrated coastal area management, with the efforts of regional organizations such as the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute.

Freshwater resources

39. Capacity development for management of freshwater resources remains an important priority, and United Nations agencies have responded with a number of activities. The UNEP-sponsored Partnership Initiative on the Management of Coastal Aquifers promotes South-South cooperation among Caribbean small island developing States and countries of Latin America. FAO provides advice on water use and efficiency in agriculture and land management, as well as on technologies for abstraction. There will likely be complementarity between that and UNEP proposed projects on rainwater harvesting; UNESCO work on managing water interaction systems at risk; and the UNDP supported project on sustainable integrated water and wastewater resources and wastewater management in the Pacific, with its linkages to the Caribbean through the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission/Caribbean Environmental Health Institute water and

climate change partnership. In terms of public awareness, there is probably a need to integrate such efforts with the management of wastes in small island developing States. Wider effort will be made to harness the coordinated United Nations response towards the achievement of the water and sanitation goals agreed for the International Decade for Action "Water for Life".

Land resources

40. FAO plays a leading role in the provision of policy advice on land use and tenure, integrated land, water and plant nutrition policies, planning and management, and efforts to enhance food security, providing technical assistance in value-added food chains, including organic agriculture. UN-Habitat proposes to become a supporting partner in such activities. There are also possible complementarities in the UNESCO programme on minimizing biodiversity loss through research and capacity-building for ecosystem management. In some small island developing States regions there are UNEP, UNDP and GEF funded activities in the field of integrated ecosystems management, such as the sustainable land management projects in the Pacific region, which are in the project development phase.

Biodiversity resources

41. The Convention on Biological Diversity secretariat also provides a framework for advisory services, guidelines and information, and recently inaugurated an island biodiversity programme, which is expected to energize the implementation of biodiversity conservation measures in small island developing States. Supporting activities include the FAO advice on legislation and regulation to comply with international agreements regarding alien plant species, particularly the International Plant Protection Convention, and support for strengthening national plant protection services to reduce the introduction and spread of pests, including weeds, of quarantine significance. The UNESCO Man and the Biosphere programme, which is being implemented through UNDP, UNEP and the GEF, should be viewed as an activity complementary to the numerous national biodiversity strategies and action plans developed for the Convention on Biological Diversity at the national level. Community-based conservation efforts are also being supported by UNDP, UNEP and development partners, with a number of potential benefits through integration with marine protected areas work and integrated coastal area management plans.

Transportation and communication

42. A number of United Nations agencies provide support and training through online programmes. The growth in the access and usage of ICT in small island developing States has been exponential, yet the costs and coverage remain important considerations. Development partners and United Nations agencies are engaged in programmes for ICT literacy, community multimedia centres and developing information systems and databases, strategies to exploit opportunities in areas such as e-commerce, telemedicine, distance learning and sharing of best practices. Improvement in the delivery of services from SIDSNet has also been registered. Nevertheless, there are several opportunities for optimizing the impact of ICT in small island developing States through greater coordination or clearing house mechanism procedures. For example, the UNESCO Multimedia Training Kit and the FAO Information Management Resource Kit are highly relevant to the situations of

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small island developing States, but neither has a small island developing States-specific portal or filter to enable small island developing States to utilize the particular aspects they need to use. Consultations are needed to find ways and means of ensuring that these resources have a greater value-added component for small island developing States officials and professionals, who often have to work through very slow ICT connections. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, through SIDSNet, is well poised to coordinate activities in this field.

Capacity development and education

43. UNDP has been playing a major role in the promotion of capacity-building projects in small island developing States and through seeking to ensure that capacity-building is a major component, for example, in projects funded by the Global Environment Facility. Other United Nations agencies have also provided assistance, guidance and support for training programmes. UNESCO has a particular mandate to promote education and has reported on numerous sources that SIDS could access, for example, to promote education for sustainable development. UNESCO also collaborates with other agencies such as UNEP on the Youth Exchange Training Kit. UNDP and UNESCO support the University Consortium of Small Island States, launched at the Mauritius International Meeting. UNEP also sponsors a civil society support programme, responding to the important need to strengthen the capacity of national and regional non-governmental (NGO) networks.

Health

44. A number of United Nations agencies are engaged in assisting small island developing States ministries of health control HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases. One of the critical new issues identified at Mauritius was the need for greater support for capacity-building and for overcoming the loss of skilled health-care professionals through migration. There are also the needs to increase cooperation of the relevant agencies of the United Nations system and regional organizations and to increase and improve the delivery of assistance to the small island developing States regions in the area of health.

Culture

45. Culture has emerged as an integral element in the promotion of sustainable development in small island developing States. UNESCO has numerous programmes aimed at safeguarding cultural heritage, heritage conservation and promotion of cultural arts. A large number of private sector companies and community-based organizations are also very active in the promotion of cultural industries. The Mauritius International Meeting panel discussion on culture concluded that investment in education and training to broaden the skills base in all aspects of cultural activities and entrepreneurship, technical assistance for collecting data on cultural industries, developing better market intelligence and stronger distribution networks for cultural products and services in small island developing States are challenges that must be addressed. The commitment of small island developing States Governments, with the support of international partners, to develop creative industries in small island developing States will only be realized if there is recognition that culture and cultural industries can significantly improve the quality of life of the people of small island developing States. A leading role could

be played by UNESCO in mobilizing such support from the United Nations system and the international community.

Governance

46. Attention is being given by small island developing States to the establishment of national sustainable development strategies. Ensuring participatory approaches and the involvement of women and major groups in decision-making are considered important by small island developing States. UNDP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat, FAO and other United Nations agencies also have complementary programmes in place. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has embarked on a process with the Pacific small island developing States to develop national sustainable development strategies, and it could coordinate with the other agencies involved.

Trade and finance

47. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) provides technical assistance to small island developing States towards strengthening national capacities to negotiate World Trade Organization accession beneficially. UNCTAD also provides direct substantive support to small island developing States members of the World Trade Organization, providing information and analysis on the impact of trade liberalization on small island developing States economies. This core supporting role of UNCTAD has been particularly relevant to small island developing States in the context of their efforts to gain specific recognition in the World Trade Organization through the work programme on small economies. UNCTAD also assists small island developing States efforts to advocate a revisiting of the graduation criteria for least developed countries, and provides support for small island developing States efforts towards product diversification and niche marketing in such areas as organic farming, tourism, offshore investment services and the development of cultural industries. Small island developing States also receive assistance in institutional capacity-building through appropriate training and sensitization activities and relevant advisory services, to enhance their participation in trade negotiations at multilateral and regional levels. Cross-sectoral collaboration with FAO, UNEP, UNESCO and UNDP in these areas should be pursued.

Other issues

48. UNESCO has programmes in support of youth and education, such as training for youth in basic sciences, and UNDP supports numerous community-based projects in small island developing States for expanding opportunities for the poor. The small island developing States would benefit from more coordinated support for implementation of initiatives for youth and community development. The integration of the Millennium Development Goals into the planning and development process is also an important complementary approach to the small island developing States sustainable development strategy. Attention will be given to assisting small island developing States ensure congruence of the Millennium Development Goals with the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Assistance from the international community will also be required to support small island developing States efforts to address their security concerns.

IV. The way forward

49. The principal message of the Mauritius International Meeting was the need for more effective, sustained implementation of the Programme of Action, to be achieved through (a) further consideration of and appropriate response in intergovernmental forums to the vulnerabilities of small island developing States; (b) the increased investment of financial and technical resources to support the efforts of small island developing States in advancing national implementation through capacity-building and institution strengthening; (c) enhancing regional institutional support for implementation of the small island developing States agenda; (d) promotion of an integrated participatory approach to sustainable development, engaging civil society and other regional and international stakeholders; and (e) enhancing coordination of United Nations system support for the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

50. The strategies, mechanisms and recommendations for action identified in this report offer sound first steps towards ensuring more efficient and effective implementation of the small island developing States agenda. Careful monitoring and reporting of progress in their implementation should contribute substantially to ensuring the faithful discharge of these new mandates.

Notes

¹ Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005 (United Nations publication, Sales No.E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

² Ibid., annex II.

³ A/CONF.207/11, chap. XVIII.

⁴ Two core technologies will be applied to integrate the above-mentioned tools: the Content Management System and the Learning Management System. Both will be combined into a single Decision Support System, which will become the new technical framework for SIDSnet.

Annex

Matrix of actions to operationalize the Mauritius Strategy

Sector	Mandated initiatives	United Nations system partners
Climate change	National and regional initiatives on adaptation to climate change; support for the development and/or transfer of appropriate technology to address climate change adaptation and mitigation; and support for the formulation and implementation of CDM projects.	GEF, UNFCCC, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat
Energy resources	Programmes to enhance energy efficiency and further develop renewable energy options; support for the formulation and implementation of integrated and interdisciplinary bio-energy policies and programmes; promotion of public/private partnerships and market-oriented approaches to diversifying energy sources. Support from regional development banks; implementation of public awareness programmes in communities and among stakeholder groups on the impact of fossil fuel-based energy use on the environment; support for training programmes to change traditional attitudes in the use of energy, to promote wider use of renewable energy sources; and support for the establishment of regulatory frameworks and supportive public policies regarding the development and use of renewable energy.	FAO, UNDP/GEF, UNEP, UNESCO
Natural and environmental disasters	Support for SIDS efforts to build human, technical and managerial capacities for disaster reduction and prevention; strengthening of national capacity for natural disaster preparation, response, mitigation and rehabilitation; review of regional mechanisms and establishment/strengthening of early warning capacity; increased public education and awareness on disaster preparedness and mitigation measures; design and implementation of interdisciplinary, intersectoral partnerships in national environment management plans; mainstreaming risk management in the planning process; and support for SIDS review and reform of the insurance sector to strengthen response to natural disasters.	FAO, ISDR, UNDP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat

Sector	Mandated initiatives	United Nations system partners
Management of waste	Identification of cost-effective, environmentally sound waste management systems; exploration of innovative mechanisms to finance waste management initiatives; strengthening of national and regional regulatory regimes; and promotion of reduction, re-use and recycling strategies.	UNDP, UNESCO, UN-Habitat
	Coastal and marine resources	FAO, UNEP, UNESCO
Freshwater resources	Support for national efforts to complete the delimitation of maritime boundaries; support for the completion of continental shelf claims; programmes to strengthen the monitoring, reporting, enforcement and control of fishing vessels, so as to reduce the incidence of IUU fishing; acquisition and installation of surveillance and monitoring systems; support for efforts for early ratification of/accession to relevant Fishing Agreements; and support for the design and implementation of integrated policies for the management of marine protected areas, coral reefs and related marine ecosystems.	FAO, UNEP, UNESCO
	Support capacity development in water quality and water demand management; programmes to improve infrastructure for water catchment, storage and distribution; programmes to strengthen sanitation and sewerage systems; and design and implementation of strategies to contain pollution, including through public awareness campaigns.	FAO, GEF, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO
Land resources	Programmes and legislation to improve land management and strengthen land tenure; programmes to reduce watershed and land degradation; implement sustainable forest management strategies to reduce forest degradation and loss; support strategies to enhance food security and promote agricultural diversification; support national and regional research initiatives in the use of appropriate technology, particularly for small farmers; strengthen agricultural extension services; support the development of aquaculture; support the development of early warning systems to monitor food security; and programmes to improve food processing, marketing, product development and quality control.	

