Chapter III

Humanitarian and special economic assistance

In 2003, the United Nations, through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), continued to mobilize and coordinate humanitarian assistance to respond to international emergencies. During the year, consolidated inter-agency appeals were launched for Afghanistan, Angola, the northern Caucasus, the Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, Côte d’Ivoire + 5 (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali), the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Eritrea, the Great Lakes region and Central Africa (Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda), Guinea, Indonesia, Iraq, Liberia, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Southern Africa region (Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe), the Sudan and Tajikistan. The appeals sought $5.2 billion to assist some 83 million people. Some $3.9 billion was made available, meeting 75.3 per cent of requirements. Excluding contributions in kind and services not costed, OCHA contributions for natural disaster assistance totalled $57 million.

At the request of Burundi, an ad hoc advisory group to elaborate a long-term programme of support was established, while the group created in 2002 on Guinea-Bissau continued its work.

During the year, the Economic and Social Council considered ways to strengthen the coordination of UN emergency humanitarian assistance, including the financing of humanitarian assistance and the transition from relief to development.


During the preceding year, developments in the humanitarian environment were mixed, with progress seen in ending conflict for some of the world’s longer-running emergencies, but others continued to threaten whole regions. The situation in Iraq (see p. 315) underlined the importance of promoting principled humanitarian interaction to address humanitarian needs in the country. Collaborative partnerships among the humanitarian community, Governments and local actors were needed to ensure that durable solutions were found, thus setting the stage for sustainable development. The contribution of regional organizations to humanitarian assistance efforts was becoming increasingly important. A number of issues presented further challenges, including the protection of civilians in armed conflict, safeguarding the security of humanitarian personnel, the resettlement of internally displaced persons, greater integration of a gender perspective into emergency humanitarian assistance, protection from sexual exploitation and abuse, proper preparedness and contingency planning regarding natural disasters and complex humanitarian emergencies, the lack of capacity to reduce the impact of natural hazards and environmental emergencies, and the development of an emergency response to ensure the...
The Secretary-General proposed a series of actions for the Assembly and the Council regarding the protection of civilians, internally displaced persons, gender mainstreaming, sexual violence and exploitation, emergency preparedness and contingency planning, natural disasters, HIV/AIDS in the context of emergencies, transition from relief to development and humanitarian financing.

**JIU coordination assessment**

**JIU evaluation.** By a May note [A/58/85-E/2003/80], the Secretary-General transmitted a report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on its evaluation of the UN system response in East Timor (renamed Timor-Leste), conducted with a view to improving coordination among UN organizations and maximizing the impact and effectiveness of their operations in emergency and post-conflict situations.

On 15 July (decision 2003/226), the Economic and Social Council took note of the Secretary-General’s note transmitting the JIU report.

**Note of Secretary-General.** A June note of the Secretary-General [A/58/85/Add.1/E/2003/80/Add.1] transmitted, for the consideration of the General Assembly, his comments, and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), on the JIU report. CEB members noted the actions already taken to address the weaknesses identified in the report.

**Communication.** On 1 July [A/58/99/E/2003/91], Sweden transmitted the Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship and Implementation Plan for Good Humanitarian Donorship, endorsed by the participants of the International Meeting on Good Humanitarian Donorship (Stockholm, 16-17 June).

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION**

On 15 July [meeting 35], the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2003/5 [draft: E/2003/L.28] without vote [agenda item 5].

**Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations**

The Economic and Social Council, 

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, recalling that humanitarian assistance should be provided in accordance with and with due respect for the guiding principles contained in the annex to that resolution and recognizing other relevant resolutions of the Assembly and resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 2002/32 of 26 July 2002 and General Assembly resolution 57/155 of 16 December 2002,

Recognizing that the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination and integration of the HIV/AIDS components into relevant programming areas. In response to the challenge of the involvement of military forces in humanitarian activities, “Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies” were developed and released in March. To address civil-military relations in the context of Iraq, the document “General Guidelines for Interaction between United Nations Personnel and Military and Civilian Representatives of the Occupying Power in Iraq” was endorsed and released by the Secretary-General, also in March.

The report said that the importance of promoting effective coordination lay at the core of the themes related to transition and humanitarian financing. Coordination in the context of the transition from relief to development required the full engagement of Governments and donors at the earliest stages and a coherent strategy for restoring stability and normalcy. In addition to rebuilding structures or institutions, recovery assistance was needed to aid the consolidation of peace, counter the negative societal transformations that occurred during the crisis and counteract the tensions that led to the conflict. A joint Working Group on Transition Issues had been established by the Secretariat’s Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), with the involvement of the International Organization for Migration, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to improve the UN response to transition through more coherent planning, effective handover of coordination responsibilities and appropriate resource mobilization. The report of the 22-member Working Group was based on case studies of UN experiences in Afghanistan, Angola, the Congo, the Great Lakes region (Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania), Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan and Timor-Leste.

The report recommended that UN transition activities be field-driven from conception to implementation and based on a common analysis, a system-wide assessment of needs and a clear identification of the potential UN role. In response to the report, a standing mechanism of the ECHA and UNDG secretariats, as well as a group of senior task teams, was established to provide continuing guidance and practical support to UN country teams engaged in transition planning. A separate report of the Secretary-General on reform measures [A/58/35] (see p. 1384) further discussed the Group’s recommendations.
implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory and in the facilitation of the work of humanitarian organizations,

Recognizing also the importance of the principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Emphasizing the importance of the discussion of humanitarian policies and activities in the Economic and Social Council,

Welcoming the fact that at the humanitarian affairs segment of 2003 the Economic and Social Council considered the theme “Strengthening of the coordination of the United Nations humanitarian assistance, with particular attention to humanitarian financing and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and the transition from relief to development” and that the Council held a panel, within the framework of the theme, on “Responding to the effects of HIV/AIDS and other widespread diseases on humanitarian relief operations”.

Emphasizing the importance of continued international cooperation in support of the efforts of affected States in dealing with natural disasters and complex emergencies in all their phases,

Retaining that humanitarian assistance should be provided in a way that is not to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development,

Welcoming positive developments towards the resolution of some long-standing conflicts, while remaining deeply concerned about the outbreak of new conflicts and the protracted nature of other conflicts,

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 address vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery,


Bearing in mind the review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and the Plan of Action therein,

Expressing grave concern about the tragic loss of lives of humanitarian staff while providing humanitarian assistance and the increased insecurity encountered by humanitarian staff as well as the acts of violence committed against them, in particular deliberate attacks, and mindful of the need to provide the fullest possible protection for their security,

Recalling the inclusion of attacks intentionally directed against personnel involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations as a war crime in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which was adopted on 17 July 1998 and entered into force on 1 July 2002, and noting the role that the Court could play in appropriate cases in bringing to justice those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law,

Bearing in mind that reaching the vulnerable is essential for providing adequate protection and assistance in context of natural disasters and complex emergencies as well as for strengthening local capacity to cope with humanitarian needs in such contexts,

Noting the grave humanitarian and development implications of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other widespread major infectious diseases prevalent in the humanitarian context, such as malaria, tuberculosis and cholera, on the affected countries,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General;

Humanitarian developments and challenges

2. Calls upon all parties to armed conflicts to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law;

3. Reaffirms the obligation of all States and parties to 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. Urges the international community and the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen humanitarian and other assistance to civilians under foreign occupation;

5. Urges all States to take measures necessary to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and United Nations personnel;

6. Strongly condemns any act, or failure to act, contrary to international law, which obstructs or prevents humanitarian personnel and United Nations personnel from discharging their humanitarian functions;

7. 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 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;

8. Strongly urges States to ensure that those responsible for attacks against humanitarian staff are promptly brought to justice, as provided by national law and obligations under international law, and notes the need for States to end impunity for such acts;

9. Notes that an increasing number of States, United Nations organizations and regional and non-governmental organizations are making use of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, encourages the strengthening of legal frameworks for the protection of internally displaced persons, and urges the international community to strengthen its support to affected States in their efforts to provide, through national plans or initiatives, protection and assistance to their internally displaced persons;

10. Stresses the continued need and relevance of integrating, through implementation of existing policies, commitments and guidelines on gender mainstreaming, a gender perspective in the planning.
programming and implementation of humanitarian assistance activities.

12. Encourages Governments as well as international humanitarian organizations, as appropriate, to take further initiatives to prevent, address and follow up on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian emergencies, and emphasizes that the highest standards of conduct and accountability are required of all personnel serving in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations;

13. Stresses the need to strengthen institutional capacity at all levels as well as disaster risk reduction programmes, particularly in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in order to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks as well as to avoid or to limit adverse impact of natural hazards within the broad context of sustainable development;

14. Encourages the United Nations Development Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and the Secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction to continue to strengthen their coordination with the view, inter alia, to advancing the implementation of provisions of vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management, including prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery as contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (“Johannesburg Plan of Implementation”);

15. Encourages humanitarian agencies to ensure, to the extent possible, the participation of those affected by humanitarian situations in the design, implementation and evaluation of humanitarian assistance activities, while respecting the role of authorities of affected countries;

16. Recalls paragraph 3 of Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations, and invites the United Nations organizations to enhance geographical balance in terms of humanitarian personnel employed by them;

17. Stresses the need for increased national and regional capacity-building in early warning and monitoring of natural hazards, natural disaster preparedness, mitigation and response, including by strengthening coordination in the areas of information sharing and analysis, logistics support, response coordination and strengthening enhanced relationships with existing regional structures, and encourages the international community to provide necessary technical assistance to States in this regard;

18. Welcomes the convening of the Second International Conference on Early Warning: Integration of the Early Warning Process into Public Policy, to be held from 16 to 18 October 2003 in Bonn, Germany, under the auspices of the United Nations;

19. Encourages States that have not done so to consider ratifying or acceding to the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations, adopted at Tampere, Finland, on 18 June 1998;

20. Recalls General Assembly resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 on strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance, and welcomes the work that is being undertaken to further strengthen the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance;

21. Affirms the leading role of civilian organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance, particularly in areas affected by conflicts, and also affirms the need, in situations where military capacity and assets are used to support the implementation of humanitarian assistance, that their use be in conformity with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles;

22. Urges States to implement outcomes and commitments of United Nations conferences, not least on the AIDS pandemic as well as other major infectious diseases, including malaria and tuberculosis, with particular focus on the time-bound targets related to those diseases in complex emergencies and natural disaster-affected countries and regions;

23. Recognizes the important role of humanitarian agencies in addressing HIV/AIDS and other major infectious diseases, such as malaria, tuberculosis and cholera, in emergencies, and urges them to factor considerations pertaining to these major infectious diseases into their planning and coordination efforts, including in the areas of early warning and contingency planning;

24. Calls upon humanitarian and development organizations to strengthen their cooperation, between themselves and with Governments of affected States, in order to ensure that the longer-term developmental implications of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and of the other major infectious diseases are adequately addressed in emergency situations;

Transition from relief to development

25. Takes note of the work in progress by the United Nations system to clarify the role of the United Nations in post-conflict transition situations;

26. Reiterates that emergency assistance must be provided in ways that will support recovery and long-term development;

27. Also reiterates the need to address the strategic planning gap between relief and development activities in the context of natural disasters and complex emergencies;

28. Notes with concern the disturbing trend of low or late funding for rehabilitation programmes aimed at helping affected communities to attain self-sufficiency;

29. Recognizes that, inter alia, early engagement in planning, fuller coverage of the needs of all sectors, more support for recovery and long-term development activities, capacity-building at all relevant levels and enhancement of national ownership are critical to managing the transition from relief to development;

30. Reiterates the need for coordinated humanitarian assistance and adequate financial resources to ensure ongoing capacity for prompt, timely and effective response by the United Nations system to natural disa
Humanitarian and special economic assistance

Humanitarian financing and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance

34. Reaffirms the responsibility of States, first and foremost, 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;

35. Recognizes the role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and calls upon relevant United Nations organizations as well as other humanitarian actors to enhance the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of their humanitarian activities, including by:
   (a) Enhancing their commitment to system-wide coordination both at Headquarters and in the field;
   (b) Strengthening efforts to report on results, activities and financial matters, including to donors, in a timely and comprehensive manner, and, where possible, to strive for harmonized reporting, bearing in mind specific requirements of donors;
   (c) Developing further methods for monitoring and evaluation, including independent evaluations;
   (d) Maximizing the portion of humanitarian assistance contributions that directly benefits people in need;
   (e) Addressing mutual safety and security concerns at the field level;
   (f) Undertaking joint agency assessments;

36. Calls upon the organizations of the United Nations system to improve and increase consistency in the way in which humanitarian needs are assessed, inter alia, by:
   (a) Enhancing the quality, accuracy and transparency of needs assessments;
   (b) Agreeing upon minimum standards in order to properly assess needs;
   (c) Including States and other humanitarian actors in assessment missions;
   (d) Addressing all humanitarian needs;
   (e) Taking into account safety and security of humanitarian personnel;

37. Urges the Secretary-General to reflect the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution in his next report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

Also on 15 July, by decision 2003/226, the General Assembly took note of the Secretary-General’s report on strengthening the coordination of UN emergency humanitarian assistance (see p. 915).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/114 [draft: A/58/L.39 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 40 (a)].

