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INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

Report of the Second Committee

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 20 September 1991, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in its agenda the item entitled "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction" and to allocate it to the Second Committee.

2. The Second Committee considered the item together with the following questions:

"Report of the Economic and Social Council: critical humanitarian situation in the Horn of Africa", under item 12;

"Special economic and disaster relief assistance:

"(a) Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator;

"(b) Special programmes of economic assistance"; under item 84;

"International assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola", under item 85;

"Emergency assistance for the economic and social rehabilitation of Liberia", under item 91.

3. The cluster of items was considered at the 26th to 29th meetings, on 31 October and 1 November. Action on item 83 was taken at the 40th and

53rd meetings, on 12 November and 2 December. An account of the Committee's discussion of the items is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/46/SR.26-29, 40 and 53).

4. Attention is also drawn to the general debate held by the Committee at its 3rd to 9th meetings, from 1 to 4 October 1991 (see A/C.2/46/SR.3-9).

5. For its consideration of the item, the Committee had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Economic and Social Council, chap. VII, sect. E (A/46/3); 1/

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (A/46/266-E/1991/106 and Add.1);

(c) Letter dated 1 August 1991 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Saint Kitts and Nevis to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General forwarding the Final Communiqué of the Twelfth Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community concluded at Basseterre on 4 July 1991 (A/46/336);

(d) Letter dated 1 October 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Group of 77, adopted on 30 September 1991 on the occasion of their fifteenth annual meeting, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York (A/46/520);

(e) Letter dated 23 October 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the resolutions adopted by the 86th Conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, held at Santiago from 7 to 12 October 1991 (A/46/598-S/23166);

(f) Letter dated 22 November 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Hungary to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General transmitting an information note on the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to be held in Budapest from 29 November to 6 December 1991 (A/46/698 and Corr.1);

(g) Letter dated 21 November 1991 from the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the text of the Concluding Statement of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction Summit Conference on Earthquake and Natural Disaster Countermeasures, 1991, Japan, held from 8 to 11 October 1991 in Tokyo (A/C.2/46/16).

6. At the 26th meeting, on 31 October, introductory statements were made by the Director General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator and the Acting Director for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction Secretariat (see A/C.2/46/SR.26).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS

A. Draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.39

7. At the 40th meeting, on 12 November, the representative of Ghana, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are also members of the Group of 77, China, Italy, Japan, Sweden, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America, subsequently joined by Australia, Belgium, France and Iceland, introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/46/L.39), entitled "International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction".

8. A statement by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution, submitted in accordance with rule 53 of the rules of procedure for the General Assembly, was subsequently circulated in document A/C.2/46/L.76.

9. At the 53rd meeting, on 2 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Bozorgmehr Ziaran (Islamic Republic of Iran), informed the Committee of the results of informal consultations held on the draft resolution and revised operative paragraph 5 by adding the words "WHO Regional Office for the Americas" after "Health Organization".

10. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.39, as orally revised, without a vote (see para. 11).

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

11. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 42/169 of 11 December 1987, 43/202 of 20 December 1988, 44/236 of 22 December 1989, in which it proclaimed the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, and 45/185 of 21 December 1990,

Taking note of Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/58 of 26 July 1991,

Reaffirming the need for the international community to demonstrate the strong political determination required to mobilize and use existing scientific and technical knowledge to mitigate natural disasters, bearing in mind, in particular, the needs of developing countries,

Welcoming the positive steps taken by approximately one hundred Governments in establishing national committees or focal points to stimulate and coordinate disaster mitigation activities for the purpose of attaining the objective and goals set for the Decade,

Reconfirming the important responsibility of the United Nations system as a whole for promoting international cooperation in order to mitigate natural disasters, provide assistance and coordinate relief, preparedness and prevention,

Welcoming the establishment of the Special High-Level Council, which completes the organizational arrangements for the Decade called for in its resolution 44/236, and the inaugural session of the Council, held in New York on 9 and 10 October 1991, on the occasion of the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction,

Expressing its appreciation to those countries that have provided generous support to the activities of the Decade through voluntary contributions, including staff secondments, the development and implementation of disaster reduction projects and the hosting of activities or meetings related to the Decade,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the Decade, the addendum to which contains the New York Declaration of the Special High-Level Council and the first annual report of the Scientific and Technical Committee on the Decade, 1/

1. Endorses the Declaration of the Special High-Level Council and encourages the members of the Council to embark actively on the implementation of their tasks, with particular attention to increasing public awareness of the potential for disaster reduction and raising support for the activities of the Decade from Governments, funding organizations and the business community;

2. Endorses the recommendations contained in the first annual report of the Scientific and Technical Committee on the Decade, 2/ while recognizing that implementation by disaster-vulnerable countries of the targets set by that Committee would constitute significant progress in reducing the impact of disasters during the Decade;

1/ A/46/266-E/1991/106 and Add.1.

2/ A/46/266-E/1991/106/Add.1, annex II.

3. Endorses also the proposal of the Scientific and Technical Committee concerning the convening in 1994 of a world conference of representatives of national committees for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, ^{3/} which would bring together participants from a broad range of sectors of activity, including the scientific and technological sector, the business sector and the industrial sector, as well as non-governmental groups, and which would serve as a substantive contribution to the mid-term review of the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade, called for in its resolution 44/236;

4. Commends the initiatives already taken by countries exposed to disasters to reduce their vulnerability, and encourages them to continue with the adoption of national disaster mitigation policies and their implementation during the Decade in the context of their socio-economic development, taking into account the targets proposed by the Scientific and Technical Committee as a measure of progress in disaster reduction;

5. Stresses the benefits of regional meetings with heads of national committees, such as that organized by the Pan-American Health Organization, the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Americas, the Organization of American States and the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator at Guatemala City from 9 to 13 September 1991;

6. Invites Governments to accelerate communication and cooperation globally and at the regional level in order to share valuable experience and to transfer scientific and technical knowledge for disaster mitigation;

7. Reiterates its appeals to the international community, in particular, to donor countries, for adequate funding, including contributions to the Trust Fund, for carrying out the activities of the Decade;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the activities of the Decade.

^{3/} Ibid., para. 6 (e).