Sector	Mandated initiatives	United Nations system partners
Biodiversity resources	Support for control of the primary pathways for potential invasive alien species; support for the development of local capacity to protect and effectively use traditional knowledge; educate and build community capacity to protect and conserve indigenous species and their habitats; and support the development in SIDS of natural resource accounting systems.	CBD, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO
Transportation and communication	Programmes to support increased ICT literacy and skills development; support for the development of ICT community multimedia centres and for the creation of subregional hubs; support low-tech communication mechanisms for rural and remote locations; support increased local content and applications; programmes to bridge the digital divide, especially in rural communities; develop/strengthen postgraduate programmes in ICT; develop information systems and databases; explore strategies to exploit opportunities in areas like e-commerce, telemedicine, distance learning, sharing of best practices; and assist SIDS in the development and strengthening of intellectual property laws.	UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO
Capacity development and education	Support national strategies to promote comprehensive access to primary education; support programmes for on-the-job training and adult education; support regional and national programmes to promote technical and vocational education; strengthen distance learning arrangements; improve teacher training programmes; explore the establishment of/participation in Regional Centres of Excellence; support for the SIDS University Consortium initiative; development of programmes to engage the human, technical and financial support of the SIDS Diaspora; and support programmes to strengthen SIDS national and regional NGO networks and civil society structures.	
Health	Review/strengthen strategies to control HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases; support the pursuit of partnerships for programmes to combat HIV/AIDS; support for enhanced data collection on demographic and epidemiological trends; support public health strategies and public awareness	

campaigns to reduce incidence of non-communicable diseases, and enhance immunization programmes; and programmes to support the development/appropriate use of traditional medicines.

Culture

UNESCO, UNCTAD

Assist SIDS efforts to strengthen national policies and legislative frameworks to support and protect cultural industries; support capacity-building to promote cultural industries in music, art, festivals, theatre, film and cultural tourism, among others; support the development of measures to improve institutional capacity for marketing cultural products; support the development of capacity in SIDS for rights management and for patent, trademark and copyright administration to protect all forms of creative innovation; assist SIDS in implementation of legislation to protect indigenous intellectual property; support programmes to protect natural, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including public-private partnerships; encourage community-based participation in policymaking to safeguard cultural heritage; assist SIDS in the preservation of local languages through locally developed curricula; assist SIDS strategies to improve the management and maintenance of cultural and natural heritage sites; support programmes to record traditional knowledge and preserve customary cultural values, traditions and practices; support the development of programmes to teach and transmit traditional community values to infuse basic education with local and indigenous knowledge; and programmes to support strategies to attract increased venture capital for small and medium cultural enterprises and to promote the establishment of culture support funds in SIDS.

Governance

FAO, DESA, UNDP, UNEP,
UNESCO, UN-Habitat

Support for the design and implementation of national sustainable development strategies in SIDS; support for efforts to strengthen community involvement in decision-making, planning and programme development; support for programmes enhancing a participatory approach to sustainable development with civil society; support SIDS strategies to enhance the representation of women in

Sector	Mandated initiatives	United Nations system partners
Trade and finance	decision-making at all levels; programmes to more actively engage corporate and other private sector actors in sustainable development; promotion of public-private partnerships; strengthen regional mechanisms in support of sustainable development in SIDS; and identify/design programmes for SIDS-SIDS, South-South cooperation, particularly in sharing of best practices, capacity development and transfer of appropriate technology. Provide technical assistance in support of SIDS efforts to prepare for World Trade Organization accession; assist SIDS in analysing the impact of trade liberalization, with a view to implementing appropriate adjustment strategies and enhancing their competitiveness in international markets; support product diversification and the development of niche markets; support through research and analysis SIDS advocacy towards ensuring that their environmental vulnerability is appropriately taken into consideration by the multilateral trading system; support the development and strengthening of legal, regulatory and physical infrastructure to assist SIDS in promoting a domestic environment conducive to entrepreneurship; support the design and implementation of measures to strengthen the private sector and promote micro-enterprise; support the establishment of innovative financial mechanisms to respond to the structural disadvantages of SIDS; capacity-building to strengthen SIDS participation in international trade negotiations at the national and regional levels; strengthen SIDS institutional capacity to develop trade-related policies and relevant regulatory measures; assist in the analysis and formulation of policies and the development of infrastructure required to address issues relating to sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) and technical barriers to trade (TBT); support research and analysis towards re-examination of the criteria for graduation from LDC status, taking into consideration the special vulnerabilities of SIDS; analysis of SIDS debt sustainability to support effective debt	FAO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO

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Sector	Mandated initiatives	United Nations system partners
	management; and assist SIDS in the design and implementation of programmes to encourage foreign investment and facilitate remittances.	
Other issues	Support SIDS strategies to expand employment opportunities for youth and the poor; support SIDS strategies to expand education opportunities for youth and the poor; support the integration of the MDGs into the planning and development processes of SIDS; and assist SIDS in strengthening legislative framework and in implementing regulatory and other measures to address their security needs.	DESA, UNDP, UNESCO



General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 February 2005



Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 85 (b)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/483/Add.2)]

59/229. Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Declaration of Barbados¹ and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,² adopted by the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, and recalling also its resolution 49/122 of 19 December 1994 on the Global Conference,

Recalling also its resolutions 58/213 A of 23 December 2003 and 58/213 B of 10 June 2004,

Recalling with appreciation the offer by the Government of Mauritius to host the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,

Welcoming the preparatory activities undertaken at the national, regional and international levels for the International Meeting,

1. *Recalls* its decision, in resolution 58/213 B, to convene the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States from 10 to 14 January 2005;

2. *Decides* to hold two days of informal consultations in Mauritius, on 8 and 9 January 2005, to facilitate the effective preparation of the International Meeting;

3. *Urges* that representation and participation at the International Meeting be at the highest possible level;

4. *Takes note* of the report of the Commission on Sustainable Development, acting as the preparatory meeting for the International Meeting;³

¹ *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April–6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

² *Ibid.*, annex II.

³ A/CONF.207/3.

II

5. *Expresses its appreciation* for the contributions made to the voluntary trust fund established for the purpose of assisting small island developing States to participate fully and effectively in the International Meeting and its preparatory process, as approved by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2003/55 and decision 2003/283,⁴ and urges all Member States and organizations to contribute generously to the fund;

6. *Decides* that non-governmental organizations whose work is relevant to the subject of the International Meeting, which are not currently accredited to the Economic and Social Council and which submitted applications to participate as observers in the International Meeting by 31 October 2004, may participate as observers in the International Meeting, subject to the approval of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, and in this regard recalls that the participation of major groups, including non-governmental organizations, in the International Meeting shall be in accordance with rule 65 of the provisional rules of procedure of the International Meeting;⁵

7. *Stresses* that strengthening of the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat has yet to take place, and in this regard reiterates its request to the Secretary-General, made in General Assembly resolution 57/262 of 20 December 2002 and resolution 58/213 A, to strengthen the Unit without delay and, within existing resources, to enable the Unit, including the Small Island Developing States Network, to undertake its broad range of mandated functions with a view to facilitating the full and effective implementation of the Declaration of Barbados¹ and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States² and the outcomes of the International Meeting;

8. *Invites* the International Meeting to consider fully the modalities for strengthening the Small Island Developing States Unit, including the Small Island Developing States Network, to enable it to assist effectively in the implementation of the outcomes of the International Meeting;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session the report of the International Meeting, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", a sub-item entitled "Further implementation of the outcome of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and follow-up to the outcomes of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action".

*75th plenary meeting
22 December 2004*

⁴ See also A/C.2/58/4.

⁵ A/58/567 and Corr.1.

Welcomes the achievements of the Task Force thus far, its orientation towards the use of information and communication technologies in the advancement of the development goals of the Millennium Declaration, its support of the preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society and its work, including through its regional networks and working groups and regional nodes on information and communication technologies issues.

48th plenary meeting
24 July 2003

2003/55

Preparations for an international meeting to review the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the decision of the General Assembly in its resolution 57/262 of 20 December 2002 to convene an international meeting in 2004 in Mauritius, including a high-level segment, for a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,¹⁸²

Also recalling the decision to convene regional and interregional preparatory meetings of small island developing States,

Further recalling the decision to invite the Commission on Sustainable Development, at its eleventh session, to consider its role in the preparatory process for the comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Noting the preliminary discussion of the issues by the Commission at its eleventh session in its consideration of its role in the preparations for the international meeting,

1. *Decides* that the Commission on Sustainable Development, during its twelfth session in 2004, will convene a three-day preparatory meeting for an international meeting for an in-depth assessment and appraisal of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,¹⁸² and will finalize the preparations for the international meeting, including its agenda;

2. *Also decides* that the three-day preparatory meeting shall consider a synthesis report, to be prepared by the Secretary-General on the basis of the recommendations contained in:

- (a) National assessment reports of small island developing States, where available;
- (b) Expert thematic workshop reports;

¹⁸² *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

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(c) Reports of the regional and interregional preparatory meetings referred to in paragraph 6 below on the implementation of the Programme of Action;

3. *Invites* the international donor and development community and international organizations to provide information, on or before 31 January 2004, on their activities in support of the Programme of Action, as well as on recommendations for further action in support of its full implementation, and requests that the information provided be considered by the Secretary-General in the preparation of the synthesis report referred to in paragraph 2 above;

4. *Welcomes* the work in progress in all small island developing States to continue and enhance their preparations for the international meeting, and calls upon the international community, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental bodies to support the efforts of small island developing States in their preparations of national assessment reports to be completed by July 2003, given that national reports are a critical component for the comprehensive review of the Programme of Action in providing information on respective national circumstances;

5. *Emphasizes* that in the preparation of the reporting referred to in paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 above, the provisions of paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 57/262 should be taken into account, and invites the Secretary-General to make full use of the Small Island Developing States Information Network in his efforts to disseminate the various reports;

6. *Welcomes*, in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 57/262, the regional preparatory meetings for:

(a) Pacific small island developing States, to be held in Apia, Samoa, from 4 to 8 August 2003;

(b) Caribbean small island developing States, to be held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 18 to 22 August 2003;

(c) Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Seas small island developing States, to be held in Praia, Cape Verde, from 1 to 5 September 2003;

(d) As well as an interregional preparatory meeting, with ministerial participation, for all small island developing States, to be held in Nassau, Bahamas, from 26 to 30 January 2004;

7. *Encourages* Governments and participants at the high-level segment of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development to also address, within the thematic cluster of issues for that session, matters related to the sustainable development of small island developing States and the Programme of Action;

8. *Invites* the international community, United Nations agencies and intergovernmental bodies to support regional initiatives and to collaborate closely, in partnership with the regional organizations and institutions, to expedite preparations for the review, noting the work already done by the regional organizations and institutions, bearing in mind the coordinating role assigned to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat by the General Assembly, and to the Department's Water, Natural Resources and Small Island Developing States Branch in its capacity as Chair of the inter-agency task force for the international meeting;

9. *Reiterates* the need for the full participation of small island developing States in the preparatory process leading up to, as well as during, the international meeting, and invites Governments and international and regional intergovernmental organizations to contribute to the voluntary fund called for in paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 57/262;

10. *Reiterates also* the need for the effective participation of associate members of the regional commissions, and calls for their participation to be facilitated through the voluntary fund referred to in paragraph 9 above;

11. *Invites* interested Governments and donor organizations to support the participation of major groups in the preparatory process and in the international meeting itself;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to work within existing resources and especially to utilize fully the savings from the budget that would result from not implementing the two intersessional meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development as programmed in 2003 and voluntary contributions, as necessary, for the preparatory process referred to above.