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,
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”,

Recognizing 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,

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 appeals 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;

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 in Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies”, as well as of the 1994 “Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief”;

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, 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 con-
flicts in accordance with international humanitarian
law, and invites States to promote a culture of protec-
tion, taking into account the particular needs of
women, children, older persons and persons with dis-
bilities;
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 mea-

sures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual
abuse;
14. Encourages the donor community to improve its
response to humanitarian emergencies through poli-
cies and practices of good donorship, together with
mechanisms for their review, and welcomes steps taken
in this direction;
15. Calls upon relevant United Nations organiza-
tions to improve and increase consistency in the way in
which humanitarian needs are assessed;
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 coor-
dination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the
United Nations, including the implementation of and
follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution

UN and other humanitarian personnel
During the year, the Security Council and the
General Assembly called for measures to ensure the
security and safety of humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel
(see also p. 1432).

SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION

On 26 August [meeting 4814], the Security Coun-
cil unanimously adopted resolution 1502(2003).

The draft (S/2003/581) was prepared in consulta-
tions among Council members.

The Security Council,
Reiterating its primary responsibility for the mainte-
nance of international peace and security and, in this
context, the need to promote and ensure respect for
the principles and rules of international humanitar-
ian law,
Reaffirming its resolutions 1265(1999) of 17 Septem-
ber 1999 and 1296(2000) of 19 April 2000 on protection
of civilians in armed conflict, and its resolution 1460
(2003) of 30 January 2003 on children and armed con-
flict, as well as other relevant resolutions, and recalling
the statements by its President on protection of civil-
ians in armed conflict (S/PRST/1999/6, S/PRST/
2002/6, S/PRST/2002/41) and on protection of United
Nations personnel, associated personnel and humani-
tarian personnel in conflict zones (S/PRST/2000/4),
Welcoming the adoption by the General Assembly of
resolution 57/28 of 19 November 2002 entitled “Scope
of legal protection under the Convention on the Safety
of United Nations and Associated Personnel” and reso-
novation 57/153 of 16 December 2002 entitled “Safety
and security of humanitarian personnel and protec-
tion of United Nations personnel”,
Reaffirming the obligation of all humanitarian per-
sonnel and United Nations and associated personnel
to observe and respect the laws of the country in which
they are operating, in accordance with international
law and the Charter of the United Nations, and under-
lining the importance for humanitarian organizations
of upholding the principles of neutrality, impartiality
and humanity in their humanitarian activities,
Emphasizing that there are existing prohibitions
under international law against attacks knowingly and
intentionally directed against personnel who are not
engaged in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission un-
dertaken in accordance with the Charter which in situ-
ations of armed conflict constitute war crimes, and re-
calling the need for States to end impunity for such
criminal acts,
Aware that the protection of humanitarian personnel
and United Nations and associated personnel is a con-
cern in situations of armed conflict and otherwise,
Gravely concerned at the acts of violence in many
parts of the world against humanitarian personnel and
United Nations and associated personnel, in particular
deliberate attacks, which are in violation of interna-
tional humanitarian law as well as other international
law that may be applicable, such as the attack against
the headquarters of the United Nations Assistance
Mission for Iraq in Baghdad on 19 August 2003,
1. Expresses its strong condemnation of all forms of vi-

olence, including, inter alia, murder, rape and sexual
assault, intimidation, armed robbery, abduction, hostage-
taking, kidnapping, harassment and illegal arrest and
detention, to which those participating in humanita-
rian operations are increasingly exposed, as well as at-
tacks on humanitarian convoys and acts of destruction
and looting of their property;
2. Urges States to ensure that crimes against such
personnel do not remain unpunished;
3. Reaffirm the obligation of all parties involved in
an armed conflict to comply fully with the rules and
principles of international law applicable to them re-

lated to the protection of humanitarian personnel and
United Nations and associated personnel, in particular
international humanitarian law, human rights law and
refugee law;
4. Urges all those concerned, as set forth in interna-
tional humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conven-
tions of 12 August 1949 and the Regulations an-
nexed to the Hague Convention of 18 October 1907, to
allow full unimpeded access by humanitarian person-


nel to all people in need of assistance and to make
available, as far as possible, all necessary facilities for
their operations, and to promote the safety, security
and freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel
and United Nations and associated personnel and
their assets;
5. Expresses its determination to take appropriate
steps in order to ensure the safety and security of hu-
manitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel, including, inter alia, by:

(a) Requesting the Secretary-General to seek the inclusion of, and requesting that host countries include, key provisions of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel of 9 December 1994, among others, those regarding the prevention of attacks against members of United Nations operations, the establishment of such attacks as crimes punishable by law and the prosecution or extradition of offenders, in future as well as, if necessary, in existing status-of-forces, status-of-mission and host country agreements negotiated between the United Nations and those countries, mindful of the importance of the timely conclusion of such agreements;

(b) Encouraging the Secretary-General, in accordance with his prerogatives under the Charter of the United Nations, to bring to the attention of the Security Council situations in which humanitarian assistance is denied as a consequence of violence directed against humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel;

(c) Issuing the declaration of exceptional risk for the purposes of article 1 (c) (ii) of the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel in situations where, in its assessment, circumstances would support such a declaration, and inviting the Secretary-General to advise the Council where, in his assessment, circumstances would support such a declaration;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to address in all his country-specific situation reports the issue of the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel, including specific acts of violence against such personnel, remedial actions taken to prevent similar incidents and actions taken to identify and hold accountable those who commit such acts, and to explore and propose additional ways and means to enhance the safety and security of such personnel.

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 57/155 [YUN 2002, p. 144], the Secretary-General, in a September report [A/58/544], described threats against humanitarian and UN personnel over the preceding year. He noted that, while fatalities had decreased significantly in recent years, there were instances in which the Organization’s efforts were being frustrated.

The Assembly, in resolution 58/122 of 17 December (see p. 1453), called on Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel.

Resource mobilization

Central Emergency Revolving Fund

In 2003, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, established in 1992 [YUN 1992, p. 584] as a cash-flow mechanism for the initial phase of humanitarian emergencies, granted 12 advances, amounting to $7.2 million.

Consolidated appeals

The consolidated appeals process continued to coordinate and facilitate the capacity of the UN system to meet its inter-agency resource requirements. In 2003, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners issued consolidated appeals seeking $5.2 billion in assistance to Afghanistan, Angola, the northern Caucasus, the Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, Côte d’Ivoire + 5 (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali), the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Eritrea, the Great Lakes region and Central Africa (Burundi, Congo, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda), Guinea, Indonesia, Iraq, Liberia, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Southern Africa region (Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe), the Sudan and Tajikistan.

The latest available data indicated that 75.3 percent ($3.9 billion) of requirements had been met.

White Helmets

In response to General Assembly resolution 56/102 [YUN 2001, p. 827], the Secretary-General, in an August report [A/58/202], described the status of implementation of the “White Helmets” initiative, which was established by Argentina in 1993 to promote the concept of pre-identified standby and trained teams of volunteers from various national volunteer corps to support immediate relief, rehabilitation, construction and development activities and was administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The report, which covered the period from March 2001 to July 2003, highlighted programme activities and their results, existing mechanisms and partnerships, financing and resources mobilization, and underscored opportunities for widening the operationalization of the concept.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/118 [draft: A/58/L.43 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 49 (d)].

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 also its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 47/188 of 22 December 1992, 48/57 of 14 December 1993, 49/139 A and B of 20 December 1994, 50/37 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, Recognizing that the international community, in addressing the growing magnitude and complexity of man-made and natural disasters and in 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, prepared in pursuance of its resolution 56/182 on the participation of volunteers, “White Helmets”, in the 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, 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.

Mine clearance

In response to General Assembly resolution 57/159 [YUN2002, p. 891], the Secretary-General, in an August report [A/58/260], described progress in implementing the goals and objectives of the UN mine-action strategy for the period 2001-2005 [YUN2001, p. 828]. A review of the six strategic goals identified progress in each goal as follows: increased information and improved information technology through the production of information related to mine-action problems, inter-agency assessment missions to mine-affected countries, enhancement of the Web-based information network E-mine, and installations and upgrading of the software, Information Management System for Mine Action (goal 1); improved capacity to respond to emergencies through the endorsement of an operational framework for rapid response, implementation of a rapid-response plan in Iraq, and the provision of emergency mine-action assistance to seven countries (goal 2); sustained efforts to build national mine-action capacity in over 30 countries (goal 3); significant improvements in quality manage-
ment realized through strengthened management and oversight of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) (goal 4); successful resource mobilization leading to increased resources for mine-action programmes and the issue of the Portfolio of Mine-related Projects: 2003 to coincide with the launch of consolidated appeals (goal 5); and increased advocacy in support of relevant legal instruments through the provision of expert information to Member States considering legislation to regulate explosive remnants of war and assistance in codifying the rights of persons living with disabilities, including landmine survivors (goal 6).

The Secretary-General concluded that the UN mine-action strategy for 2001-2005 had provided valuable direction and guidance for all UN entities involved in its implementation and had fostered coordination and accountability across the mine-action community. He recommended that the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action should continuously monitor the 2001-2005 strategy and report annually to the Assembly, and called for the development, in 2005, of a UN mine-action strategy for the period 2005-2009.

An addendum to the report [A/58/260/Add.1] presented the text of the revised strategy.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 19 December [meeting 76], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/127 [draft A/58/L.50 & Add.1, orally revised] without vote [agenda item 22].

**Assistance in mine action**

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 57/199 of 16 December 2002 and all its previous resolutions on assistance in mine clearance and mine action, all adopted without a vote,

Recognizing that, in addition to the primary role of States, the United Nations has a significant role to play in the field of assistance in mine action, and considering mine action to be an important and integrated component of United Nations humanitarian and development activities,

Reaffirming its deep concern at the tremendous humanitarian and development problems caused by the presence of mines and other unexploded ordnance that constitute an obstacle to the return of refugees and other displaced persons, to humanitarian aid operations and to reconstruction and economic development, as well as to the restoration of normal social conditions, and that have serious and lasting social and economic consequences for the populations of mine-affected countries,

Bearing in mind the serious threat that mines and other unexploded ordnance pose to the safety, health and lives of local civilian populations, as well as of personnel participating in humanitarian, peacekeeping and rehabilitation programmes and operations,

Encouraged by the reduction in the number of new mine victims, but reiterating its dismay at the existing high number of victims of mines and other unexploded ordnance, especially among civilian populations, including women and children, and recalling in this context its resolution 57/190 of 18 December 2002 and Commission on Human Rights resolutions 2003/49 of 23 April 2003, on the human rights of persons with disabilities, and 2003/80 of 25 April 2003, on the rights of the child,

Deeply alarmed by the number of mines that continue to be laid each year, as well as the presence of a decreasing but still very large number of mines and other unexploded ordnance as a result of armed conflicts, and therefore remaining convinced of the necessity and urgency of a significant increase in mine-clearance efforts by the international community with a view to eliminating the threat of landmines to civilians as soon as possible,

Noting the inclusion in Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects of a number of provisions of importance for mine-clearance operations, notably the requirement of detectability, and provision of information and technical and material assistance necessary to remove or otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines and booby traps, and noting also that Amended Protocol II to the Convention entered into force on 3 December 1998,

Noting also the conclusions and recommendations adopted at the Fourth and Fifth Annual Conferences of the States Parties to Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, held in Geneva on 11 December 2002 and on 26 November 2003, respectively,

Noting further the new additional Protocol to address the post-conflict impact of explosive remnants of war adopted by the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, held in Geneva on 27 and 28 November 2003, and noting the agreement reached on mandates for further work by the same Meeting,

Noting that additional States have ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which entered into force on 1 March 1999, bringing the total number of States that have formally accepted the obligations therein to one hundred and forty-one,

Noting also the conclusions of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held in Bangkok from 15 to 19 September 2003, taking note of the reaffirmed commitments that were made by the States parties in the Bangkok Declaration, among other things, to pursue efforts related to the core humanitarian objectives of the Convention, urging all States parties and relevant organizations to participate actively in the work of the intersessional programme established by States parties to the Convention, and taking note also that the First Review Conference, to which the Secretary-General will be invited, will be
field in Nairobi, from 29 November to 3 December 2004.

Stressing the need to convince mine-affected States to halt new deployments of anti-personnel mines in order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of mine-clearance operations,

Stressing also the pressing need to urge non-State actors to halt immediately and unconditionally new deployments of mines and other associated explosive devices,

Recognizing the importance of assisting mine clearance in mine-affected countries by ensuring that the necessary maps and information and appropriate technical and material assistance are provided to help to remove existing minefields, mines, booby traps and other unexploded ordnance,

Noting that the resources allocated to mine-action activities have increased in recent years, but stressing the need to mobilize additional resources and to secure the best possible utilization of such resources, particularly for victim assistance, in order to meet increasing requirements, and encouraging all States, the United Nations and other international, regional and non-governmental and private organizations to continue their efforts in this regard,

Concerned at the limited availability of safe and cost-effective mine-detection and mine-clearance equipment, as well as the need for effective global coordination in research and development to improve relevant technologies, and conscious of the need to promote further and more rapid progress in this field and to foster international, national and local technical cooperation to that end,

Reaffirming the need to reinforce cooperation and coordination in the area of mine action at all levels and to devote the necessary resources to that end, including resources to support national and regional capacity-building initiatives, where applicable, and the work of the United Nations in this regard,

Noting with appreciation the finalization of an emergency response plan by the United Nations to respond to emergency mine-action requirements,

Welcoming the various established mine-action coordination centres, as well as the creation and existence of international trust funds for mine-action activities,

Noting with satisfaction the inclusion in the mandates of several peacekeeping operations of provisions relating to mine-action work carried out under the direction of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, in the context of such operations,

Commending the action taken by donor and recipient Governments, the United Nations system, regional organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations to coordinate their efforts and seek solutions to the problems related to the presence of mines and other unexploded ordnance, as well as their assistance to victims of mines,

Welcoming the role of the Secretary-General in increased public awareness of the problem of landmines,

1. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action and the recommendations contained therein, and takes note with appreciation of the revised mine-action strategy contained in the agenda item to the report;

2. Calls, in particular, for the continuation of the efforts of States, with the assistance of the United Nations and relevant organizations involved in mine action, as appropriate, to foster the establishment and development of national mine-action capacities in countries in which mines and other unexploded ordnance constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the local population or an impediment to social and economic development efforts at the national and local levels, and urges all Member States, in particular those that have the capacity to do so, to assist mine-affected countries in the establishment and development of national capacities in mine action;

3. Invites Member States to develop and support national programmes, where appropriate, in cooperation with the relevant bodies of the United Nations system and relevant regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations, to reduce the risks posed by landmines and other unexploded ordnance, including among women and children;

4. Expresses its appreciation to Governments, regional organizations and other donors for their financial and in-kind contributions to mine action, including contributions for emergency operations, peacekeeping operations and for national and local capacity-building programmes;

5. Encourages efforts to conduct mine action in accordance with accepted national and international standards, including International Mine Action Standards, and also encourages all States involved in mine action, including troop-contributing countries conducting mine action in peacekeeping operations, to follow these standards, as applicable;

6. Emphasizes the importance of using an information management system, such as the Information Management System for Mine Action, in full coordination with the United Nations Mine Action Service and with the instrumental support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining;

7. Appeals to Governments, regional organizations and other donors to continue and, whenever possible, increase their support to mine action through reliable, predictable and timely contributions, including contributions through the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action as well as to national mine-action efforts and humanitarian mine-action programmes of non-governmental organizations, to allow for the timely delivery of mine-action assistance, and stresses that such assistance should be integrated into broader humanitarian, development and other strategies;

8. Stresses the importance of international support for emergency assistance to victims of mines and other unexploded ordnance and for the care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of the victims, and also stresses that such assistance should be integrated into broader public health and socio-economic strategies;

9. Encourages all relevant bilateral and national programmes and bodies to include, in coordination with the United Nations, activities related to mine action in their humanitarian, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development assistance activities, where appropriate, bearing in mind the need to ensure national and local ownership, sustainability and capacity-building;

10. Encourages Member States, the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and
relevant non-governmental organizations to take further action to mainstream a gender perspective and integrate gender and age-appropriate considerations in all aspects of mine-action programming, particularly including programmes to reduce the number of child victims and relieve their plight;

11. **Stresses** the importance of cooperation and coordination in mine action, while emphasizing once again the important role of the United Nations in the effective coordination of mine-action activities, based on the United Nations policy on mine action and effective coordination, and especially the role of the Mine Action Service, stresses also the important role that national authorities and regional organizations can play in this regard, as well as the important role of relevant non-governmental organizations, and underlines the need for the continuous assessment of these roles by the General Assembly;

12. **Emphasizes** the role of the Mine Action Service as the focal point for mine action within the United Nations system and its ongoing collaboration with and coordination of all mine-related activities of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, and in this regard expresses its appreciation of the roles played by other bodies of the United Nations system, in accordance with United Nations mine-action policy;

13. **Urges** Member States and regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations to continue to extend full assistance and cooperation to the Secretary-General and, in particular, to provide him with information and data, as well as other appropriate resources that could be useful in strengthening the coordination role of the United Nations in mine action;

14. **Takes note with appreciation** of the Mine Action Guidelines for Ceasefire and Peace Agreements, requests the Secretary-General to make them widely available to United Nations mediators, moderators, special representatives of the Secretary-General and others, as appropriate, and calls upon all parties to conflict to incorporate provisions on mine action, where relevant, in ceasefire and peace agreements or other relevant arrangements;

15. **Takes note of** the potential that mine action can have as a peace and confidence-building measure in post-conflict situations among concerned parties;

16. **Encourages** the Secretary-General to continue to propose, where appropriate, provisions related to mine action in his recommendations to the Security Council for peacekeeping operations;

17. **Emphasizes** the importance of undertaking further multisectoral assessments and surveys to better define the nature, scope and impact of the landmine and other unexploded ordnance problem in affected countries and to support the establishment of clear priorities and national economic and development plans of action, underlining the need for the participation of populations of mine-affected areas in this regard;

18. **Notes with appreciation** the ongoing development by the United Nations of the International Mine Action Standards, with the assistance of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and other partners in mine action, to support the safe and effective implementation of mine-action activities, and emphasizes the need for an inclusive process to be followed in the development and review of such standards and the importance of developing in mine-affected countries national mine-action standards based on the International Mine Action Standards;

19. **Recognizes** the importance of building national capacities for and ownership of mine-action programmes, encourages the further establishment of national mine-action centres, including those supported by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Children’s Fund as well as those established under the auspices of the Mine Action Service in emergency situations, and encourages States to support the activities of those centres and the trust funds established for the coordination of assistance in mine action and the promotion of national ownership;

20. **Requests** the Mine Action Service to continue developing the electronic mine information network as a user-friendly repository of mine-related information and as a means for mine-action programmes to circulate on a regular basis to donors and other partners standard reports on the scope and impact of the mine problem, available mine-action resources and capacities and the progress achieved in the field;

21. **Emphasizes** the importance of recording the location of mines, of retaining all such records and making them available to concerned parties upon cessation of hostilities, and welcomes the strengthening of the relevant provisions in international law;

22. **Calls upon** Member States, especially those that have the capacity to do so, to provide the necessary information and technical, financial and material assistance, as appropriate, and to locate, remove, destroy or otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines, booby traps and other devices, in accordance with international law, as soon as possible;

23. **Urges** Member States and regional, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations that have the ability to do so to provide, as appropriate, technological assistance to mine-affected countries and to promote user-oriented scientific research on and development of mine-action techniques and technology, within reasonable time frames, so that mine-action activities may be carried out more safely and cost-effectively, and also urges them to promote collaboration at all levels in this regard;

24. **Invites** States to explore the possibility of strengthening internationally negotiated and nondiscriminatory legal instruments that address landmines and other unexploded ordnance, as well as their victims;

25. **Takes note with appreciation** of the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General to increase public awareness of the impact of the problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance;

26. **Requests** the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the progress achieved on all relevant issues outlined both in his previous reports to the Assembly on assistance in mine action and in the present resolution, including the progress made by the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international and regional organizations as well as national programmes, and on the operation of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and other mine-action programmes, as well as a report on the first implementation of the emergency response plan and lessons
learned from this experience and on the implemen-
tation of the strategy for the period 2001-2005;
27. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of
its fifty-ninth session the item entitled “Assistance in
mine action”.

Humanitarian activities

Africa

Angola

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for
Angola, launched for a total of $314 million to as-
sist 3.7 million beneficiaries during 2003, received
55.1 per cent ($173 million) of requirements.

The humanitarian situation in Angola im-
proved significantly during 2003 in all areas ac-
cessible to humanitarian partners. However,
about 100,000 people with critical needs re-
mained in areas where access was hampered by
mine infestation, broken bridges and poor road
conditions. According to government figures,
more than 3.8 million persons returned to their
areas of origin. Some 500,000 remained in camps
and temporary settlement areas and centres;
about 400,000 persons were living with host fam-
ilies in urban centres; and 350,000 refugees were
still in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
(DRC).

Humanitarian partners adopted a new pro-
gramme approach for the 2003 appeal, which fo-
cused on unifying programmes around a limited
set of time-bound and realistic objectives through
programme blocs in food security, public health,
protection and education, and access and
coordination.

Central African Republic

A Flash Appeal for Humanitarian Assistance
to the Central African Republic sought $9.1 mil-
lion to cover assistance for 2.2 million people
from April to June, of which 38.8 per cent
($3.5 million) was received.

Since 15 March, the political and military situa-
tion in the Central African Republic had
changed with the overthrow of the former re-
gime (see p. 155). However, populations in the
former conflict-stricken areas were experienc-
ing a serious humanitarian situation. Lack of access
to supplies from the capital deprived the local
population of basic commodities and basic
health services, whose infrastructure had been
consistently looted. Incidence of diseases had in-
creased as had cases of malnutrition among chil-
dren, and there was serious risk of losing the
2003 crop year due to the lack of seeds that either
had been looted or consumed by households. In-
security across the country constrained humani-
tarian assistance activities.

Eritrea

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal
for Eritrea, launched for a total of $160 million to
assist 2.3 million beneficiaries during 2003, met
77.3 per cent ($124 million) of requirements.

The humanitarian situation in Eritrea, which
deteriorated throughout 2003, was defined by
the effect of another year of severe drought,
which threatened the country with widespread
crop failures and water shortages, in addition to
the continuing effects of war, generalized pov-
erty, the imperative of creating a safe environ-
ment for the return of thousands of internally
displaced persons, expellees, and returning refu-
gees and their reintegration. The 2002 crop pro-
duction, at only 9 per cent of the national con-
sumption requirement, led 2.3 million people to
depend on food aid. In addition, reports of live-
stock deaths, increased grain prices and deflated
livestock prices indicated a significant reduction
of purchasing power and increased food insecur-
ity countrywide.

Great Lakes region and Central Africa

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal
for the Great Lakes Region and Central Africa,
launched for a total of $115 million to cover 2003,
received 100 per cent of that amount. Neither
Rwanda nor the United Republic of Tanzania
issued appeals in 2003, but chose instead to rely
on alternative funding mechanisms or targeted
development assistance.

Key issues were the region’s vulnerability to
natural disasters and the impact of climatic
trends, peace, security and human rights, health
and HIV/AIDS, internally displaced persons, ref-
ugees and vulnerable groups, and human rights
violations targeting women and children.

Burundi

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal
for Burundi, launched to assist 415,531 beneficia-
ries in 2003, sought $72 million, of which
44.1 per cent ($32 million) was received.

In 2003, the security situation deteriorated in
Burundi, hampering the work of the United
Nations and its partners. Acts of abduction, ban-
ditry, robbery, looting and assassination of local
administrative officials rose markedly. Looting
by the rebels and uncontrolled elements of the
armed forces stripped communities of their self-
sufficiency.

(See also p. 947 for information on the Ad Hoc
Advisory Group on Burundi.)
Congo (Republic of the)

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Republic of the Congo to cover 2003, amounting to $28 million, met 35 per cent ($10 million) of requirements.

The UN Plan for 2003-2004 described strategies to reduce poverty, enhance the role and status of women in society, support national efforts to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS and assist infected and affected persons, strengthen the rule of law and protect human rights, and improve food security and nutrition. Other areas of concern were children and the family, culture and communications, education and science, employment and income generation, the environment, health, refugees, the reintegration of ex-combatants and water, hygiene and sanitation.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the DRC sought $229 million for assistance to 2.6 million beneficiaries during 2003, of which 47.1 per cent ($108 million) was received.

A fifth year of uninterrupted war in large parts of the DRC further eroded coping mechanisms, and pushed entire populations to near exhaustion, which was reflected in the increase in internally displaced persons from 2.7 million in January to 3.4 million in August. On the positive side, the previous Government and former rebel groups united to form a new transitional Government (see p. 113), which established a new Ministry for Solidarity and Humanitarian Affairs as part of its strategy for consolidating peace and security.

(See also p. 943 under “Special economic assistance”.)

Uganda

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Uganda, launched for a total of $127 million to cover 2003, received 97.6 per cent ($124 million) of that amount to assist 750,000 beneficiaries.

While steady economic progress was made in the south, a serious humanitarian crisis was ongoing in the northern and north-eastern parts of the country, where an estimated 1 million persons had been displaced, with most of them living in heavily congested camps or public buildings under appalling health and sanitary conditions. Limited access to the camps had been possible through government-provided armed escorts. The most vulnerable groups—internally displaced persons, refugees and drought-affected people, mainly in Karamoja—were unable to access adequate agricultural land or find employment because of displacement, lack of income-generating activities and, specific to the drought-affected areas, poor weather and soil conditions.