48th plenary meeting
24 July 2003

2003/56

Science and technology for development

I. Technology development, capacity-building for competitiveness in a digital society

The Economic and Social Council,

Welcoming the work of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on its theme on “Technology development and capacity-building for competitiveness in a digital society”, and noting the findings, which indicate, inter alia, the following:

(a) Information and communication technologies (ICT) create new opportunities to tackle the problems of poverty, poor communications, economic stagnation and environmental degradation. At the same time, they generate new challenges, especially for those countries in which technological capability, skill capacity and supporting infrastructure are not sufficiently developed;

(b) The diffusion of ICT throughout the world is extremely uneven. Many of the developing countries face significant barriers in access to and effective applications of ICT owing to limited telecommunications infrastructure, low computer literacy levels and lack of a regulatory framework;

(c) ICT will continue to play an increasingly important role in development. Most developing countries are not in a position to compete with industrialized countries at the frontier of innovation. The most effective way of raising the level of technology in developing countries is therefore through acquisition of technology from the industrialized countries. The experience of successful economies suggests that foreign direct investment has a crucial role to play in the acquisition of technology by developing countries;



General Assembly

Distr.: General
15 June 2004

Fifty-eighth session
Agenda items 8 and 94 (d)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/58/L.63)]

58/213 Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

B¹

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 58/213 A of 23 December 2003, in which it decided to convene the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States from 30 August to 3 September 2004,

Recalling also the offer of the Government of Mauritius to host the International Meeting,

Taking note of the request by the Government of Mauritius to reschedule the International Meeting due to logistical considerations,

1. *Decides* to convene the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States from 10 to 14 January 2005;

2. *Also decides* to hold, if deemed necessary and taking into account paragraph 7 of its resolution 58/213 A, two days of informal consultations in Mauritius, on 8 and 9 January 2005, to facilitate the effective preparation of the International Meeting;

3. *Takes note* of the appointment of a Facilitator for the process of informal consultations, who will report progress thereon to the Bureau of the International Meeting, when constituted.

90th plenary meeting
10 June 2004

¹ Consequently, resolution 58/213, in section IV of the *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/58/49)*, vol. I, becomes resolution 58/213 A.

Q

South-South cooperation



60/212	22 December 2005	
	South-South cooperation	578



Sixtieth session
Agenda item 57 (b)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/493/Add.2)]

60/212. South-South cooperation

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 58/220 of 23 December 2003,

Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,¹

Recalling further its resolution 59/250 of 22 December 2004, which, inter alia, called on organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to mainstream, in their programmes and through their country-level activities and country offices, modalities to support South-South cooperation,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation at its fourteenth session² and the decisions taken at that session;³

2. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the state of South-South cooperation;⁴

3. *Stresses* that South-South cooperation, as an important element of international cooperation for development, offers viable opportunities for developing countries in their individual and collective pursuit of sustained economic growth and sustainable development;

4. *Recognizes* that developing countries have the primary responsibility for promoting and implementing South-South cooperation, not as a substitute for but rather as a complement to North-South cooperation, and in this context reiterates the need for the international community to support the efforts of the developing countries to expand South-South cooperation;

5. *Encourages* the international community, including the international financial institutions, to support the efforts of developing countries, inter alia, through triangular cooperation;

¹ See resolution 60/1.

² *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixtieth Session, Supplement No. 39 (A/60/39).*

³ *Ibid.*, chap. I.

⁴ A/60/257.

6. *Recognizes* that regional integration initiatives between developing countries constitute an important and valuable form of South-South cooperation and that regional integration is a step towards beneficial integration into the world economy;

7. *Welcomes* the initiatives and partnerships being undertaken at the subregional, regional, interregional and global levels towards establishing public-private partnership mechanisms aiming to enhance and expand South-South cooperation in trade and investment;

8. *Takes note with appreciation* of the launching of the third round of negotiations on the Global System of Trade Preferences among Developing Countries as an important instrument to stimulate South-South cooperation;

9. *Recognizes* the considerable contribution of South-South cooperation arrangements, which promote development activities in developing countries;

10. *Also recognizes* the importance of initiatives and arrangements, including public-private mechanisms, in the undertaking of efforts to enhance cooperation between developing countries, including, inter alia, in the areas of information and communication technologies, science and technology, culture, health and education;

11. *Welcomes* the contributions made by developing countries in the context of South-South cooperation to countries and peoples stricken by natural disasters, including through the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Promotion of South-South Cooperation within the framework for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of countries affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster and through the South Fund for Development and Humanitarian Assistance;

12. *Urges* all relevant United Nations organizations and multilateral institutions to intensify their efforts to effectively mainstream the use of South-South cooperation in the design, formulation and implementation of their regular programmes and to consider increasing allocations of human, technical and financial resources for supporting South-South cooperation initiatives, and in this regard takes note of the initiatives contained in the Havana Programme of Action adopted by the first South Summit,⁵ the Marrakesh Framework for the Implementation of South-South Cooperation and the Doha Plan of Action;⁶

13. *Recognizes* the need to mobilize additional resources for enhancing South-South cooperation, reiterates in this context its decision, in its resolution 57/263 of 20 December 2002, to include the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Promotion of South-South Cooperation in the United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, as long as it exists, recalls the decision to include the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for Economic and Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries in the same Pledging Conference, and invites all countries, in particular developed countries, to support South-South and triangular cooperation through, inter alia, these funds, bearing in mind the need for these funds to continue to use such resources in an effective manner;

14. *Invites* the United Nations Development Programme to rename the Voluntary Trust Fund for the Promotion of South-South Cooperation, which was established in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/119 of 20 December

⁵ A/55/74, annex II.

⁶ A/60/111, annex II.

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1995, as the United Nations Fund for South-South Cooperation, while maintaining its mandate and voluntary nature, and to designate it as the main United Nations trust fund for promoting and supporting South-South and triangular initiatives;

15. *Invites* the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation and the United Nations Development Programme Executive Board, as appropriate, to consider measures to strengthen further the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation within the United Nations Development Programme as a separate entity and a focal point for South-South cooperation in the United Nations system, so as to enable it to carry out its full responsibilities, in particular through the mobilization of resources for the advancement of South-South cooperation, including through triangular cooperation;

16. *Decides to* include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-second session a sub-item entitled “South-South cooperation for development”, and requests the Secretary-General to submit at that session a comprehensive report on the state of South-South cooperation and on the implementation of the present resolution.

*68th plenary meeting
22 December 2005*

R

Sustainable development

- 
- 60/193 *22 December 2005*
Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme
for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21
and the outcomes of the World Summit on
Sustainable Development
Resolution adopted by the General Assembly..... 582
- 59/227 *22 December 2004*
Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme
for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21
and the outcomes of the World Summit on
Sustainable Development..... 587



Sixtieth session
Agenda item 52 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/60/488/Add.1)]

60/193. Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 55/199 of 20 December 2000, 56/226 of 24 December 2001, 57/253 of 20 December 2002 and 57/270 A and B of 20 December 2002 and 23 June 2003, respectively, and its resolutions 58/218 of 23 December 2003 and 59/227 of 22 December 2004,

Recalling also the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,¹ Agenda 21,² the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,³ the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development⁴ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”),⁵ as well as the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,⁶

Reaffirming the commitment to implement Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, including the time-bound goals and targets, and the other internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,⁷ and reaffirmed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome,⁸

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol.I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

² *Ibid.*, annex II.

³ Resolution S-19/2, annex.

⁴ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

⁵ *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

⁶ *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18–22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

⁷ See resolution 55/2.

⁸ See resolution 60/1.

Reaffirming the decisions taken at the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development,

Reaffirming also the continuing need to ensure a balance among economic development, social development and environmental protection as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development,

Reiterating that the Commission is the high-level body responsible for sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as a forum for consideration of issues related to integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development,

Reaffirming that eradicating poverty, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development,

Recognizing that good governance within each country and at the international level is essential for sustainable development,

Recognizing also that eradicating poverty is the greatest global challenge facing the world today and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, particularly for developing countries, and that although each country has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and poverty eradication and the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized, concerted and concrete measures are required at all levels to enable developing countries to achieve their sustainable development goals as related to the internationally agreed poverty-related targets and goals, including those contained in Agenda 21, the relevant outcomes of other United Nations conferences and the Millennium Declaration,

Recalling the decision taken by the Commission at its thirteenth session⁹ to devote one day of its review sessions to the review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,¹⁰ focusing on that year's thematic cluster, as well as on any new developments regarding the sustainable development efforts of small island developing States using existing modalities,

Recalling also the decision of the Commission to request its secretariat to update the policy options and practical measures contained in the Chairman's summary of the interactive discussions held at the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, on a regular basis, so as to make it a living document, and to develop web-based tools to disseminate information on implementation and best practices,⁹

Looking forward to the upcoming cycles of the work programme of the Commission as adopted at its eleventh session and their contributions to the further implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,

⁹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2005, Supplement No. 9 (E/2005/29)*, chap. I, sect. C, resolution 13/1.

¹⁰ *Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10–14 January 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

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1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities undertaken in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;¹¹

2. *Notes* that the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session adopted policy decisions on options and practical measures aimed at accelerating progress in implementation in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements;⁹

3. *Reiterates* that sustainable development is a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities, in particular for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration⁷ and in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”);⁵

4. *Calls upon* Governments, all relevant international and regional organizations, the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations funds and programmes, the regional commissions and the specialized agencies, the international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility and other intergovernmental organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates, as well as major groups, to take action to ensure the effective implementation of and follow-up to the commitments, programmes and time-bound targets adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and encourages them to report on concrete progress in that regard;

5. *Calls for* the effective implementation of the commitments, programmes and time-bound targets adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and for the fulfilment of the provisions relating to the means of implementation, as contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

6. *Encourages* Governments to participate at the appropriate level with representatives, including ministers, from the relevant departments and organizations working in the areas of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change, as well as finance, in the fourteenth session of the Commission;

7. *Recalls* the decision of the Commission at its eleventh session to invite the regional commissions, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Commission, to consider organizing regional implementation meetings in order to contribute to the work of the Commission,¹² and, in this regard, welcomes the activities undertaken by the regional commissions and the secretariat of the Commission to organize the regional implementation meetings in preparation for the fourteenth session of the Commission, and looks forward to their contributions, based on the discussions in the intergovernmental regional implementation meetings, to the preparation of the fourteenth session;

¹¹ A/60/261 and Corr.1.