Somalia

In response to General Assembly resolution 57/154 [YUN 2002, p. 896], the Secretary-General, in a July report [A/58/131], reviewed conditions in Somalia and the humanitarian relief and rehabilitation assistance provided by the United Nations and its partners from 22 May 2002 to 22 May 2003.

Somalia remained one of the poorest countries in the world. About 350,000 internally displaced persons were living in desperate conditions, with no access to international assistance or protection. Chronic food instability exacerbated the plight of the poorer groups, especially in drought-prone areas. Deterioration in the security situation resulted in the United Nations and other international agencies losing access to large areas, and prevented vulnerable Somalis from rebuilding sustainable livelihoods. In collaboration with implementing partners, the United Nations continued to deliver humanitarian aid and development assistance and remained committed to assisting the country. However, the low donor response to the consolidated appeals process prevented UN agencies from fully addressing Somalia’s emergency needs. The United Nations, with the assistance of the international community, would continue to support national reconciliation and social and economic development, employing an incremental approach of increased engagement. It would also undertake inter-agency peace-building strategies to strengthen communities and encourage reconciliation between rival factions.

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Somalia sought $71 million to assist 750,000 beneficiaries in 2003, of which 63.4 per cent ($45 million) was received.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/115 [draft: A/58/L.40 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 40 (b)].

Assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia

The General Assembly,
Recalling its resolution 47/160 of 18 December 1992 and subsequent relevant resolutions, in particular resolutions 50/166 of 14 December 2001 and 57/154 of 16 December 2002,
Noting with serious concern that the current four-year drought in Somalia threatens the lives of Somali nomads as well as livestock,
Noting with grave concern the high mortality rates of over 80 per cent of livestock in the worst-affected areas
of the Sool and Sanaag plateau of Somalia and the high risk of starvation of Somali nomads, Noting with serious concern the threat, as a result of this drought, of an imminent collapse of the Somali economy, and in particular of the pastoral economy and social support systems, Underlining the urgent need for humanitarian assistance, relief and reconstruction, Noting the linkage between the search for peace and alleviation of the humanitarian crisis in Somalia, Welcoming the continued focus of the United Nations, in partnership with civil society at the grassroots level, on programmes of assistance, including both humanitarian and development approaches, taking into consideration the conditions on the ground, Recalling statements by the President of the Security Council of 31 October 2001 and 28 March 2002, by which the Security Council condemned attacks on humanitarian personnel and called upon all parties in Somalia to respect fully the security and safety of personnel of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations, and to guarantee their complete freedom of movement and access throughout Somalia, Re-emphasizing the importance of the further implementation of its resolutions 47/160, 56/106 and 57/154 to rehabilitate basic social and economic services throughout the country, Taking note of the reports of the Secretary-General, 1. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his continued and tireless efforts to mobilize assistance for the Somali people; 2. Reiterates its firm support for the national reconciliation process sponsored by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and in particular for the ongoing peace conference in Kenya and the efforts of the Facilitation Committee in this regard, urges all parties throughout Somalia to participate in the process, and invites the Intergovernmental Authority and its member States to continue their efforts to promote national reconciliation in Somalia; 3. Encourages the further implementation of its resolution 47/160 to rehabilitate basic social and economic services throughout Somalia; 4. Welcomes the strategy of the United Nations focusing on the implementation of community-based interventions aimed at rehabilitating local infrastructures and increased self-reliance of the local population, and the ongoing efforts by the United Nations agencies, their Somali counterparts and their partner organizations to establish and maintain close coordination and cooperation mechanisms available for the implementation of the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction programme; 5. Notes the incremental and prioritized approach of the United Nations system to addressing the continuing crisis and needs in Somalia while maintaining long-term commitments to rehabilitation, recovery and development activities; 6. Commends the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat for its response, and underlines the urgent need for putting in place practical measures aimed at the alleviation of the consequences of the drought in Somalia; 7. Urges all States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to continue to implement further its resolutions 47/160, 56/106 and 57/154 in order to assist the Somali people in embarking on the rehabilitation of basic social and economic services, as well as institution-building aimed at the restoration of structures of civil governance at all levels in all parts of the country in which peace and security prevail; 8. Calls upon the Secretary-General to continue to mobilize international humanitarian, rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance for Somalia; 9. Calls upon all Somali parties to respect the security and safety of the personnel of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations and to guarantee their complete freedom of movement and safe access throughout Somalia; 10. Urges the international community to provide as a matter of urgency humanitarian assistance and relief to the Somali people to alleviate in particular the consequences of the prevailing drought; 11. Calls upon the international community to provide continuing and increased assistance in response to the United Nations 2004 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance for Somalia; 12. Commends the Secretary-General for the establishment of the Trust Fund for Peace-Building in Somalia, welcomes the contributions made thus far to the Fund, and appeals to Member States to contribute to it; 13. Requests the Secretary-General, in view of the critical situation in Somalia, to take all necessary and practicable measures for the implementation of the present resolution and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

Sudan

In response to General Assembly resolution 56/112 [YUN 2001, p. 836], the Secretary-General, in August [A/58/225], described the emergency situation and recovery, rehabilitation and development activities in the Sudan from 15 July 2001 to 22 May 2003.

During the reporting period, positive changes occurred in the operational environment in which humanitarian aid was provided. Nevertheless, the need for such assistance remained high, as armed conflict and ethnic violence continued to destroy infrastructure, isolate populations, erode coping mechanisms and limit access to markets, and also resulted in significant human rights violations. Natural calamities further diverted and drained government resources and caused additional large-scale displacement. In Upper Nile, Kassala, Darfur and the Sobat corridor, the presence of militias constituted a serious impediment to access. Road operations remained hampered by the presence of landmines and conditions were not established to allow internally displaced persons, refugees and ex-combatants to return voluntarily to their homes. From May 2003, some humanitarian workers holding Sudanese visas were not permitted entry to areas in the south. The issuance of travel permits and visas
took from three days to three months, and some staff received permits for one month only. Other restrictions were also imposed. Humanitarian access to previously denied or war-affected areas was expected to improve with the conclusion of a peace agreement.

The Secretary-General presented recommendations regarding a coherent transitional assistance programme, which called for sustaining the current multifaceted approach, covering diplomatic, political and economic factors; ensuring adequate funding facilities were responsive to humanitarian and transitional needs prior to the signing of a peace agreement; and the reintegration of internally displaced persons, ex-combatants and refugees into affected communities. He said assistance partners should act urgently to ensure that effective mechanisms were in place for consolidating any peace that was negotiated but not fully implemented.

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Sudan, launched for $263 million to cover the needs of 2.8 million beneficiaries in 2003, received 74.2 per cent ($195 million) of requirements.

West Africa

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Flash Appeal, launched in 2002, for $22 million to assist 3.9 million people in Côte d’Ivoire and Burkina Faso, Ghana and Mali from November 2002 to January 2003, received 56.6 per cent ($12 million) of the requirement.

The West Africa subregion had suffered chronic instability, with a coup d’état on 14 September (Guinea-Bissau), state collapse and violent conflict (Côte d’Ivoire and Liberia), disputed governance (Guinea and Togo), weakened economies linked to the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali), outburst of political tensions (Mauritania), and increased vulnerability in rural areas due to drought in the Sahel region and civilians seeking asylum in the border areas of Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea and Mali.

An appeal for the subregion was planned for 2004.

Côte d’Ivoire + 5

A UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Côte d’Ivoire and the five neighbouring countries of Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and Mali, to cover the period from April to December 2003, sought $91 million to assist 3 million beneficiaries. Of the total, 54.3 per cent ($49 million) was received.

The humanitarian situation in Côte d’Ivoire steadily deteriorated and was marked by widespread human rights abuses, continuing insecurity and uncertainty about the political/military situation, and the economic downturn and virtual collapse of basic social services. The crisis portended ominous trends for the wider West Africa subregion.

In Liberia, which was already facing a deep political, economic and humanitarian crisis, the situation worsened due to the spillover effects of the Côte d’Ivoire conflict. The ongoing conflict in Côte d’Ivoire and the resultant closure of its borders with Burkina Faso had a severe impact on the latter country’s economy, given its structural links with Côte d’Ivoire, including higher transport action costs, loss of income and rising prices. An estimated 3 million Burkinabé lived in Côte d’Ivoire. Despite its own precarious situation, Guinea continued to bear the burden of a constant flow of refugees from its neighbours. Continuing tensions along the Liberian/Guinean border presented a further security obstacle to the population and critical humanitarian assistance operations. The appeal would target about 176,000 people.

The impact of the Côte d’Ivoire crisis on Mali was seen against the background of an economy vulnerable to world commodity price fluctuations and the effects of recurrent Sahelian droughts. Up to 2 million Malian nationals resided in Côte d’Ivoire. An increase in the prices of basic commodities, food and petroleum products, a shortfall in rain and the unexpected return of thousands of Malians, along with a substantial drop in remittances, meant diminishing opportunities in Côte d’Ivoire and a deepening of poverty in Mali. The ramifications of the crisis in Côte d’Ivoire on Ghana mainly resulted in the influx of third-country nationals transiting to their countries of origin, and Ivorian asylum-seekers, challenging the capacity of the Government, the humanitarian community and host communities to identify and respond to their needs adequately.

Guinea

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Guinea, launched for a total of $48 million to assist 400,000 beneficiaries in 2003, received 61.2 per cent ($29 million) of the requirement.

Guinea provided a safe haven for refugees fleeing conflicts in Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Populations in its refugee-hosting and war-affected areas near the border with Liberia and Sierra Leone remained vulnerable and in need of aid, due to the volatile security situation linked to the alleged presence of armed militaries. Building the country’s capacity to manage complex emergencies and natural disasters remained a key priority.
Liberia

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Liberia, which sought $47 million to cover 1.3 million beneficiaries in 2003, received 39.6 per cent ($18 million) of that amount from the donor community.

In 2003, the humanitarian situation in Liberia was severely affected by the continuing escalation of conflict. During the first half of the year, humanitarian agencies had poor access to only one third of the country. Assistance to vulnerable populations in accessible areas also became increasingly difficult. Public social services collapsed and schools closed down prematurely. However, there were signs of hope that enabled greater humanitarian access and assistance, including the signing of the Accra Peace Agreement (see p. 192), the inauguration of an interim president and the arrival of Economic Community of West African States troops in early August. As a result, the humanitarian community was able to return to the capital, Monrovia, in mid-August.

Sierra Leone

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Relief and Recovery for Sierra Leone sought $126 million to assist 1.3 million beneficiaries in 2003. Of the total, 75.6 per cent ($95.1 million) was received from the donor community.

The stable environment in Sierra Leone enabled continued opportunities for reintegration and recovery efforts and accelerated repatriation, while the instability in Liberia generated additional influxes of refugees. Although progress was achieved in meeting humanitarian and recovery needs, delays in the commitment of resources early in the year hampered efforts to implement activities in time for the planting season and before the heavy rains undermined rehabilitation. Priorities for the country during the year included assistance and protection to Liberian refugees; support for the repatriation of Sierra Leonean refugees from neighbouring countries and for reintegration efforts; and enhanced delivery of education, health, agriculture, water and sanitation, and shelter services.

Southern Africa

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal in Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa, launched for a total of $464 million to cover 14.4 million beneficiaries from July 2003 to June 2004, received 65.9 per cent ($306 million) of the requirement.

Although conditions had improved in Southern Africa, primarily in the northern region, as a result of a massive humanitarian response and a reasonable 2002-2003 agricultural season, the overall levels of vulnerability remained high and the underlying causes of the crisis (food insecurity, HIV/AIDS, poor social and economic conditions) remained. The combination of a lack of funding for critical assistance activities and prospects for food production once again compromised by drought continued to expose millions to a life-threatening mix of vulnerability. However, longer-term prospects for addressing the crisis seemed healthier, as there were indications that resources to combat HIV/AIDS would become increasingly available.

Lesotho

For Lesotho, the UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal in Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa sought $3.6 million to cover assistance needs from July 2003 to June 2004, of which 25.9 per cent ($949,322) was received.

Pervasive HIV/AIDS continued to adversely impact livelihoods and incomes in Lesotho. Chronic poverty was still growing owing to the lack of employment opportunities to compensate for income losses due to retrenchment of migrant Basotho workers from South African mines and farms in Free State. For the third consecutive year, bad weather conditions led to drastically reduced agricultural production and severe food insecurity.

Malawi

For Malawi, the UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal in Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa sought $11 million to cover assistance from July 2003 to June 2004, of which 20.1 per cent ($2.2 million) was received.

While progress had been tangible in Malawi, the confluence of chronic poverty, HIV/AIDS and the regular disruptions to food security caused by variable rainfall, among other factors, indicated the need for ongoing emergency assistance. A shortage of qualified staff affected the quality of health services. Sanitation and water supply were of increasing concern as large inequities existed in the distribution of water. The macroeconomic environment had deteriorated, with inflation at 9.5 per cent in October.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 5 December [meeting 69], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/26 [draft: A/58/L.35 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 40 (b)].