¹² See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 9 (E/2003/29)*, chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution I entitled “Future programme, organization and methods of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development”, para. 3 (a); see also Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/61 of 25 July 2003.

8. *Also recalls* the decision of the Commission at its eleventh session¹³ that activities during Commission meetings should provide for the balanced involvement of participants from all regions, as well as for gender balance;

9. *Invites* donor countries to consider supporting the participation of experts from the developing countries in the areas of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change in the fourteenth session of the Commission;

10. *Reaffirms* the objective of strengthening the implementation of Agenda 21,² including through the mobilization of financial and technological resources, as well as capacity-building programmes, particularly for developing countries;

11. *Also reaffirms* the objective of enhancing the participation and effective involvement of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in the implementation of Agenda 21, as well as to promote transparency and broad public participation;

12. *Further reaffirms* the need to promote corporate responsibility and accountability as envisaged by the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

13. *Reaffirms* the need to promote the development of microenterprises and small- and medium-sized enterprises, including by means of training, education and skill enhancement, with a special focus on agro-industry as a provider of livelihoods for rural communities;

14. *Requests* the secretariat of the Commission to make arrangements to facilitate the balanced representation of major groups from developed and developing countries in the sessions of the Commission;

15. *Also requests* the secretariat of the Commission to coordinate the participation of the relevant major groups in the discussions at the fourteenth session of the Commission;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in reporting to the Commission at its fourteenth session on the state of the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21³ and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, on the basis of appropriate inputs from all levels, to submit thematic reports on the thematic cluster of issues for the fourteenth session of the Commission, in accordance with the decisions taken by the Commission at its eleventh session;

17. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Commission, at its review session, on progress and obstacles in respect of sustainable development in small island developing States, including recommendations on how to enhance the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,¹⁰ focusing on that year's thematic cluster;

18. *Encourages* Governments and organizations at all levels, as well as major groups, including the scientific community and educators, to undertake results-oriented initiatives and activities to support the work of the Commission and to promote and facilitate the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the

¹³ Ibid., para. 2 (j).

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Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, including through voluntary multi-stakeholder partnership initiatives;

19. *Notes* the convening of the Second International Expert Meeting on the Ten-year Framework of Programmes for Sustainable Consumption and Production in San José, Costa Rica, from 5 to 8 September 2005;

20. *Also notes* the work in inter-agency cooperation and coordination undertaken in the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and requests the Secretary-General to report, at its sixty-first session, on action taken by the United Nations system in the thematic areas being addressed by the Commission in its current two-year cycle, with a view to facilitating an in-depth consideration of system-wide inter-agency cooperation and coordination in the relevant thematic areas, in accordance with the mandates agreed upon in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

21. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-first session the item entitled “Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development”, and requests the Secretary-General, at that session, to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

*68th plenary meeting
22 December 2005*



General Assembly

Distr.: General
16 February 2005

Fifty-ninth session
Agenda item 85 (a)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/59/483/Add.1)]

59/227. Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 55/199 of 20 December 2000, 56/226 of 24 December 2001, 57/253 of 20 December 2002 and 57/270 A and B of 20 December 2002 and 23 June 2003, respectively, as well as its resolution 58/218 of 23 December 2003,

Recalling also the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,¹ Agenda 21,² the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,³ the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development⁴ and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”),⁵

Reaffirming the commitment to implement Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, including the time-bound goals and targets, and the other internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,⁶

Recalling the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits, including the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,⁷

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex I.

² *Ibid.*, annex II.

³ Resolution S-19/2, annex.

⁴ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

⁵ *Ibid.*, resolution 2, annex.

⁶ See resolution 55/2.

⁷ *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18–22 March 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

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Reaffirming the continuing need to ensure a balance between economic development, social development and environmental protection as interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development,

Reaffirming also that eradicating poverty, changing unsustainable patterns of production and consumption and protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development are overarching objectives of and essential requirements for sustainable development,

Recognizing that good governance within each country and at the international level is essential for sustainable development,

Noting with satisfaction that the Commission on Sustainable Development at its twelfth session undertook an in-depth evaluation of progress in implementing Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, focusing on the thematic cluster of issues on water, sanitation and human settlements, and identified best practices, constraints and obstacles in the process of implementation,⁸

Noting that the organization of work of the twelfth session of the Commission included plenary sessions, an interactive plenary dialogue and regional meetings, as well as a partnership fair, learning centres and side events,

Recalling the decision of the Commission at its eleventh session, endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2003/61 of 25 July 2003, that the Commission, at its policy sessions, to be held in April/May of the second year of the cycle, would take policy decisions on practical measures and options to expedite implementation in the selected thematic cluster of issues, taking account of the discussions of the intergovernmental preparatory meeting, the reports of the Secretary-General and other relevant inputs,⁹

Recalling also the decision of the Commission at its eleventh session that the discussions of the intergovernmental preparatory meeting would be based on the outcome of the review session and reports of the Secretary-General, as well as other relevant inputs, and that, on the basis of those discussions, the Chair would prepare a draft negotiating document for consideration at the policy session,⁹

Looking forward to the upcoming cycles of the work programme of the Commission as adopted at its eleventh session and their contributions to the further implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities undertaken in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development;¹⁰

2. *Reiterates* that sustainable development is a key element of the overarching framework for United Nations activities, in particular for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration⁶ and in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;⁵

⁸ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 9 (E/2004/29)*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 2003, Supplement No. 9 (E/2003/29), chap. I, sect. A.

¹⁰ A/59/220.

3. *Calls upon* Governments, all relevant international and regional organizations, the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations funds and programmes, the regional commissions and specialized agencies, the international financial institutions, the Global Environment Facility and other intergovernmental organizations, in accordance with their respective mandates, as well as major groups, to take action to ensure the effective implementation of and follow-up to the commitments, programmes and time-bound targets adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and encourages them to report on concrete progress in that regard;

4. *Calls for* the implementation of the commitments, programmes and time-bound targets adopted at the Summit and, to that end, for the fulfilment of the provisions relating to the means of implementation, as contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

5. *Encourages* Governments to participate, at the appropriate level, with representatives from the relevant departments and agencies in water, sanitation and human settlements, as well as finance, in the intergovernmental preparatory meeting and the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

6. *Recalls* the decision of the Commission at its eleventh session to invite the regional commissions, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Commission, to consider organizing regional implementation meetings in order to contribute to the work of the Commission,⁹ and in this regard urges the regional commissions to take into account the relevant thematic clusters contained in the programme of work of the Commission and to provide inputs as specified by the Commission at its eleventh session;

7. *Recalls also* the decision of the Commission at its eleventh session that activities during Commission meetings should provide for the balanced involvement of participants from all regions, as well as for gender balance;⁹

8. *Welcomes* the contributions of the regional commissions to the work of the Commission at its twelfth session, including the regional meetings focusing on the thematic cluster of issues on water, sanitation and human settlements, and their inputs to the reports of the Secretary-General;

9. *Invites* donor countries to consider supporting the participation of experts from the developing countries in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements in the thirteenth session of the Commission;

10. *Takes note with interest* of the establishment of the Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation by the Secretary-General, and looks forward to its contribution to the mobilization of efforts and resources towards the implementation of the commitments, goals and targets agreed upon in these areas;

11. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in reporting to the Commission at its thirteenth session on the state of the implementation of Agenda 21,² the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21³ and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,⁵ on the basis of appropriate inputs from all levels, to submit thematic reports on each of the three issues contained in the thematic cluster of issues on water, sanitation and human settlements, taking into account their interlinkages, while addressing the cross-cutting issues identified by the Commission at its eleventh session;⁹

12. *Requests* the Commission, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/191 of 22 December 1992 and as specified by the Commission at its

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eleventh session, to examine the cross-cutting issues related to the thematic cluster of issues on water, sanitation and human settlements;

13. *Stresses* the importance of the success of the Commission at its thirteenth session in:

(a) Taking policy decisions on practical measures and options to expedite implementation in the thematic cluster of issues on water, sanitation and human settlements;

(b) Mobilizing further action by all implementation actors to overcome obstacles and constraints in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;

14. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on inter-agency cooperation,¹¹ and requests him to continue his efforts to strengthen system-wide inter-agency cooperation and coordination for the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and in this regard to report on such inter-agency cooperation and coordination activities and their terms of reference to the Economic and Social Council in 2005;

15. *Recalls* its resolution 58/291 of 6 May 2004 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 2004/44 of 22 July 2004 and 2004/63 of 23 July 2004, and in this regard requests the Commission, without prejudice to the decisions adopted at its eleventh session, to contribute through the Council to the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly in 2005, in accordance with the modalities to be set out by the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session;

16. *Requests* the secretariat of the Commission to make arrangements to facilitate the balanced representation of major groups from developed and developing countries in the sessions of the Commission;

17. *Notes* the convening of the second international expert meeting on a ten-year framework of programmes for sustainable consumption and production, to be held in Costa Rica in September 2005, and in this regard, while acknowledging their ongoing support, urges Member States to consider further support for those activities;

18. *Encourages* Governments and organizations at all levels, as well as major groups, including the scientific community and educators, to undertake results-oriented initiatives and activities to support the work of the Commission and to promote and facilitate the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, including through voluntary multi-stakeholder partnership initiatives;

19. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixtieth session the item entitled "Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development", and requests the Secretary-General, at that session, to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

*75th plenary meeting
22 December 2004*

¹¹ E/2004/12-E/CN.17/2004/3.

S

Volunteers

60/134

16 December 2005

Follow-up to the implementation of the
International Year of Volunteers 592



Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/60/501)]

60/134. Follow-up to the implementation of the International Year of Volunteers

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 57/106 of 26 November 2002 on the follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers,

Recognizing the valuable contribution of volunteering, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, formal service delivery and other forms of civic participation, to economic and social development, benefiting society at large, communities and the individual volunteer,

Recognizing also that volunteerism is an important component of any strategy aimed at, inter alia, such areas as poverty reduction, sustainable development, health, disaster prevention and management and social integration and, in particular, overcoming social exclusion and discrimination,

Noting with appreciation the efforts to increase understanding and awareness of volunteerism through research, global information-sharing and education, including efforts to develop an effective network for volunteers through, inter alia, the World Volunteer Web¹ and linked national sites,

Acknowledging the existing contribution of the organizations of the United Nations system to supporting volunteering, including the work of United Nations Volunteers around the world,

Bearing in mind the need for an integrated and coordinated follow-up to the International Year of Volunteers to be pursued in the relevant parts of the United Nations system,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General;²
2. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General in response to the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations;³

¹ www.worldvolunteerweb.org.

² A/60/128.

³ A/59/354.

3. *Welcomes* the hosting of the first International Conference on Volunteerism and the Millennium Development Goals, organized jointly by the Government of Pakistan and the United Nations system and held in Islamabad from 5 to 7 December 2004, and takes note of its final report;¹

4. *Reiterates its call upon* Governments, with the active support of the media, civil society and the private sector, to observe the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development on 5 December and to include activities, in particular on efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals;

5. *Reaffirms* the need to recognize and promote all forms of volunteerism as an issue that involves and benefits all segments of society, including children, young persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, minorities and immigrants and those who remain excluded for social or economic reasons;

6. *Recognizes* that volunteering, in particular at the community level, will help to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration;⁴

7. *Also recognizes* the importance of supportive legislative and fiscal frameworks for the growth and development of volunteerism, and encourages Governments to enact such measures;

8. *Welcomes* the work of the United Nations Volunteers, and requests them to continue their efforts, together with other stakeholders, to raise awareness of volunteerism, increase reference and networking resources available, provide technical cooperation to developing countries, upon their request, in the field of volunteerism and enhance coordination among those operating on the ground;

9. *Invites* all stakeholders, especially from the private sector community and from private foundations, to support volunteerism as a strategic tool to enhance economic and social development, including by expanding corporate volunteering;

10. *Calls for* the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to integrate volunteerism in its various forms into their policies, programmes and reports, and encourages the recognition and inclusion of volunteer contributions in future United Nations and other relevant international conferences;

11. *Acknowledges* the importance of civil society organizations for the promotion of volunteerism, and in this respect recognizes that strengthening the dialogue and interaction between civil society and the United Nations contributes to the expansion of volunteerism;

12. *Encourages* Governments to establish partnerships with civil society in order to build up volunteer potential at the national level, given the important contribution that volunteerism makes to the fulfilment of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration;

13. *Recognizes* the increasing attention being given to the economic dimension of volunteerism, and encourages Governments, with the support of civil society, to build up a knowledge base on the subject, to disseminate data and to expand research on other volunteer-related issues, including in developing countries;

⁴ See resolution 55/2.

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14. *Welcomes* the work of the United Nations Volunteers in building up the capacity of the World Volunteer Web¹ with a view to enhancing network capabilities and to expanding information, knowledge and resource management, and encourages Governments and all stakeholders, in particular the private sector, to contribute on a voluntary basis to this initiative;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled “Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family” and to include in the report proposals regarding possible ways to mark the tenth anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers in 2011.

*64th plenary meeting
16 December 2005*

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“Water for life”

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United Nations

A/60/158



General Assembly

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Sixtieth session

Item 54 (a) of the provisional agenda*

**Sustainable development: implementation of Agenda 21,
the Programme for the Further Implementation
of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit
on Sustainable Development**

Actions taken in organizing the activities of the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/228, in which the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its sixtieth session a report on the activities planned by the Secretary-General and relevant organizations of the United Nations system for the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015. The Assembly also recalled its resolution 55/196, by which it had proclaimed 2003 the International Year of Freshwater, and its resolution 58/217, by which it had proclaimed 2005-2015 the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, to commence on 22 March 2005. The latter resolution stated the goals of the Decade and called upon the relevant United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system to deliver a coordinated response, utilizing existing resources and voluntary funds to make 2005-2015 a decade of action. The report outlines the activities that were prepared for the launch of the Decade on 22 March 2005, some concrete initial actions for the Decade at the regional level, proposals for a public information strategy and a communications plan for awareness-raising, and provides some recommendations for action to be taken during the course of the Decade.

* A/60/150.

** The present report was prepared by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with UN-Water, the inter-agency mechanism designated by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, through its High-level Committee on Programmes, as the coordinating mechanism in the United Nations system for follow-up action in the area of water resources and sanitation.

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I. Introduction

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1. In its resolution 58/217, the General Assembly proclaimed 2005-2015 the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", to commence on 22 March 2005, and recalled its resolution 55/196, in which it had proclaimed 2003 the International Year of Freshwater.

2. In its resolution 59/228, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to it at its sixtieth session a report on the activities that he and relevant organizations of the United Nations system planned for the Decade. The present report has been prepared in response to that request.

3. In its resolution 58/217, the Assembly decided that the goals of the Decade should be to have a greater focus on the implementation of water-related programmes and projects, while striving to ensure the participation and involvement of women in water-related development efforts, and the furtherance of cooperation at all levels in order to help to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals. It also called upon the relevant United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system to deliver a coordinated response, utilizing existing resources and voluntary funds to make 2005-2015 a decade of action.

4. The Millennium Declaration commits Governments around the world to a clear agenda for combating poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease, discrimination against women and environmental degradation. In the area of water resources and sanitation, heads of State pledged in 2000 to reduce by half the proportion of people who are unable to reach, or to afford, safe drinking water by 2015 and to stop the unsustainable exploitation of water resources. Additional goals adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg in 2002, are aimed at developing integrated water resource management and water efficiency plans by 2005 and at halving the proportion of people who do not have access to basic sanitation by 2015. The primary goal of the "Water for Life" Decade is to promote efforts to fulfil international commitments made on water and water-related issues by 2015 — to be a decade of action. This will be the second international decade on water-related issues organized by the United Nations, succeeding the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade, 1981-1990.

5. UN-Water, the United Nations system-wide mechanism for coherence and coordination for the relevant agencies and programmes involved with water-related issues, was established by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) through its High-level Committee on Programmes in 2004. UN-Water is coordinating activities of the United Nations for implementing the Decade, including with non-United Nations partners. At the national level, it is expected that each country will take its own approach to organizing activities around the "Water for Life" Decade through, for example, national committees.

6. The present report provides information on the institutional framework for preparations for the Decade and gives details on some of the international, regional and national activities that are being planned and that could be carried out in connection with it.

II. Background

7. Awareness of the importance of the use and management of freshwater resources for achieving sustainable development has increased dramatically in recent years, as a result of a number of ongoing international and national initiatives and activities, leading to the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. This recognition put water and sanitation high on the agenda at Johannesburg. The International Year of Freshwater, 2003, was well timed to follow up on recommendations for action on water and sanitation made at the Johannesburg Summit. The major United Nations activities for the Year were jointly coordinated by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This example of excellent inter-agency collaboration drew in many other members of UN-Water, in particular the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which was the lead agency in organizing the World Day for Water, 22 March 2003, under the theme “Water for the future”. UNEP developed a programme designed to help Governments and key partners to plan events to raise awareness of the need to preserve the quality and quantity of freshwater for future generations. Educational materials and national events throughout the International Year were featured on the official website (www.wateryear2003.org), and can be used during the Decade.

8. During the “Water for Life” Decade, special emphasis will be placed on ensuring the participation and involvement of women in water-related development efforts, as called for in the resolution. The challenge of the Decade is to focus attention on action-oriented activities and policies that ensure the long-term sustainable management of water resources, in terms of both quantity and quality, and include measures to improve sanitation. Achieving the goals of the “Water for Life” Decade will require sustained commitment, cooperation and investment on the part of all stakeholders from 2005 to 2015 and far beyond.

III. Intergovernmental processes at the onset of the “Water for Life” Decade

9. In paragraph 2 of its resolution 58/217, the General Assembly decided that the goals of the Decade should support the achievement of “internationally agreed water-related goals contained in Agenda 21, the Programme for the further Implementation of Agenda 21, the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and, as appropriate, those identified [by] the Commission on Sustainable Development”.

10. At the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, held in 2003, the special themes selected for the first implementation cycle following the World Summit on Sustainable Development were water resources, sanitation and human settlements. The twelfth session, in 2004, provided an exhaustive review of the current state of implementation of policies and practices to meet the internationally agreed goals in water and sanitation.

11. At its thirteenth session, in 2005, the Commission on Sustainable Development explored policy options for furthering implementation on the issues of water and sanitation, as well as on human settlements. The final decision (see E/2005/29) provides a possible framework for Governments and the United Nations system,

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working in partnership with major groups and other stakeholders, to take action in the areas of water and sanitation. Options are presented on access to basic water services; integrated water resources management; access to basic sanitation; sanitation and hygiene education; and wastewater collection, treatment and reuse. The decision provides a range of measures and approaches to address water, sanitation and human settlements in an integrated manner, taking into account economic, social and environmental aspects, related sectoral policies and cross-cutting issues as identified at the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. A user-friendly matrix was developed in this process to highlight policy options, possible actions and case studies. It is available at <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/matrix.pdf>. Both the decision and the matrix could be used as guidelines for action during the “Water for Life” Decade.

IV. United Nations system programmes and activities

A. UN-Water¹

12. UN-Water is coordinating activities for the “Water for Life” Decade, 2005-2015. The terms of reference and modalities of work for UN-Water cover the elements of a detailed inter-agency plan for addressing water as well as sanitation issues, and include mechanisms for interacting with non-United Nations system stakeholders. The chairmanship of UN-Water rotates among its members and is currently held by the World Health Organization (WHO), while the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs provides secretariat services. Information on UN-Water can be found at http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/inter_agency/inter_agency.htm.

13. UN-Water has defined a number of thematic initiatives for its work over the Decade, which include coping with water scarcity and pollution; sanitation, safe drinking water and health; gender mainstreaming in water and sanitation; integrated water resources management; transboundary water issues; and disaster risk reduction. Africa was selected as a geographical focus due to its exceptional needs in water and sanitation. A series of policy briefs is planned for wide distribution by UN-Water during the Decade, to reflect UN-Water’s thematic initiatives. An initial prototype on water hazard risks has been produced, and a second on gender, water and sanitation is available on the website.

14. One of the main ongoing subprogrammes of UN-Water is the World Water Assessment Programme, an inter-agency initiative hosted by UNESCO, which provides the background assessment for and produces the *World Water Development Report*. The first edition of the report, *Water for People, Water for Life*, was launched at the Third World Water Forum, in Kyoto, Japan, on 22 March 2003 (see www.world.water-forum3.com/), and the second edition will be launched at the Fourth World Water Forum, in Mexico City, on 22 March 2006. The World Water Assessment Programme provides comprehensive information and analysis on the current state of the world’s water resources and potential policy solutions, bringing together relevant inputs from Governments, NGOs, academic institutions and the private sector. Information on participation in the Programme is available at <http://www.unesco.org/water/wwap/index.shtml>.

15. A number of activities coordinated under UN-Water have cross-linkages with another water-oriented coordinating mechanism, UN-Oceans, which was also set up under CEB to strengthen the coordination and cooperation of United Nations activities related to oceans and coastal areas. The cross-linkages between UN-Water and UN-Oceans are most relevant for integrative mechanisms, such as the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities, and for small island developing States (see <http://www.un-oceans.org>).

B. Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation

16. The Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation was established by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in order to give advice, galvanize global action and raise awareness on water and sanitation issues, to help mobilize funds for water and sanitation projects and to encourage new partnerships, as part of international efforts to eradicate poverty and to achieve the agreed development goals in water and sanitation.

17. The Advisory Board, chaired by former Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan, includes a wide range of eminent persons, technical experts, stakeholders from civil society and other knowledgeable individuals with experience in inspiring people, moving the machinery of government and working with the media, the private sector and civil society. After its second meeting, in Tokyo in December 2004, the Board issued statements on two key issues — integrated water resources management and water disaster risk management — which provided content for the international debate at the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction (January 2005) and the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (April 2005). The Board is expected to provide important inputs to the Fourth World Water Forum, in Mexico City in March 2006.