Emergency humanitarian assistance to Malawi


Convinced that all people have the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and their families, including food, medical care, necessary social services and security in the event of lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond their control,

Noting that drought and other types of natural disasters have proved to be recurring phenomena in Malawi,

Restating that natural disasters damage the social and economic infrastructure of affected countries, although the long-term consequences of such natural disasters are especially severe for poor developing countries, including Malawi, and hamper sustainable development,

Concerned that Malawi continues to face natural catastrophes such as drought, floods and heavy rains, causing serious crop failure, loss of life and extensive damage to property and infrastructure,

Noting that an increasing number of cases of malnutrition, particularly among children, and deaths due to hunger-related diseases continue to occur in Malawi, with adverse long-term consequences,

Deeply alarmed that the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS has increased the vulnerability of communities, creating greater levels of dependency and severely reducing their ability to cope with humanitarian crises,

Gravely concerned that the capability of the national economy to absorb such shocks has been seriously eroded and that the frequent occurrence of extreme natural disasters has increasingly contributed to the stagnation of social and economic development,

Acknowledging that national efforts are critical to prevent the deepening of the humanitarian crisis,

Noting with appreciation the mobilization and allocation of resources by States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to complement the national efforts of Malawi,

Also welcoming that international cooperation remains a critical factor for the success of all national efforts to address the crisis situation,

1. Welcomes the positive role of the Government of Malawi in the relief operations, in particular the close coordination between the United Nations system and the Government;

2. Also welcomes the launching by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat of the consolidated appeal for Malawi on 18 July 2002 and the humanitarian appeal for 2004 on 18 November 2003, as well as the continued monitoring of the situation, including through the activities of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Humanitarian Needs in Southern Africa;

3. Requests the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to continue to seek ways and means of improving the effectiveness of the United Nations coordinated appeals process;

4. Calls upon all States to adopt, where required, and to continue to implement effectively, the legislative and other appropriate measures necessary to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, inter alia, in the areas of disaster prevention, including building regulations and appropriate land use, as well as early warning, disaster preparedness and capacity-building in disaster response, and in that context requests the international community to continue to assist Malawi as the need arises;

5. Emphasizes the importance of enhanced international cooperation, including with the United Nations and regional organizations, to assist Malawi in its efforts to build capacity and to predict, prepare for and respond to natural disasters;

6. Stresses, in that context, the need to further strengthen international cooperation in the provision of emergency humanitarian assistance in support of the efforts of Malawi to deal with natural disasters in all their phases, from relief and mitigation to development, including through the provision of adequate resources, and encourages the effective use of multilateral mechanisms;

7. Also stresses that emergency humanitarian assistance for natural disasters should be provided in accordance with the guiding principles contained in the annex to resolution 46/182, on the basis of human dimensions and needs;

8. Urges the international community to continue to support the efforts of Malawi to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic, poverty and malnutrition in order to increase its capacity to cope during natural disasters;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

Mozambique

For Mozambique, the UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal in Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa sought $20 million to cover assistance from July 2003 to June 2004, of which 13.7 per cent ($2.8 million) was received.

Monitoring assessments, carried out in November, suggested that, while ongoing interventions had a significant effect in stabilizing the food security status of vulnerable people, the sustainability of progress was contingent on the rainy season in January-March 2004. The southern and central parts of the country remained extremely vulnerable due to the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. A growing concern was the unfolding orphan crisis due to AIDS.

Swaziland

For Swaziland, the UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal in Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa sought $6 million to cover assistance needs from July 2003 to June 2004, of which 39 per cent ($2.3 million) was received.

The humanitarian crisis in Swaziland arose from drought and land degradation, deepening poverty and HIV/AIDS, with mutually reinforcing disastrous effects. Many families that would have weathered the drought through family remittances or employment in local industries no
longer had such coping mechanisms to rely on due to economic trends and the deaths of family breadwinners. Other coping mechanisms, such as selling assets and liquidating animal herds, were no longer available for most people.

Zambia

For Zambia, the UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal in Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa sought $15 million to cover assistance needs from July 2003 to June 2004, of which 22 per cent ($3.2 million) was received.

A good harvest and a favourable humanitarian response took Zambia off the critical list of countries requiring emergency food support. However, the recovery was fragile, as by December over 1 million people required emergency food assistance in the southern and western provinces. At the national level, the problems of HIV/AIDS, chronic malnutrition, water and sanitation had reached critical proportions and 73 per cent of the population were living in poverty.

Zimbabwe

For Zimbabwe, the UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal in Response to the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa sought $95 million to cover assistance needs from July 2003 to December 2004, of which 12.8 per cent ($12.3 million) was received.

The general humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe did not improve in 2003. A combination of the constrained policy environment, economic decline, climatic instability and HIV/AIDS continued to plague the population. The cumulative effect of five years of humanitarian crisis had resulted in a dramatic depletion of the country’s assets, including human health and productivity, essential services, and economic and vital natural resources.

Asia

Afghanistan

The Transitional Assistance Programme for Afghanistan (TAPA), which covered the period from January 2003 to March 2004, sought $728 million to assist 4.1 million people; as at late May, 31 per cent ($225 million) of the requirements were met.

TAPA sought to address the underlying causes of the crisis in Afghanistan—poverty, debt, environmental degradation, insecurity—as well as urgent recovery and reconstruction priorities. It provided support for mine/unexploded ordnance (UXO) victims, returned land for productive use, clearance for reconstruction projects and education for adults and children on the dangers of mines and UXO. TAPA prioritized integrated national and UN agency action in communities of return, to help assure sustainable livelihoods, essential community services, potable water supply and sanitation, and to address problems of debt and asset depletion. It also aimed to promote environmental protection and recovery, arrest environmental degradation, develop a national counter-narcotics strategy and address food insecurity.

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 57/113 B [YUN 2002, p. 900], the Secretary-General, in a December report covering the period from July 2002 to November 2003 [A/58/666], described key political and humanitarian developments in Afghanistan (for political aspects, see p. 304).

The report stated that Afghanistan had made progress towards post-war recovery. Gross domestic product grew by 30 per cent and was expected to grow by a further 20 per cent in 2004. Other achievements included the rehabilitation of the national primary education system and the successful management of one of the largest UN-assisted refugee repatriation efforts in history. However, serious challenges remained, the most important being the creation of a secure environment in the south so that reconstruction activities could take place. Equally crucial were government efforts to extend its authority, enhance its administrative capacity and deliver socio-economic benefits nationwide. UN assistance was channelled through TAPA (see above), which reflected an agreement between the Transitional Administration and the United Nations to ensure that UN humanitarian programming supported the national priorities identified by the Government in the national development budget and strengthened the Government’s implementation capacity.

During the review period, some 2.2 million highly vulnerable Afghans, mainly in the north, west and central highlands, received winter assistance. As at June 2003, some 10 million people had received 555,000 metric tons of food commodities; an estimated 6 million Afghans still required food assistance for the remainder of 2003. The majority of food aid projects focused on the restoration of agricultural opportunities, the recovery of agricultural land, seed stocks, irrigation systems, the rehabilitation of pasturage and the recuperation of livestock, as well as environmental protection. The Ministry of Health, with donor support, focused on providing rural communities with access to primary care by year’s end and was establishing an emergency obstetric care centre in each province. A birth registration campaign and national immunization...
days were launched for children. Progress was made in providing safe drinking water and sanitation facilities to schools, vulnerable villages affected by drought, communities with high numbers of refugee returns and camps for internally displaced persons. The main constraints of the sector were a low funding response, a shortage of sufficient implementing partners and appropriate drilling equipment, and insufficient capacities to plan and manage the sector.

School enrolment increased significantly and 292 schools countrywide were identified for rehabilitation or reconstruction. Efforts to reduce illiteracy among women were under way. Cultural sites and monuments were being restored, and national archives, public libraries and the Kabul theatre were rehabilitated. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 2.5 million individuals had received repatriation assistance since March 2002. Afghanistan, Iran and UNHCR signed a joint agreement in June 2003, which provided for the gradual return of some 1 million Afghans from Iran over the next two years. UNHCR suspended its repatriation programme from Pakistan in the wake of the killing of one of its staff members in November. Significant efforts were made to combat the threat of landmines and UXO. Road construction began in July on six sectors of the Kabul-Kandahar highway, totalling 439 kilometres. Reconstruction of the Salang Tunnel, the main road link between the north and the south, began in July.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 5 December [meeting 70], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/27 B [draft: A/58/ L.32 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 40 (f)].

Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 57/113 B of 6 December 2002 and all other relevant resolutions,

Recalling also the agreement reached among various Afghan groups in Bonn, Germany, on 5 December 2001 and the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, held in Tokyo on 21 and 22 January 2002,

Expressing its grave concern about the continuing effects of decades of conflict in Afghanistan, which have resulted in massive loss of life, extensive human suffering, serious violations of human rights, destruction of property, serious damage to the economic and social infrastructure, refugee flows and other forcible displacements of large numbers of people,

Mindful that Afghanistan is highly vulnerable to natural disasters and that some parts of its territory continue to be affected by serious drought,

Noting the accession of Afghanistan to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction,

Remaining deeply concerned about the problem of millions of anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordnance, which constitutes a great danger for the civilian population and a major obstacle for the return of refugees and displaced populations and for the resumption of agricultural and other economic activities, the provision of humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts,

Welcoming the positive steps taken so far towards an improved situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms for many Afghans, in particular women and children, and commending in this regard the positive role played by the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commissioner and Afghan civil society organizations, while noting with grave concern, however, that there remain discriminatory practices that hinder the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Expressing its deep concern about reports of violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law in parts of the country,

Reminding the Transitional Administration and all Afghan groups of their commitment to respect human rights in the country, as contained in the Bonn Agreement,

Reaffirming the importance of the safety and security of the humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel in Afghanistan, and alarmed by the increase in attacks on humanitarian personnel, including Afghan nationals, in parts of the country,

Noting with concern that the increase in such attacks has limited access to certain areas of Afghanistan and led to inadequate conditions for the delivery of aid for internally displaced persons and vulnerable sectors of the civilian population,

Recognizing that a secure environment is indispensable for the safe and effective delivery and distribution of humanitarian assistance and is a precondition for rehabilitation, reconstruction efforts and long-term development, and welcoming the expansion of the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force to allow it, as resources permit, to support the Afghan Transitional Administration and its successors in the maintenance of security in areas of Afghanistan outside Kabul and its environs, so that the Afghan authorities, as well as the personnel of the United Nations and other international civilian personnel engaged, in particular, in reconstruction and humanitarian efforts, can operate in a secure environment, and to provide security assistance for the performance of other tasks in support of the Bonn Agreement,

Welcoming the ownership of the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts by the Transitional Administration through the National Development Framework and national budget,

Reiterating the importance of a seamless transition from humanitarian relief to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan, and welcoming the important contribution that the integrated approach of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and of members of the donor community has made in this regard,
6. Welcomes the recent substantial contributions to the Law and Order Trust Fund, and at the same time regrets that the funding provided to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund and the Law and Order Trust Fund, which were designed to contribute to the mobilization of international support to Afghanistan, remains inadequate;

7. Urges the international community to actively participate in and financially contribute to these rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, and encourages the international community to channel assistance through the national development budget of the Afghan Transitional Administration and to focus attention on building the capacity of Afghans.

8. Strongly condemns the recent deliberate attacks and all other acts of violence and intimidation directed against humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel, and regrets the loss of life and physical harm suffered among such staff;

9. Urges the Transitional Administration and local authorities to ensure the safety, security and free movement of all United Nations and humanitarian personnel, as well as their safe and unhindered access to all affected populations, and to protect the property of the United Nations and of humanitarian organizations, including non-governmental organizations;

10. Notes the ratification by Afghanistan of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 5 March 2003, and at the same time strongly condemns once again continuing discrimination against women and girls, as well as against persons belonging to ethnic and religious groups, including minorities;

11. Emphasizes the importance of actively involving all elements of Afghan society, in particular women, in the development and implementation of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes;

12. Reminds all Afghan groups of their commitment to the Bonn Agreement, and calls upon them to respect fully the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all, without discrimination of any kind, including on the basis of gender, ethnicity or religion, in accordance with their obligations under international law, and to protect and promote the equal rights of women and men;

13. Welcomes the start of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process by the Transitional Administration and the efforts of the international observer group to verify the fairness of the process, and calls upon the international community to assist the Transitional Administration in these efforts;

14. Also welcomes, in this regard, the accession of the Transitional Administration on 24 September 2003 to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and urges Afghan groups to refrain from the recruitment or use of children contrary to international standards, while stressing the importance of demobilizing and reintegrating child soldiers and other war-affected children;

15. Emphasizes the necessity of investigating allegations of violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law, including violations committed against persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities, as well as against women and girls, of facilitating the provision of efficient and effective remedies to the victims and of bringing the perpetrators to justice in accordance with international law;

16. Appeals to the Transitional Administration and the international community to mainstream gender issues into all humanitarian assistance and future rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes and to actively promote the full and equal participation of and benefit to both women and men in respect of those programmes, underlining the importance of a senior gender adviser position in this context;

17. Calls upon the Transitional Administration to provide Afghan children with educational and health facilities in all parts of the country, recognizing the special needs of girls, and to ensure their full access to those facilities;
18. **Expreses its appreciation** to those Governments that continue to host Afghan refugees, and reminds them of their obligations under international refugee law with respect to the protection of refugees and the right to seek asylum;

19. **Calls upon** the Transitional Administration, acting with the support of the international community, to create the conditions for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons, welcomes in this respect the initiation of the National Area-Based Development Programme and the National Solidarity Programme, and calls upon the international community to provide adequate funding to these programmes which, inter alia, assist in the resettlement of Afghan refugees and internally displaced persons;

20. **Urges** donors to fulfil promptly the funding commitments made in Tokyo at the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan and reiterated in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on 21 September 2003, and invites them to provide additional resources beyond those pledged so far;

21. **Urgently appeals** to all States, the United Nations system and international and non-governmental organizations to continue to provide, in close collaboration with the Transitional Administration and Afghan civil society, all possible and necessary humanitarian, financial, technical and material assistance for the Afghan population, inter alia, a minimal degree of health care and health services in all parts of the country;

22. **Calls upon** the international community to continue and strengthen its coordination of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, bearing in mind the role of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan;

23. **Also calls upon** the international community to respond generously and without delay to the national development budget, as well as long-term interventions towards rehabilitation and reconstruction;

24. **Requests** the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly every four months during its fifty-eighth session on the progress of the United Nations and the efforts of his Special Representative to promote peace in Afghanistan, and to report to the Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on progress made in the implementation of the present resolution;

25. **Decides** to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session the sub-item entitled “Emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan”.