C. United Nations Inter-agency Task Force on Gender and Water

18. In early 2003, the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality established the Inter-agency Task Force on Gender and Water, with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Division for Sustainable Development as task manager. UN-Water also supported the creation of the Task Force, thus linking gender focal points and water focal points in each agency. Currently the Task Force comprises 18 United Nations programmes and agencies, 5 non-United Nations entities and 2 observers. The Task Force reports annually to the Inter-agency Network on Women and Gender Equality and semi-annually to UN-Water. In late 2004, UN-Water agreed that the Task Force would be one of its subprogrammes and requested it to take responsibility for the gender component of the “Water for Life” Decade, 2005-2015. The Task Force has prepared a programme of work for 2005-2006 and a policy brief for UN-Water.

19. The Task Force submitted its paper “A gender perspective on water and sanitation” (see http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd13/documents/bgground_2.pdf) to the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in April 2005. The paper provided content for much of the discussion on the cross-cutting issue of gender in water and sanitation.

D. Joint Monitoring Programme on water supply and sanitation

20. WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) actively contribute to global water supply and sanitation monitoring and information dissemination through the Joint Monitoring Programme under the umbrella of UN-Water. Coverage figures produced by the Joint Monitoring Programme are the official reference data for the United Nations system, including with regard to the goals contained in the Millennium Declaration and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

21. In the 2004 report, "Meeting the MDG drinking water and sanitation target: a mid-term assessment of progress", the WHO-UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme presented coverage data for most countries of the world as of 2002 (see www.wssinfo.org). The figures revealed the glaring contrasts between rich and poor nations and between rural and urban populations in the poorest countries. The focus of its most recent report, "Water for life: making it happen" (June 2005), is on the impact of lack of drinking water and sanitation on different age groups and the changes that simple improvements in water and sanitation services can make on people's lifestyles, health and economic prospects.

22. For its coverage estimates, the Joint Monitoring Programme uses nationally representative household surveys such as the Demographic and Health Survey, the UNICEF multiple indicator cluster surveys and the WHO global health survey, as well as other reliable country surveys and national censuses that allow data to be compared. The current database provides country, global and regional coverage estimates, disaggregated by service type and by urban and rural areas, for 1990 and 2002. The 2006 report will update coverage estimates to 2004 as a baseline for the "Water for Life" Decade.

E. Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities and associated programmes

23. To address the fact that nearly 80 per cent of the pollution in the oceans originates from land-based sources, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities was adopted in 1995. The Programme of Action is the global mechanism aimed at addressing the linkages between freshwater and the coastal and marine environment and the significant impacts on human health, poverty alleviation and food security from the continued degradation of the coastal and marine environment.

24. UNEP provides the secretariat for the Global Programme of Action Coordination Office, located in The Hague, which is developing national programmes of action for the implementation of the Global Programme of Action in some 40 countries. Working closely with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other implementing United Nations agencies, the Global Programme of Action can assist countries in building national capacity in these areas during the "Water for Life" Decade. Direct support is provided to local and national training programmes on, for example, municipal wastewater management, which will be continued and intensified during the Decade. UNEP is also planning to convene the second intergovernmental review of the Global Programme of Action

in China in October 2006, thus contributing significantly to implementation of the goals and targets associated with the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

25. As part of its efforts during the “Water for Life” Decade, UNEP will also strengthen the UNEP Global Environmental Monitoring System on Water as a global repository for water-quality data.

26. The UNEP Regional Seas Programme, covering 17 regions around the world and more than 140 coastal States and territories, provides a framework for regional agreements and conventions and their related action plans to protect the coastal and marine environment. These cover such issues as chemical wastes and integrated approaches to the management of coastal areas and the conservation and management of marine resources and ecosystems. A new brochure examines the widespread occurrence of marine litter in areas under the Regional Seas Programme and within the 64 large marine ecosystems around the world, so as to promote integrated management based on ecosystem approaches.

F. International Hydrological Programme

27. Of relevance for the “Water for Life” Decade is the International Hydrological Programme, which is the UNESCO intergovernmental scientific cooperative programme for water resources. The International Hydrological Programme aims to improve the scientific and technological basis for the rational management of water resources, including the protection of the environment. As the principal UNESCO mechanism for contributing to the priority issue of water resources and related ecosystems, the International Hydrological Programme strives to minimize risks to water resources systems, taking fully into account social challenges and interactions and developing appropriate approaches for sound water management (see <http://www.unesco.org/water/ihp/index.shtml>).

G. Water for African and Asian cities

28. In its resolution 57/275 of December 2002, the General Assembly called upon the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to further support the implementation of the Water for African Cities Programme, as requested by the New Partnership for Africa’s Development. In April 2005, the UN-Habitat Governing Council supported further actions in the field of urban drinking water and sanitation and invited Governments and international financial institutions to increase their support for the water and sanitation activities of UN-Habitat. Thus, UN-Habitat has established strategic partnerships with the World Bank and the regional development banks to promote pro-poor investments in human settlements related to water and sanitation. These partnerships are expected to lead to significant new investments through the Water for African Cities Programme and the Water for Asian Cities Programme.

29. In strengthening its work in the field of water and sanitation, UN-Habitat has moved towards a programmatic approach that allows donors to contribute funds to a facility dedicated to a well-defined goal with a clear set of objectives, the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund. For this facility, priority is given to Africa, which has the poorest water and sanitation coverage of all regions, and to initiatives that could

reduce the difficulties faced by women and children in having access to safe water and adequate sanitation.

30. In the Water for Asian Cities Programme, the UN-Habitat partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is expected to bring in \$500 million in investment in five Asian cities. The Programme was officially launched by ADB and UN-Habitat at the Third World Water Forum, in March 2003 in Japan. This partnership initiative entails capacity-building grant support of \$10 million (provided by the Government of the Netherlands and ADB) and follow-up loans of \$500 million to Asian cities over a period of five years (2003-2007).

31. In the Water for African Cities Programme, a similar partnership with ADB is expected to assist with follow-up investments of about \$360 million. Moreover, with support from the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund, in consultation with host Governments, UN-Habitat has initiated the Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative to address the rehabilitation needs of water and sanitation infrastructure in the secondary towns around the lake.

H. United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

32. The aim of the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction is to mobilize Governments, United Nations agencies, regional bodies, the private sector and civil society to unite efforts in building resilient societies by developing a culture of prevention and preparedness. The “Water for Life” Decade has the same time frame as the Hyogo Framework for Action: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe, Japan, January 2005). This synergy provides a unique opportunity to strengthen understanding of how the management of risk related to disasters should be linked to water resources management.

V. Regional initiatives

33. UN-Water, which includes the secretariats of all five United Nations regional commissions as members, encourages regional inter-agency networking arrangements between the regional economic commissions and regional offices of the various United Nations agencies. The first regional UN-Water initiative is being established by the Economic Commission for Africa, which is developing a work plan of activities for UN-Water/Africa; this provides a good model for the work of UN-Water work in other regions.

A. Economic Commission for Africa

34. Africa’s share of global freshwater resources, 10 per cent, closely matches its share of world population, 12 per cent, but the distribution of this resource is uneven, from areas of severe aridity, such as the Sahara and Sahel in the north and the Kalahari in the south, to areas of abundant water resources, such as the Congo Basin, which is estimated to have 50 per cent of Africa’s freshwater. The continent suffers from one of the most unstable rainfall regimes in the world. The extremes of shortage and excess of water result in different forms of socio-economic insecurity.

35. In the field of water policy, strategy and institutional arrangements, a number of advances have been made in African countries. There is an increasing commitment to water policy reform and a strong trend towards decentralization of water institutions. The main goal of UN-Water/Africa is to ensure coherence and foster joint action by all United Nations agencies active in the water sector in Africa, particularly during the “Water for Life” Decade. The main activities on UN-Water/Africa’s work programme are:

(a) *Advocacy for raising the profile of water issues targeted towards policy makers.* UN-Water/Africa organized the Pan African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water under the auspices of the African Ministers’ Council on Water in December 2003, which defined Africa’s priority implementation needs and required actions. The major outcomes formed the basis of the work programme of many African countries in water and sanitation. Policy priority has been given to the role of gender in water resources management in Africa, based on an action plan developed and approved by the Executive Committee of the African Ministers’ Council on Water in June 2005. Detailed information is available at www.uneca.org/awich;

(b) *Monitoring of progress in implementing regional and global programmes.* UN-Water/Africa has initiated a biannual African Water Development Report, based on reports at the basin, national and subregional levels. A final version of the report, covering 30 countries, is scheduled for release in September 2005;

(c) *Improving access to information on African water resources.* The UN-Water/Africa group has set up the African Water Information Clearing House, a continent-wide information system backed up by subregional networks of water and geo-information specialists and institutions.

36. With Africa designated as the geographic focus of UN-Water, the activities described above are expected to make a significant contribution to improving the development and utilization of Africa’s water resources for socio-economic development, and thus to progress in reaching the goals of the “Water for Life” Decade.

B. Economic Commission for Europe

37. Integrated water resources management in the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region, with more than 150 major transboundary rivers, over 100 transboundary groundwater aquifers and about 30 international lakes, requires joint actions among the countries that share basins, including the establishment of joint bodies, such as river commissions. In February 2005, the sixtieth annual session of ECE agreed on a framework for policies, strategies and action on water and sanitation that covers the period until 2015. The policies and actions that form the ECE response to the challenges of the Decade are based on its 1992 Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes and its two Protocols, on water and health and on civil liability for damage caused by industrial accidents. These regional legal instruments set goals and tasks for countries and institutions that are responsible for integrated water resources management in a transboundary context. The provisions of the European Union

Water Framework Directive and some 150 bilateral and multilateral agreements supplement these instruments.

38. The contributions of ECE to the Decade include research and capacity-building support in such technical areas as flood management, protection of water-related ecosystems, groundwater management and monitoring and assessment of transboundary waters. Selected programme elements, most of them carried out in cooperation with UNESCO, UNDP, UNEP, the World Meteorological Organization, WHO, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and others, became part of the work plan of UN-Water.

C. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

39. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) conducts research and disseminates information on the economic and institutional aspects of water resources management in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also provides advice on water legislation and regulation of water utilities and cooperates with a number of global and regional projects, such as the Global Water Partnership and Visión Andina, assessing the impact of trade and investment agreements on water and water utilities.

40. ECLAC publishes the newsletter of the Network for Cooperation in Integrated Water Resource Management for Sustainable Development in Latin America and the Caribbean twice a year, in English and Spanish. Organizations involved in the technical network include private and public water resources management institutions. The Network's purpose is to improve the capacity for multiple-use management of water resources in diverse dimensions (institutional, administrative, economic-financial, legal and technical), through exchange of information and direct cooperation between Network members. More information on the Network and the ECLAC work programme and publications on water resources can be found at <http://www.eclac.cl/drni/>.

D. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

41. The Asia and the Pacific region accounts for more than two thirds of the world's population and, on average, over 80 per cent of deaths caused by natural disasters annually. As part of its activities related to the "Water for Life" Decade, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) initiated two major programmes in 2004 and 2005: (a) the application of strategic planning and management to assist developing countries in the preparation of integrated water resources management plans, with emphasis on eradicating poverty and meeting the goals of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and (b) integrating disaster risk management into water resources management.