**In resolution 58/27 A** of the same date (see p. 304), the Assembly called on the international community to support the efforts of the Transitional Administration.

**Democratic People’s Republic of Korea**

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), launched for a total of $229 million to cover assistance for 6.4 million beneficiaries, received 58.1 per cent ($133 million) of requirements.

The humanitarian situation in the DPRK was impacted by increasing security tension on the peninsula following the re-emergence of the nuclear issue. While most donors continued to separate politics from humanitarian aid, the serious deterioration in the external environment affected the level of assistance to the country. The situation was compounded by the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) epidemic. While no SARS was reported in the DPRK, national authorities took measures beyond the World Health Organization (WHO) technical measures to prevent the introduction of the disease into the country, which were seen as an overriding need to avoid a SARS outbreak.

**Indonesia**

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Indonesia, which sought $55 million to assist 3 million beneficiaries in 2003, received 55.3 per cent ($31 million) of the requirements.

Significant progress had been made in restoring relative social and political stability in most of the conflict-affected regions of Indonesia, enabling thousands of internally displaced persons to return to their villages of origin. Humanitarian and development assistance continued to be required to help the Government rehabilitate infrastructure, restore social services facilities and assist the communities affected by the conflict.

**Iraq**

A Flash Appeal for the Humanitarian Requirements of the Iraq Crisis sought $2,223 million to cover assistance from April to December 2003, of which the donor community committed 90.9 per cent ($2,020 million).

Although the conflict had not resulted in a major humanitarian crisis, the humanitarian situation in Iraq remained serious. The high levels of vulnerability and dependence on government services that existed before the conflict had increased further. The conflict and its aftermath resulted in a widespread breakdown of essential services, severely affecting the population. The lack of security and law and order remained the most serious obstacle to the restoration of basic services and the humanitarian community’s ability to conduct assistance activities. It also had a severe impact on the lives of women and children in their ability to access basic services and live normal lives.

**Palestine**

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which sought $294 million to assist 1.5 million people
Israel’s closure policy, involving checkpoints and roadblocks, had crippled the Palestinian economy. The situation was further compounded by continued expansion of settlements and bypass roads. The number of Palestinians unable to cope had increased, with 60 per cent living below the poverty line and 40 per cent of the workforce unemployed. Half the population was unable to access their usual health services due to closures and curfews. Children’s school performance declined due to a disruption of school life. Assistance focused on recovery and infrastructure, food aid, health, education and psychosocial services.

**Tajikistan**

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Tajikistan, which sought $62 million to assist 1 million people in 2003, received 78.5 per cent ($49 million) of the requirements.

Despite positive economic growth indicators for Tajikistan, there was little change in the humanitarian context for the most vulnerable groups. Complex and deep-rooted poverty had left many families with few, if any, coping mechanisms for survival, triggering internal population movements and labour migration to neighbouring countries. Lack of access to food and productive resources, including land, seeds and water, remained the root of food insecurity. The weakened capacity of families to look after their children resulted in increasing numbers of street children and children in conflict with the law. Nearly 20 per cent of the country’s schools were destroyed during the civil war, while about 80 per cent of the remaining schools were in need of major repair. With 43 per cent of the population not having access to safe drinking water, unprotected water reservoirs and irrigation canals were the main source of water for many households and public facilities. Outbreaks of water-borne diseases and epidemic levels of malaria and tuberculosis regularly overwhelmed national capacities.

**Europe**

**North Caucasus (Russian Federation)**

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Chechnya and Neighbouring Republics (North Caucasus–Russian Federation), which sought $30 million to assist 1.2 million beneficiaries, received 91.1 per cent ($28 million) of the requirements.

The situation in Chechnya and neighbouring republics continued to be characterized by complexity, instability and unpredictability. Low-intensity hostilities continued in some regions, sometimes resulting in civilian casualties. Chechnya remained one of the world’s areas most heavily affected by landmines and UXO. Insecurity remained the biggest hindrance to providing aid to the population and the largest obstacle to recovery and economic development. Pervasive unemployment gave rise to the need for food aid and access to social services, such as potable water, health care and education.

**Special economic assistance**

On 23 December, the General Assembly decided that the item on special economic assistance to individual countries or regions would remain on the agenda of its resumed fifty-eighth (2004) session (decision 58/565).

**African economic recovery and development**

**New Partnership for Africa’s Development**


**Reports of Secretary-General.** In February, the Commission for Social Development (see p. 1099) considered a report of the Secretary-General on national and international cooperation for social development [E/CN.5/2005/5 & Corr.1], which discussed NEPAD in the context of State to State partnerships.

In response to General Assembly resolution 57/7, the Secretary-General, in August, submitted the first consolidated report [A/58/254] on progress made to implement and support NEPAD. The report was compiled from information provided by the NEPAD secretariat and from information and data generated from responses to questionnaires sent to Member States and UN agencies.
and organizations. It also drew on ideas and suggestions from meetings with the private sector and civil society groups on NEPAD.

Regarding implementation activities by African countries, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the AU (second ordinary session, Maputo, Mozambique, 10-12 July) [A/58/26] adopted a declaration on NEPAD’s implementation. The African Peer Review Mechanism—a mutually agreed instrument voluntarily accredited by AU members as an African self-monitoring, peer-review and peer-learning mechanism—was established and accredited by 16 members as of July. The Mechanism, which was fundamental to the implementation of the NEPAD priorities of political, economic and corporate governance, had as its primary purpose to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that led to political stability and economic growth. Several African countries had taken steps to create a national focal point for NEPAD, and the work programmes of the regional economic communities were reoriented to reflect NEPAD priorities. At the sectoral level, a plan for comprehensive African agricultural development had been completed. NEPAD was also working with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS to prepare a multisectoral AIDS strategy, and had developed a full programme on the environment, which was approved at the second ordinary session of the AU Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Constraints to implementation by African countries were a weak link between the Heads of State and Government Implementation Committee and the regional economic communities; weak institutional capacity to plan and implement the development programmes at the country and regional levels; a lack of sufficient effort in popularizing NEPAD at the country level; and inadequate funding.

Assistance to Africa by the international community through increases in official development assistance (ODA) had been directed to critical sectors, particularly health and education. Closely related to the increase in the volume of ODA was an effort at improving aid effectiveness, including steps by donor countries to unite their aid. It was expected that African countries would benefit from the Rome Declaration on Harmonization, adopted by the heads of multilateral and bilateral development institutions and representatives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), other multilateral financial institutions and partner countries (Rome, 24-25 February) [A/57/763] to simplify and harmonize programming, reporting and disbursement procedures. Several donor countries made pledges to meet the estimated shortfall of $1 billion in the Trust Fund for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. In addition, some HIPC-eligible African countries had benefited from bilateral debt cancellations announced by several donor countries. In the area of trade, there had been a limited positive international policy response, mainly centring on the granting by some developed countries of duty-free and quota-free access to products of African least developed countries. A number of Africa’s partner countries took steps to assist the promotion of foreign direct investment in Africa. The trend towards increased economic and technical cooperation between Africa and other developing regions, especially with countries in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, continued. Intergovernmental events offering impetus for cooperation between African and Asian countries were the Asian-African Interregional Organizations Conference (Bandung, Indonesia, 29-30 July), the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (Tokyo, Japan, 29 September–2 October) and the Second Ministerial Conference of the China-Africa Cooperation Forum (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, December). Challenges to support to Africa included insufficient levels of ODA for Africa to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) [YUN 2000, p. 51] and problems within the HIPC Initiative, such as the slow redemption of pledges to the HIPC Trust Fund and a combination of difficulties in preparing poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) and implementing macroeconomic reforms.

Several UN agencies and organizations had aligned their activities with NEPAD priorities. The UN system had also developed an operational framework to support NEPAD at the national, regional and global levels and adopted the cluster approach for pooling its efforts in support of NEPAD. Various UN system entities were engaged in human and institutional development efforts to support NEPAD, and were working with African regional and subregional organizations on policy issues. The Secretary-General established the Office of the Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, effective 1 May, which served as the focal point for NEPAD at Headquarters and supported the promotion of a coordinated, system-wide response to assist Africa’s development, particularly implementation of NEPAD, through CEB. The Secretary-General issued a report on the future engagement of the UN system with NEPAD (see p. 959).

The private sector had responded favourably to NEPAD. A NEPAD Business Group, formed to promote cooperation between NEPAD and the private companies that supported it, shared information on trade and investment opportunities.
in Africa and encouraged private sector involvement in NEPAD and other projects. The African Business Round Table, in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and other sponsors, organized the NEPAD–Economic Community of West African States Business Forum (Abuja, Nigeria, 3-5 March), which underlined the need for more forums modeled on the Abuja meeting, for business associations to disseminate information on NEPAD and for promoting the establishment of business consultative groups to monitor the recommendations of the Forum. The Africa Economic Summit 2003 of the World Economic Forum (Durban, South Africa, June) examined how business could play its part in NEPAD implementation and assist African Governments. Several factors continued to impede private sector development in Africa, including the poor policy environment in most countries; weak institutional mechanisms for policy dialogue and consultation between the corporate sector and the Government in some countries; poor infrastructure facilities; the lack of an enabling governance environment; and limited use of public-private partnerships to address NEPAD priorities. Major constraints for civil society included lack of communications between and among civil society organizations, Government and the private sector and between civil society organizations and the NEPAD secretariat; a lack of resources to implement NEPAD; poor coordination and synergy among civil society organizations in their engagement with NEPAD; and the tendency of African Governments to cooperate mainly with organizations that were created or financed by donors or government departments, while often neglecting others.

The Secretary-General proposed that African countries take measures to integrate NEPAD priorities into their development process; development partners strive to achieve coherence and complementarity in their trade and aid policies; and the private sector and civil society adopt a proactive orientation towards NEPAD.

UN Future Engagement with NEPAD

Report of Secretary-General. The Secretary-General, responding to a 2002 request of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), submitted an April report E/AC.5/2003/6 on the future engagement of the UN system with NEPAD, which described the UN system’s role in support of NEPAD as mandated by the General Assembly in resolution 57/7 (UN 2002, p. 901). A three-tier operational framework was in place to help implement NEPAD. At the country level, the main framework for engaging with African Governments would be the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the common country assessments, complemented by PRSPs. At the regional level, the framework for coordination and collaboration among UN entities would be the regional consultative meetings, chaired by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), working among the five clusters corresponding to the NEPAD priorities under the convenership of a UN agency: infrastructure development (ECA), governance, peace and security (UNDP), agriculture, trade and market access (FAO), environment, population and urbanization (UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)); and human resources development, employment and HIV/AIDS (United Nations Children’s Fund).

At the global level, CEB was providing oversight and policy guidance, while the new Office of the Special Adviser on Africa would assist the Secretary-General in the coordination of global advocacy and support to NEPAD.

The report concluded that NEPAD’s implementation was a work in progress and the UN system had demonstrated a strong commitment to adopting a coherent framework. The active involvement of the NEPAD secretariat and the AU Commission at virtually every stage of the UN system’s support to NEPAD augured well for the idea of partnership embodied in NEPAD.

CPC action. CPC, at its forty-third session (New York, 9 June-3 July and 9 July) [A/58/46], recommended that relevant UN system organizations assume the role of convener of the clusters, consistent with their fields of competence and capacity, while avoiding inter-agency rivalry, and strengthening coordination and collaboration so as to ensure their effective involvement in providing added value to NEPAD’s implementation. CPC stressed that the coordination function should be carried out at the regional and subregional levels by ECA and coordinated by the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa. It stressed the need for CEB to keep under regular review the issue of inter-agency coordination on NEPAD. The Committee recommended that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to report in 2004 on the further future engagement of the UN system with NEPAD and to submit an annual progress report on the implementation of NEPAD.

Following consideration of the proposed revisions to programme 8, UN support for NEPAD, of the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 [A/58/83], CPC recommended that the Assembly approve the revisions with modifications as set out in its report.
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 21 July [meeting 42], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission for Social Development [E/2003/26], adopted resolution 2003/13 without vote [agenda item 14 (b)].

National and international cooperation for social development: implementation of the social objectives of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly entitled “World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world”, held in Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 56/218 of 21 December 2001, by which the Assembly established the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Final Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world, held in Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 56/218 of 21 December 2001, by which the Assembly established the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole of the General Assembly for the Final Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and related initiatives on the basis of the report of the Secretary-General on the independent high-level quality evaluation, as well as on the basis of proposals by the Secretary-General on the modalities of the future engagement of the United Nations with the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, and Assembly resolution 56/98 of 27 June 2002,


Welcoming the adoption of the chapter VIII, entitled “Sustainable development for Africa”, of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),

Cognizant of the link between the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development and the Millennium Declaration, in which the international community committed itself to addressing the special needs of Africa, and of the need to achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including those set out in the Millennium Declaration,

Bearing in mind the reports of the Secretary-General of 20 June 1995 and 12 June 2001, submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its high-level segments devoted to the consideration of the development of Africa,

Bearing in mind also that, while the primary responsibility for the development of Africa remains with African countries, the international community has a stake in that development and in supporting the efforts of these countries in that regard,

Underlining the fact that international cooperation based on a spirit of partnership and solidarity among all countries contributes to creating an enabling environment conducive to the achievement of the goals of social development,

Recognizing the urgent need to continue to assist African countries in their efforts to diversify their economies as well as enhance capacity-building and promote regional cooperation,

Recognizing also the serious challenges facing social development in Africa, in particular illiteracy, poverty and HIV/AIDS,

1. Emphasizes that economic development, social development and environmental protection are inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development;

2. Recognizes that, while social development is primarily the responsibility of Governments, international cooperation and assistance are essential for the full achievement of that goal;

3. Reiterates the importance of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development;

4. Reaffirms the need to strengthen, inter alia, in a spirit of partnership, international, regional and sub-regional cooperation for social development and implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly entitled “World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world”;

5. Also reaffirms the need for effective partnership and cooperation between Governments and the relevant actors of civil society for the achievement of social development;

6. Welcomes the New Partnership for Africa’s Development as a programme of the African Union for peace and sustainable development that embodies the vision and commitment of all African Governments and peoples;

7. Stresses the need for renewed political will at the national, regional and international levels to invest in people and their well-being so as to achieve the objectives of social development;

8. Emphasizes that democracy, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society, as well as effective participation by civil society, are among the indispensable foundations for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development;

9. Also emphasizes the New Partnership objectives of eradicating poverty in Africa and placing African countries, both individually and collectively, on a path of sustainable growth and development and thus facilitating Africa’s participation in the globalization process;

10. Underlines the need for effective partnership and cooperation between Governments and the relevant actors of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the implementation of and follow-up to the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, and the need for ensuring, within the framework of the New Partnership, their involvement in the planning, elaboration, implementation and evaluation of
social policies at the national, regional and international levels;

11. Welcomes with appreciation actions already under way at the regional level to organize the activities of the United Nations system around thematic clusters covering the priority areas of the New Partnership, and in this regard urges the strengthening of that process as a means of enhancing the coordinated response of the United Nations system in support of the New Partnership;

12. Stresses, in this context, the vital role of the United Nations in assisting Member States to achieve the development objectives and targets of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and to mainstream those dimensions in future reports submitted to the Commission on its priority themes;

13. Welcomes the commitment of African countries to peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights and sound economic management, as well as their commitment to taking concrete measures to strengthen mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution as embodied in the New Partnership, as an essential basis for sustainable development in Africa, and in this context welcomes the ongoing efforts of African countries to develop further the African peer review mechanism which is an important and innovative feature of the New Partnership;

14. Recognizes that illiteracy, poverty, HIV/AIDS and other major communicable diseases add challenges to Africa's development, and urges the international community to continue to increase its assistance to African countries in their efforts to address these challenges;

15. Urges the international community and the United Nations system to organize support for African countries in accordance with the principles, objectives and priorities of the New Partnership in the new spirit of partnership;

16. Invites the international financial institutions to ensure that their support for Africa is compatible with the principles, objectives and priorities of the New Partnership;

17. Urges the United Nations system, in coordinating its activities at the national, regional and global levels, to foster a coherent response, inter alia, through close collaboration with bilateral donors in the implementation of the New Partnership in response to the needs of individual countries within the larger framework of the New Partnership;

18. Welcomes the decision of the General Assembly to invite the Economic and Social Council, pursuant to its role in respect of system-wide coordination, to consider how to support the objectives of Assembly resolution 57/7;

19. Calls upon the Secretary-General, in his efforts to harmonize the current initiatives on Africa, to enhance coordination between the United Nations and the specialized agencies, programmes and funds of the United Nations system;

20. Acknowledges the reflection by the Secretary-General of the social dimensions of the New Partnership in his report on the priority theme for the forty-first session of the Commission for Social Development, "National and international cooperation for social development", and invites him to continue to reflect those dimensions in future reports submitted to the Commission on its priority themes;

21. Recommends that the Commission for Social Development continue to give due prominence to the social dimensions of the New Partnership in its future priority themes;

22. Decides to bring the present resolution to the attention of the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session during its consideration of the agenda item entitled "New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support".

The Council, on 24 July, decided to consider, pursuant to its role in respect of system-wide coordination, how to support the objectives of General Assembly resolution 57/7 at its resumed session in 2003 (decision 2003/282).

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 23 December [meeting 78], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/233 [draft: A/58/L.7/Rev.1 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 39 (a)].

New Partnership for Africa's Development: progress in implementation and international support

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 57/2 of 16 September 2002 on the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa's Development,

Recalling also its resolution 57/7 of 4 November 2002 on the final review and appraisal of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and support for the New Partnership for Africa’s Development,

Recalling further its resolution 57/297 of 29 December 2002 on the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa,

Mindful of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, the Doha Ministerial Declaration, the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development ("Johannesburg Plan of Implementation"),

Noting with appreciation the commitment of the international community in its support of the New Partnership, and welcoming in this regard the outcome of the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development,

Noting with appreciation also that the Group of Eight summit in Evian, France, in June 2003 devoted a significant part of its deliberations to the New Partnership, welcoming in this regard the endorsement of the report on the implementation of the Group of Eight Action Plan, and also welcoming the inaugural meeting, in Paris in November 2003, of the Africa Partnership Forum in support of the New Partnership,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General entitled "The New Partnership for Africa’s Development: first consolidated report on progress in implementation and international support",

declares that:

1. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General;

2. Reaffirms its full support for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development;
3. Recognizes the progress made in the implementation of the New Partnership and regional and international support for the New Partnership;

4. Also recognizes that much needs to be done to achieve the objectives of the New Partnership, particularly with regard to economic growth and poverty reduction;

5. Reaffirms that the international community, Africa and its development partners should further cooperate with one another to achieve the objectives and priorities of the New Partnership, on the basis of the principles of ownership and partnership;

6. Calls upon Member States and the international community, and invites the United Nations system, to enhance their support for the implementation of the New Partnership, in accordance with its principles, objectives and priorities;

I

Action by African countries and organizations

7. Notes with satisfaction efforts made by the African countries in fulfilling their commitments, in implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, to deepen democracy, human rights, good governance and sound economic management, and encourages African countries to continue to strengthen their efforts in this regard by developing and strengthening institutions for governance and the development of the region;

8. Welcomes the efforts of African countries in the management and resolution of conflicts in the region, in particular their determination to establish a Peace and Security Council within the African Union, African mediation in a number of conflicts and the efforts of the African Union and African regional organizations to develop their capabilities for peace-support operations;

9. Takes note of the adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding on the African Peer Review Mechanism, signed in Abuja on 9 March 2003, and welcomes in this regard the progress made with respect to the Mechanism, in particular the accession of a number of States members of the African Union and the appointment of the panel of eminent persons, and encourages other States members of the African Union to accede to the Mechanism as well;

10. Welcomes the priorities identified in the New Partnership and the progress made in the development of programmes in the areas of agricultural development, environment and infrastructure development, as well as the ongoing work in the areas of health and education and science and technology;

11. Also welcomes the efforts of African countries to fulfill their commitments to promote gender equality, the empowerment of women and the mainstreaming of gender perspectives in the implementation of the New Partnership;

12. Further welcomes the adoption by the African Union in Maputo, on 12 July 2003, of the Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Corruption;

13. Encourages African countries to take further concrete steps to deepen the process of integrating the priorities of the New Partnership into their national development plans and frameworks, including poverty reduction strategies, where they exist, to mobilize public and political support for the New Partnership, to develop sound programmes in the designated priority areas of the New Partnership and to mobilize resources for those priority areas;

14. Emphasizes the role of national focal points in monitoring the implementation of the New Partnership and the need to build and strengthen human and institutional capacities in order to effectively implement it in all its aspects;

15. Also emphasizes that regional economic communities are effective vehicles for the development and integration of the African continent, and in this regard calls for the strengthening of their role in the coordination and implementation of programmes and projects of the New Partnership at the subregional level;

16. Encourages the further integration of the priorities and objectives of the New Partnership into the programmes of the regional structures and organizations, as well as programmes for the African least developed countries;

17. Calls upon African countries to promote the development and strengthening of their domestic private sectors and to facilitate their effective involvement in the growth and development of, and economic integration among, the African economies;

18. Recognizes the efforts of African countries to raise awareness of the New Partnership and to involve all African stakeholders, namely, Governments, the private sector and civil society, including women's organizations and community-based organizations, in its implementation;

19. Welcomes the decision taken by the Executive Council of the African Union in Maputo to integrate the New Partnership into the African Union structures and processes;

II

Action by the international community

20. Welcomes the pledges of increased official development assistance made by many of the development partners, also welcomes the contributions that have been made, and urges that partners take steps to continue to disburse the assistance they have pledged;

21. Notes with satisfaction that some developed countries have untied their official development assistance, and encourages countries that have not yet done so to untie their aid, in accordance with the relevant recommendation of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development;

22. Calls upon the international community, relevant multilateral institutions and developed countries to enhance coherence in their trade, investment and aid policies towards African countries;

23. Stresses the need to find a durable solution to the problem of external indebtedness of heavily indebted poor countries in Africa, including through debt cancellation and other arrangements, and the need to encourage innovative mechanisms to comprehensively address the debt problem of low- and middle-income African countries, bearing in mind that external debt relief can release resources that may be utilized in the successful implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development, taking into account initiatives that have been taken to reduce outstanding indebtedness and the need to pursue debt relief measures vigorously and expeditiously, including...
within the context of the Paris Club, the London Club and other relevant forums;

24. Welcomes the actions taken by creditor countries within the framework of the Paris Club and by some creditor countries through the cancellation of bilateral debts, urges all creditor countries to participate in efforts to remedy the external debt and debt-servicing problems of African countries, notes the Evian Approach of the Paris Club of October 2003, and also notes that debt relief does not replace alternative sources of financing;

25. Encourages developed countries and other partners to support the promotion of private investment in African countries from their countries, in particular in the key productive sectors of the economy, to provide investment guarantees for such investment and to support policies of African countries aimed at promoting a conducive environment to attract foreign investment;

26. Underlines the need to take concrete steps to implement existing frameworks and programmes of South-South cooperation, including through triangular cooperation in support of the New Partnership;

27. Acknowledges the activities in African countries of the Bretton Woods institutions and of the African Development Bank, and encourages them to continue their support for the implementation of the priorities and objectives of the New Partnership;

28. Notes the growing collaboration among the entities of the United Nations system in support of the New Partnership, and requests the Secretary-General to promote greater coherence in the work of the United Nations system in support of the New Partnership, on the basis of the agreed clusters;

29. Calls upon the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies to strengthen further their existing coordination and programming mechanisms, as well as the simplification and harmonization of planning, disbursement and reporting procedures, as a means of enhancing support for African countries in the implementation of the New Partnership;

30. Notes that the entities of the United Nations system have been actively using the regional consultation mechanism as a vehicle for fostering collaboration and coordination at the regional level, and encourages them to intensify their efforts in developing and implementing joint programmes in support of the New Partnership at the regional level;

31. Requests the United Nations system to continue to provide assistance to the secretariat of the New Partnership and to African countries in developing projects and programmes within the scope of the priorities of the New Partnership;

32. Welcomes the cooperation and the support granted by the United Nations to the African regional and subregional organizations in conflict prevention and conflict management, takes note with appreciation of the work carried out by the Economic and Social Council ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict, while looking forward to the evaluation of their work during the substantive session of the Council in 2004, and encourages the pursuit of these activities in support of African efforts for conflict prevention and conflict management and in post-conflict situations;

33. Also welcomes the creation of the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to take measures to strengthen the Office to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate;

34. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the basis of inputs from Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and the other stakeholders in the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, such as the private sector and civil society.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

In response to General Assembly resolution 57/146 [YUN 2002, p. 95], the Secretary-General, in August [A/58/273], described economic recovery and reconstruction assistance provided by the UN system to the DRC.