42. The programme on integrated water resources management builds on the results of case studies in 17 developing countries which applied the guidelines on strategic planning and management of water resources, developed earlier by ESCAP. The case studies were carried out in 2003 and 2004 as part of a regional project funded through the Development Account. This programme supports the implementation of the integrated water resources management component of the

Johannesburg Plan of Implementation within the framework of the “Water for Life” Decade.

43. The programme on water-related disaster risk management links the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (Kobe, Japan, January 2005), to the “Water for Life” Decade. The programme builds on existing ESCAP subregional networks on hydrology, meteorology and disaster risk management, especially the Typhoon Committee and the Panel on Tropical Cyclones. The integration of disaster risk management into the management of water resources includes improvements in multi-hazard mapping and warning systems and the enhancement of disaster preparedness at the local, national and regional levels, as well as the promotion of community-based disaster risk management practices. The region’s developed and developing countries are learning from one another’s experience — for example, through the annual hydrological workshops of the Typhoon Committee.

E. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

44. The Western Asia region has always experienced a low level of natural water availability, especially in arid or extremely arid climatic zones. Rapid population growth, unsustainable water use and increasing pollution levels further contribute to water scarcity problems in the region. Moreover, most water resources used in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) region, both surface water and groundwater, are shared by several riparian countries.

45. To address these challenges, ESCWA initiated several activities in 2004 and 2005 as part of preparations for the “Water for Life” Decade, mainly in building capacity for shared water resources management and integrated water resources management. A training manual for the region was prepared, addressing the integration of water policies, institutional and legislative tools and the administrative methods required for integrated water resources management.

46. On the issue of shared water resources, several pilot areas (relating to surface water and groundwater resources) were studied to serve as models for reaching agreements on sharing resources and promoting joint technical and managerial cooperation among the riparian countries. A series of workshops was held to assist member countries in enhancing their negotiation capacity and skills and promoting conflict resolution in the region. ESCWA also focused on the sustainable management of shared groundwater resources, especially in the many countries where groundwater is the main source of water. Emphasis has been placed on integrating specific policies for groundwater management into policies at the basin level.

VI. Assistance to country programmes

47. The coherence of United Nations-system actions at the country level is crucial to achieving the overall objectives of the “Water for Life” Decade. UN-Water is encouraging exchanges of information and dialogue on policy-making on water and sanitation issues within the United Nations system and with external partners and stakeholders. Such cooperation is essential in efforts to incorporate the water agenda

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in country-level exercises and processes such as the Common Country Assessment, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers.

48. As part of the actions taken for the “Water for Life” Decade, UNDP and the World Bank have undertaken a joint initiative to identify a few key areas in the water and sanitation sector where UNDP and the World Bank would benefit from closer collaboration. The focus of the work is on the need to support countries in scaling up their efforts to reach the water and sanitation targets.

49. The UNDP Water Governance Programme and the World Bank’s Water and Sanitation Programme are working together to develop rural and urban initiatives in water supply and sanitation. Both programmes can influence large-scale investments to focus more on poverty-reduction targets and encourage the participation of local-level stakeholders in decision-making processes to ensure more equitable distribution of investment benefits. Both programmes promote governance (policy, legal, regulatory and institutional reform) and build capacities at the national and local levels, and both provide similar structures for service delivery, including regional and country offices.

50. UNDP places poverty eradication at the centre of its work on water supply, sanitation and human settlements, with an overall investment of over \$400 million in grants. Through this work, UNDP, with a variety of partners, has produced replicable results in providing access to affordable drinking water and sanitation to the poor in peri-urban and rural areas. The Water Governance Programme focuses on addressing local capacity constraints in order to improve access to water and sanitation and operates at the local and national levels.

51. At the local level, UNDP supports the local management of water resources and delivery of water supply and sanitation services by providing grants for community action, in collaboration with the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme and Local Initiatives for the Environment. Gender mainstreaming is emphasized in decision-making and project implementation at the household, community and national levels. The gender focus in water management programmes leads to improvements in effectiveness, sustainability, health and equality. The programme is having positive impacts on the ground through three key water and sanitation initiatives: the Community Water Initiative, ecological sanitation programmes and the international network for capacity-building in integrated water resources management (Cap-Net), the UNDP flagship programme for capacity-building.

52. At the national level, UNDP facilitates communication and coordination among the multiple actors dealing with water resources. UNDP and its partners have been facilitating country-level action for the preparation of plans for integrated water resources management and for promoting the participation of multiple stakeholders in the implementation of water resources management practices.

53. The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs provides policy advice at the national level, particularly through its technical advisory services to developing countries, in particular least developed countries and small island developing States, for strengthening institutional capacity to develop integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans, encouraging the participation of all stakeholders.

54. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has developed training materials for users at all levels to promote better use of water in agriculture as part of its activities for the “Water for Life” Decade. Areas covered include educational approaches aimed at farmers and farm communities; technical materials for irrigation professionals; irrigation scheme management training courses; and policy advice in agricultural water management. In addition, FAO is promoting more sustainable agricultural practices with a view to reducing negative environmental impacts and water pollution, through its integrated plant-nutrient and pest-management programmes. These practices are applied in member countries through technical assistance and South-South cooperation programmes and projects.

55. UNICEF continues to expand its water, sanitation and hygiene programmes, supporting activities in 93 countries in 2004, ranging from national policy development to direct support for improved service delivery in focus areas. UNICEF interventions focus on expanding programmes that promote improved hygiene and sanitation, while maintaining support for improved water-supply services.

56. UNICEF supported water, sanitation and hygiene education programmes for schools in 76 countries in 2004 and plans to expand the programme during the “Water for Life” Decade. Components include hygiene education and teacher education in hygiene in primary schools; construction of new water and sanitation facilities in schools; developing and promoting child- and girl-friendly facility designs; and promoting hygienic behaviour change in communities.

57. WHO, working with its partners, is developing a suite of tools to assist countries in assessing the health impacts of water and sanitation and to assess the costs and impacts (both health and non-health) of policy and technical alternatives to support and inform intersectoral policy dialogue. The tools will be launched during the first year of the Decade and progressively updated and expanded as the Decade progresses.

VII. Communications strategy

58. The “Water for Life” Decade draws on much of the work initiated during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, and provides an opportunity to maintain momentum on freshwater issues. In this regard, strategic communications and coordination are crucial for the coherence and success of such efforts.

59. To support the launch of the Decade in March 2005, key messages were drafted by UN-Water in conjunction with the Department of Public Information and circulated for discussion at a meeting of the United Nations Communications Group, which is composed of communications focal points within all United Nations agencies. Materials that were developed to support the initial launch of the Decade include a logo, a website and educational and audio-visual materials. The Department of Public Information is assisting UN-Water in drafting a communications strategy with important dates, key messages, expected publications and key meetings planned throughout the Decade.

A. Logo

60. The logo for the International “Water for Life” Decade, 2005-2015, was chosen by UN-Water from several designs submitted by the Department of Public Information and an independent designer working on a pro bono basis. The logo chosen, submitted by the independent designer, is shown here.



61. The design was submitted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to the Publications Board of the Department of Public Information in January 2005. The decision on the logo was approved by consensus through e-mail correspondence among the members of the Logo Approval Committee. The logo is intended to be used by UN-Water members and other United Nations entities on all United Nations publications and promotional materials pertaining to the Decade and can also be used by outside parties who seek permission through the online interactive form.

B. Website

62. The official website for the “Water for Life” Decade was launched on 22 March 2005 (www.un.org/waterforlifedecade.org). Work is currently under way to make the site available in all official United Nations languages. The website will be housed and maintained at United Nations Headquarters, jointly by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Department of Public Information. Links to all the other UN-Water member organizations are included. The website will be used as an awareness-raising tool and a clearing house to present activities taking place at the international, regional and national levels.

C. Promotional and educational materials and publications

63. The Department of Public Information and UN-Water produced a promotional booklet for the Decade which includes images, facts, figures and recommendations for action on a number of water-related themes. The booklet is currently available in English and French.

64. WHO, on behalf of UN-Water, prepared an advocacy sourcebook for the “Water for Life” Decade, to be used as a guide for local groups on how to raise awareness on water issues. It will be progressively updated in cooperation with other UN-Water members and partners throughout the Decade to provide advocacy support on diverse themes.

65. A DVD was produced by the Department of Public Information and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs containing the message of the Secretary-General for the Decade; an eight-minute video, *Water: the Drop of Life*; a children's video, *Splish and Splash*; and the promotional booklet for the Decade.

66. Occurring almost simultaneously with the "Water for Life" Decade in the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014. The synergy of these two initiatives provides a useful framework for strengthening and promoting education programmes and training projects to increase awareness and preparedness within schools, families and communities on water- and sanitation-related issues.

67. UNICEF has developed interactive learning resources for young people on water, environment and sanitation. These include a computer game of strategy and survival, entitled *Water Alert!*, which includes a facilitator's guide and instructions for use in developing countries, and a user-friendly text module with an online discussion board. These resources, in English, French and Spanish, are available online and on CD at UNICEF Voices of Youth (www.unicef.org/voy).

68. The second edition of the *World Water Development Report*, prepared by the UN-Water World Water Assessment Programme, will be issued in March 2006, as a major focus of the Decade's public information activities, and will be issued every three years throughout the Decade. The *African Water Development Report* is a regional report similar to the *World Water Development Report*. Subsidiary reports at the subregional and national levels have also been developed as stand-alone products for providing up-to-date information and monitoring tools.

69. The UNICEF-WHO Joint Monitoring Programme plans to issue its 2006 report with 2004 coverage estimates as a baseline for the Decade, followed by further reports to assess progress throughout the Decade, tentatively in 2008, 2012 and 2015 or 2016.

70. The proceedings and framework for action resulting from a round table on water, sanitation and hygiene education for schools, held in Oxford, England, in January 2005, set out actions that must be taken to ensure that by 2015 — the end of the "Water for Life" Decade — all schools receive a basic quality package of water, sanitation and hygiene education. The programme was sponsored by UNICEF and the International Water and Sanitation Centre, with the support of Oxfam GB and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council.

71. UNEP has a wide range of information products available which are relevant to the observance of the "Water for Life" Decade, including the *Atlas of International Freshwater Agreements*, *Vital Water Graphics* and a diverse portfolio on coral reefs. Some relevant websites include www.unep.org, www.gpa.unep.org, <http://www.unep.org/dewa/water> and www.unep.org/regionalseas.

VIII. Partnership initiatives

A. Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council

72. The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) is a multi-stakeholder organization dedicated to enhancing collaboration in the water-supply

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and sanitation sector; it works in close cooperation with the United Nations system, including WHO, UNICEF, UN-Habitat, UNEP and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (see www.wsscc.org). The Council's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for all (WASH) Programme was recognized by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its thirteenth session as an existing initiative that should be supported for countries in their pursuit of the international development goals on water and sanitation. The WASH partnership, which involves national and regional activities in over 35 developing countries, aims to establish national WASH coalitions and mobilize political support and action around the world on the importance of sanitation, hygiene and water in achieving these goals and in reducing poverty during the "Water for Life" Decade. Among the Council's Decade-related initiatives are:

(a) *The Global WASH Forum*. Held in Dakar in December 2004, the Forum had as one of its main outcomes the Dakar Roadmap for achieving the Millennium Development Goals on water and sanitation, which is included in the matrix of policy options as part of the outcome of the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

(b) *The African Ministers' Initiative on WASH*. The Initiative will support increased national action in the fields of water, sanitation and hygiene through advocacy, coalition-building and South-South collaboration;

(c) *Women Leaders for WASH*. Convened during the thirteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development by key women ministers from Norway and Uganda, the initiative includes women leaders in politics, culture, media, civil society, the United Nations and other fields to draw attention to the important role of women as decision makers in sanitation, hygiene and water programmes;

(d) *Television documentaries*. WSSCC is involved in co-producing documentaries on water and sanitation themes with the Television Trust for the Environment for the BBC *Earth Report* series.

B. Global Water Partnership

73. The Global Water Partnership (GWP) is a working partnership among all those involved in water management: government agencies, private companies, professional organizations, multilateral development agencies and others committed to meeting international goals related to water and sanitation. This network supports the idea that the goals of the "Water for Life" Decade can be reached only if there is collective awareness-raising on the key role of water in achieving sustainable development. The particular contribution that GWP can make to the Decade is to work within countries, and with the community of international organizations, to assist countries in developing integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005, as set out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

74. To assist in this effort, GWP, together with the Netherlands Water Partnership, has developed the GWP Toolbox on Integrated Water Resources Management to provide water-management professionals clear examples of good and bad practices and lessons learned from real-life implementation experiences. The Toolbox offers a compendium of over 50 policies and actions, or tools, for putting integrated water resources management into practice, and each tool is illustrated by real cases, giving

examples of how a tool has worked in a given combination and context. The Toolbox provides a range of tools which users can select or modify according to their needs and local circumstances.

C. Ramsar Convention on Wetlands

75. The Ramsar Convention has been highly supportive of the “Water for Life” Decade. On the occasion of World Wetlands Day (2 February 2005), the Ramsar secretariat invited representatives of the main environmental and aid agencies in Geneva to a debate on the theme “Natural mitigation of natural disasters”. The main focus of the event was the Indian Ocean tsunami, but the debate also covered broader issues, including many related to the “Water for Life” Decade.

76. The ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention will be held in November 2005 in Kampala. The theme for 2005 is “Wetlands and water, supporting life, sustaining livelihoods”. The issue of poverty alleviation will also be the theme of World Wetlands Day 2006, on which occasion the messages of the Decade will be further promoted.

D. Gender and Water Alliance

77. The Gender and Water Alliance (GWA), a network of over 300 organizations and individuals around the world, offers a mix of information- and knowledge-sharing initiatives, such as electronic conferencing, a website, advocacy leaflets and videos, and capacity-building and pilot programmes (see www.genderandwater.org). For the “Water for Life” Decade, GWA is working with partners such as UNDP, UN-Habitat and Cap-Net to develop gender strategies in the water sector and to provide training and materials to water managers on the importance of involving both women and men in the sustainable management of water and sanitation. GWA will showcase these materials at the Fourth World Water Forum, in Mexico in March 2006, and at other events. GWA also cooperated with UN-Water/Africa in organizing a seminar on gender and water resources management in Africa, in Pretoria in March 2005, where an action plan on gender and water resources management was drawn up. The plan was endorsed by the African Minister Council on Water and will be implemented with all major stakeholders, including the African Water Facility hosted by the African Development Bank.

E. Fourth World Water Forum, Mexico 2006

78. The World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference are initiatives of the World Water Council and host Governments, aimed at raising awareness and promoting active stakeholder discussions on water issues all over the world. As a major international event on water, the Forum seeks to enable multi-stakeholder participation and dialogue to influence water policymaking at the global and national levels, to improve living standards for people all over the world and to promote more responsible water resources use and management in line with the pursuit of sustainable development. The Fourth World Water Forum, to be held in Mexico City in March 2006, will focus on good practices and concrete field actions

in five key themes under the conference slogan, “Local actions for global challenges”.

79. In cooperation with the Fourth World Water Forum and the Japan Water Forum, UNICEF is planning to organize the second Children’s World Water Forum as a parallel event. The focus of the proposed event is to highlight intergenerational cooperation, strengthening dialogue between policymakers and the children of the world.

F. International Water Management Institute

80. The International Water Management Institute (IWMI), based in Sri Lanka, implements research studies focusing on analysis of the trade-offs between water development, water management and the environment. Its new thematic structure covers water basin management; land, water and livelihoods; agriculture, water and cities; and water management and environment. The current emphasis of IWMI research projects is on identifying the linkages between irrigation and poverty; scientifically documenting the relationship between irrigation water management and the environment, especially regarding wetlands; and examining existing smallholder and/or community experiences in rehabilitating degraded agro-ecosystems and the opportunities for replication.

81. IWMI contributed to the Copenhagen Consensus project by submitting proposals highlighting the lack of access to safe and affordable domestic water supply and sanitation and water for productive purposes for the rural poor. The three investment proposals presented were ranked among the best, likely to be highly cost-effective (see <http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/>).

82. IWMI and Development Cooperation Ireland have produced a “Water for Life” calendar for 2005. It highlights IWMI work with poor rural communities in Africa and Asia to improve livelihoods and food production and Development Cooperation efforts to bring drinking water and better health and sanitation to poor communities in Africa and South-East Asia.

G. Other important partnership activities

83. The members of the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH), a scientific and educational NGO, are active in promoting the theme “water for life” in their professional roles as regulators, academics and researchers on groundwater. Its members also act as advisers to United Nations agencies, Governments and other NGOs. IAH works to improve the science, policy and information base for groundwater planning by fostering cooperation and information-exchange among professionals, supporting reliable and long-term data sets. IAH will devote significant resources to Africa during the period 2005-2015, recognizing that technically sound groundwater management will be critical in the types of basins and aquifers that exist in Africa. More information on IAH is available at its website (www.iah.org).

84. The Northern Water Network was launched at the Third World Water Forum in an effort to build a network among the water community in industrialized countries to exchange experiences, technologies and know-how.

85. A large number of non-governmental organizations, as well as research institutes and other entities dealing with water issues, have indicated interest in preparing and organizing activities related to the International “Water for Life” Decade and using its logo. It is expected that a strong network of interested parties will be established for the purpose of engaging in the activities related to the Decade.

IX. Conclusions and recommendations

86. The outcomes achieved at the twelfth and thirteenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development provide a useful framework for action to raise public awareness and to meet the internationally agreed development goals on water and sanitation during the “Water for Life” Decade. As financial contributions and commitments to advance the goals of the Decade have been limited so far, fund-raising appeals will be needed, aimed at all stakeholders, such as Governments, non-governmental organizations and private foundations.

87. **Member States may wish to consider setting up national committees or designating focal points in their respective countries to facilitate and promote activities related to the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015.**

88. **Special focus needs to be placed on Africa’s water development and management, and on gender, water and sanitation initiatives, if the goals of the Water for Life Decade are to be achieved in that region.**

89. **UN-Water will continue to facilitate the coordinated system-wide response necessary for the implementation of activities in support of the “Water for Life” Decade, giving equal consideration to water and sanitation.**

90. **Member States, national and international organizations, major groups and the private sector are urged to make voluntary contributions in accordance with the guidelines for international years and anniversaries.**

91. **Interested stakeholders, such as international and regional organizations, non-governmental groups and others, are encouraged to link their water-related activities to the “Water for Life” Decade and may wish to consider new partnerships.**

92. **Links with related initiatives undertaken by all stakeholders as well as major international events planned during the Decade should be strongly encouraged so that the Decade will involve all stakeholders in and outside of the United Nations system.**

Notes

¹ The scope of UN-Water’s work encompasses all aspects of freshwater, including surface and groundwater resources and the interface between freshwater and seawater. It includes freshwater resources, in terms of both quality and quantity, their development, assessment, management, monitoring and use (including, for example, domestic uses, agriculture and ecosystem requirements). The scope of work of UN-Water also includes sanitation, encompassing both access to and use of sanitation by populations and the interactions between sanitation and freshwater. It further includes water-related disasters, emergencies and other extreme events and their impact on human security.



Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[on the report of the Second Committee (A/58/485)]

58/217. International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, 2005-2015

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 55/196 of 20 December 2000, by which it proclaimed the year 2003 the International Year of Freshwater,

Emphasizing that water is critical for sustainable development, including environmental integrity and the eradication of poverty and hunger, and is indispensable for human health and well-being,

Recalling the provisions of Agenda 21,¹ the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 adopted at its nineteenth special session,² the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”)³ and the decisions of the Economic and Social Council and of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its sixth session⁴ relating to freshwater,

Reaffirming the internationally agreed development goals on water and sanitation, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,⁵ and determined to achieve the goal to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of people who are unable to reach or to afford safe drinking water, and a similar goal set out in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation to halve the proportion of people without access to basic sanitation,

Taking note of the contents of the *United Nations World Water Development Report: Water for People, Water for Life*,⁶ a joint project of twenty-three specialized

¹ *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

² Resolution S-19/2, annex.

³ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August-4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

⁴ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1998, Supplement No. 9* (E/1998/29).

⁵ See resolution 55/2.

⁶ United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.2.

agencies and other United Nations entities, and other water-related collaborative mechanisms and initiatives,

Taking note also of the Ministerial Declaration entitled “Message from the Lake Biwa and Yodo River Basin”, adopted on 23 March 2003, at the Ministerial Conference on the occasion of the Third World Water Forum, held in Kyoto, Japan,⁷ and the Dushanbe Water Appeal, proclaimed on 1 September 2003 at the International Freshwater Forum, held in Dushanbe from 29 August to 1 September 2003,⁸

1. *Proclaims* the period from 2005 to 2015 the International Decade for Action, “Water for Life”, to commence on World Water Day, 22 March 2005;

2. *Decides* that the goals of the Decade should be a greater focus on water-related issues at all levels and on the implementation of water-related programmes and projects, while striving to ensure the participation and involvement of women in water-related development efforts, and the furtherance of cooperation at all levels, in order to help to achieve internationally agreed water-related goals contained in Agenda 21,¹ the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,² the United Nations Millennium Declaration⁵ and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation,³ and, as appropriate, those identified during the twelfth and thirteenth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

3. *Welcomes* the decision of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session, as reflected in its multi-year programme of work, to consider water, sanitation and human settlements as the thematic cluster in the first cycle, 2004-2005,⁹ and invites the Commission to work within existing resources to identify possible activities and programmes in connection with the Decade within the framework of its consideration of the thematic cluster of issues on water, sanitation and human settlements at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions, as provided for by its multi-year programme of work;

4. *Invites* the Secretary-General to take the appropriate steps to organize the activities of the Decade, taking into account the results of the International Year of Freshwater and the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its twelfth and thirteenth sessions;

5. *Calls upon* the relevant United Nations bodies, specialized agencies, regional commissions and other organizations of the United Nations system to deliver a coordinated response, utilizing existing resources and voluntary funds, to make “Water for Life” a decade for action.

78th plenary meeting
23 December 2003

⁷ A/57/785, annex.

⁸ A/58/362, annex.

⁹ See *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 9 (E/2003/29)*, chap. I, sect. A.



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