A series of encouraging prospects for a peaceful resolution of the country’s political crisis followed the signing of the Final Act of the inter-Congolese political negotiations in April (see p. 113). However, in May, after the withdrawal of Ugandan troops, the district of Ituri, particularly the city of Bunia, was the scene of violent clashes between ethnic Hema and Lendu militias, which triggered a major humanitarian crisis (for Security Council action, see p. 123). Those and other clashes weakened the ceasefire, continued to threaten the peace process and exacerbated the already precarious humanitarian situation. Despite significant macroeconomic advances, particularly in controlling inflation, the social situation remained precarious. The great majority of the population continued to live below the poverty line. Faced with the various challenges, UN system agencies provided technical, material and financial assistance to support the transition process, democratic governance and poverty reduction, and for emergency humanitarian assistance.

The Secretary-General encouraged all parties to the conflict in the DRC to pursue efforts to accelerate the establishment of the transitional institutions. He invited donors to stress their support for the efforts of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) to ensure the disarmament, demobilization and repatriation of foreign armed groups and to encourage the Government of Rwanda and its allies to cooperate with MONUC for that purpose; the multinational financial institutions and DRC’s principal creditors to speed up the country’s admission to the HIPC Initiative in order to alleviate its debt service; and development partners to support the implementation of financial mechanisms designed to discharge the public debt, and to cover the funding
shortfall of the Emergency Multisectoral Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Programme 2003–2005, approved by the Congolese parties, and supporting civil service reform and efforts to reunify the country.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 17 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/123 [draft: A/58/L.31/Rev.1 & Add.1] by recorded vote (169–1) [agenda item 40 (b)].

**Special assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

The General Assembly,

Recalling its previous resolutions on special assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Recalling also all resolutions of the Security Council and the statements by its President regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Reaffirming the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and all States in the region,

Gravely concerned at the dire humanitarian, economic and social situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the effects on the inhabitants of the continued fighting in the eastern part, resulting in the continuing plight of the civilian population, and calling for its protection, taking into account the particular needs of women and girls,

Deeply concerned at the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and at its disproportionate effect on women and girls,

Expressing its deep concern at the dire consequences of the conflict for the humanitarian and human rights situations in the country, and at the continuing lack of sufficient access to vulnerable people,

Gravely concerned by the continued illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo as a source of further conflict, and reaffirming in this regard its commitment to respect the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo over its natural resources,

Gravely concerned also at the negative impact of war on the promotion of sustainable development in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region,

Deeply concerned about the continued extensive destruction of life and property, as well as the severe damage to infrastructure and the environment suffered by the Democratic Republic of the Congo,

Bearing in mind the fact that the Democratic Republic of the Congo hosts thousands of refugees from neighbouring countries, which places a great burden on its limited resources, and expressing the hope that conditions will be created that facilitate a safe and voluntary return of refugees,

Bearing in mind the close interrelationship between ensuring peace and security and the ability of the country to meet the humanitarian needs of its people and to take effective steps towards the rapid revitalization of the economy, and reaffirming the urgent need to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of its damaged economy and in its efforts to restore basic services and the infrastructure of the country,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General;
2. Welcomes the conclusion of the Global and All-Inclusive Agreement on the Transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, signed in Pretoria on 17 December 2002 and the subsequent establishment of the Government of National Unity and Transition, and encourages the effective establishment of all transitional institutions;
3. Also welcomes the declaration of Principles on Good-Neighbourly Relations and Cooperation between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda, which marked the successful conclusion of the high-level meeting held on 25 September 2003 under the auspices of the Secretary-General;
4. Further welcomes the efforts of the Republic of South Africa, the Republic of Angola, and all the Central African countries, as well as the important role of the Secretary-General, in facilitating the adoption of these agreements;
5. Urges all parties concerned in the region to cease military activities and to cease any support for armed groups, and rather to use their influence to support the transition and bring all within the dynamic of the transition;
6. Strongly condemns the acts of violence, including the latest massacres in Ituri, systematically perpetrated against civilians, including the massacres, as well as other atrocities and violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, in particular sexual violence against women and girls, stresses the need to bring to justice those responsible, including those at the command level, and urges all parties, including the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to take all necessary steps to prevent further violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, in particular those committed against civilians;
8. Recognizes the importance of an effective withdrawal of all foreign troops from the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
9. Urges all parties concerned in the region to cease any recruitment, training and use of child soldiers, which are contrary to international law, welcomes the initial steps taken by the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to demobilize and reintegrate child soldiers, in particular through education, and urges the Government and all parties to continue their efforts in this context, and to take into account the particular needs of girl ex-combatants;
10. Invites donors to strengthen their support for the efforts of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to demobilize and repatriate armed groups currently in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to encourage the transitional Government and all parties to the conflict to cooperate with the Organization Mission in achieving a
climate of security and trust, the support of neighbouring countries in this process being essential;
11. Emphasizes that the consolidation of peace and the resumption of economic activity in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are inextricably linked, and calls for further international economic assistance in this regard;
12. Encourages the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to pursue the implementation of economic reforms aimed at stabilizing the macro-economic framework so that conditions for sustainable growth can be created;
13. Urges all parties to fully respect international humanitarian law and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel to all affected populations throughout the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the safety of United Nations and humanitarian personnel;
14. Calls upon the international community to incorporate humanitarian relief activities within the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
15. Urges all parties to permit free and unhindered movement of the population, which is essential, inter alia, to the resumption of economic activities;
16. Expresses its deep concern especially at the very serious, dire humanitarian situation in Ituri, and calls on all Congolese parties on the ground to cooperate fully, in general, with the institutions of the transition, and, in particular, with the Ituri Pacification Commission;
17. Also expresses its deep concern over the dire humanitarian situation throughout the country and the very high number of internally displaced persons in the eastern part and, in particular, in the Ituri region, and urges all parties to avoid further population displacement and to facilitate the safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their places of origin;
18. Stresses the importance of the restoration of river traffic, welcomes in this regard the reopening of the Congo and Ubangi Rivers, and expresses its support for the establishment of a Congo River Basin Commission;
19. Calls for the reopening of the Kisangani-Kindu rail and river link to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as well as the resupply access for humanitarian personnel;
20. Encourages the continued cooperation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the United Nations, the specialized agencies, international financial institutions and other organizations, including non-governmental organizations, in addressing the need for rehabilitation and reconstruction, and welcomes in this regard their renewed dialogue and cooperation;
21. Renew its urgent appeal to the executive boards of the United Nations funds and programmes to continue to keep under consideration the special needs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and stresses the need to mainstream an appropriate gender perspective within overall reconstruction efforts; activities;
22. Welcomes the inclusion of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative;
23. Urges the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to implement national comprehensive strategies to monitor and manage external liabilities, embedded in the domestic preconditions for debt sustainability, including sound macroeconomic and public resource management;
24. Welcomes initiatives that have been undertaken to reduce outstanding indebtedness, and invites further national and international measures in that direction, including, as appropriate, debt cancellation and other arrangements;
25. Invites the development partners to cover the funding shortfall of the Emergency Multisectoral Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Programme and support civil service reform and efforts to reunify the country;
26. Invites Governments to continue providing support to the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
27. Requests the Secretary-General:
(a) To ensure through his Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who convenes the International Committee in Support of the Transition, the coordination of all the activities of the United Nations system in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the facilitation of the coordination with other national and international actors of activities in support of the transition, and welcomes to that effect the adoption of new coordination mechanisms aimed at ensuring a coherent and effective response to the multifaceted humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
(b) To continue to consult with regional leaders, in coordination with the President of the African Union, about ways to bring about a peaceful and durable solution to the conflict;
(c) To continue to consult with regional leaders, in coordination with the President of the African Union, in order to prepare an international conference on peace, security and development in Central Africa and in the Great Lakes region, under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union, to address the problems of the region in a comprehensive manner;
(d) To keep under review the humanitarian and economic situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with a view to promoting participation in and support for a programme of financial and material assistance to the country to enable it to meet urgent needs in terms of economic recovery and reconstruction;
(e) To submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session a report on the actions taken pursuant to the present resolution.

RECORDED VOTE ON RESOLUTION 58/123:

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, YUN03—3rd proofs
May 13 2005
In response to General Assembly resolution 56/108 [YUN 2001, p. 853], the Secretary-General submitted an August report [A/58/285] describing the political and socio-economic situation in Djibouti and progress made in providing assistance for reconstruction and development over the past four years to March 2003.

Djibouti’s development challenges were related to the country’s economic and financial crisis, which resulted from civil strife and changes in the international and subregional context. In addition, recurring emergency situations, including drought, flood and epidemics, combined with large-scale destruction of livestock, water points and health and educational facilities as a result of the internal conflict, led to the large-scale movement of displaced populations and considerably increased Djibouti’s need for further emergency and humanitarian assistance. As drought had affected both the rural and urban populations, there was an urgent need to make better use of rainwater and to explore country-wide water resources. Djibouti needed to rebuild much of the rural infrastructure to enable people to return to their homelands. Most schools, roads, hospitals, water facilities and dispensaries had to be reconstructed. Microcredit programmes and highly labour-intensive projects and programmes were needed to encourage people to return to their villages. Also needed was the promotion of income-generating activities. It was estimated that at least $100 million was required to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the civil war. Further assistance was necessary for governance, administrative reform and economic management, and to train national officials to contribute to the rebuilding of a fragile economy.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/116 [draft: A/58/L.41 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 46 (b)].

Economic assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti

The General Assembly

Recalling its resolution 56/108 of 14 December 2000 and its previous resolutions on economic assistance to Djibouti,

Recalling also the United Nations Millennium Declaration,

Recalling further the Brussels Declaration and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, adopted by the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries on 20 May 2001, as well as the mutual commitments undertaken on that occasion and the importance attached to follow-up and the implementation of the Programme of Action,

Aware that Djibouti is included in the list of least developed countries and that it is ranked 153rd out of the 175 countries studied in the Human Development Report 2003,

Noting that the economic and social development efforts of Djibouti are constrained by the extremes of the local climate, in particular cyclical droughts, and that the implementation of reconstruction and development programmes requires the deployment of substantial resources which exceed the limited capacity of the country,

Noting also that the situation in Djibouti has been made worse by the disastrous drought situation prevailing in the Horn of Africa and by the absence of natural resources, which continues to place serious constraints on the fragile economic, budgetary, social and administrative infrastructure of the country,

Expressing its concern at the severe shortage of drinkable water and the dramatic projected figures for the year 2020 as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General,

Noting with satisfaction that the Government of Djibouti is pursuing the implementation of a reform programme and is about to finalize with the international financial institutions a poverty reduction strategy paper,

Noting with gratitude the support provided by various countries, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to meet the humanitarian needs of the country,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General;
2. Declares its solidarity with the Government and the people of Djibouti, who continue to face critical developmental and humanitarian challenges owing, in particular, to the scarcity of natural resources, coupled with harsh climatic conditions and the acute issue of water supply impacting on the development aspirations of the country;
3. Encourages the Government of Djibouti, despite difficult economic and regional situations, to continue its serious efforts towards the consolidation of democracy;
4. Notes with satisfaction the implementation of a reform programme by Djibouti, and in that context appeals to all Governments, international financial institutions, the specialized agencies and non-governmental organizations to respond adequately to the financial and material needs of the country in line with the poverty reduction strategy paper;
5. Expresses its gratitude to the intergovernmental organizations and the specialized agencies of the United Nations for their contributions to the national rehabilitation of Djibouti, and invites them to continue their efforts;
6. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his continued efforts to make the international community aware of the difficulties faced by Djibouti, and welcomes his initiative to appoint a special envoy for humanitarian affairs for the Horn of Africa, with
the objective of mobilizing resources for relief support as well as sustainable development;

7. Requests the Secretary-General to continue, in close cooperation with the Government of Djibouti, his efforts to mobilize resources necessary for an effective programme of financial, technical and material assistance to Djibouti;

8. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session on the humanitarian situation of Djibouti and on the progress made with regard to economic assistance to Djibouti and the implementation of the present resolution.

African countries emerging from conflict

The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 2002/1 [YUN 2002, p. 919], created an ad hoc advisory group, at the request of any African country emerging from conflict, to assess humanitarian and economic needs and develop a programme of long-term support.

In 2003, an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi was established, while the Group on Guinea-Bissau, mandated by Council decision 2002/304 [YUN 2002, p. 920], continued its activities (see below).

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 24 July [meeting 47], the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2003/50 [draft: E/2003/L.124] without vote [agenda item 7 (b)].

Ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict

The Economic and Social Council, recalling its resolution 2002/1 of 15 July 2002 on the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict.

1. Reiterates the need to undertake an assessment of lessons learned based on the initial experience of such ad hoc advisory groups, no later than at its substantive session of 2004;

2. Stresses the need to assess also progress made in the implementation of recommendations made by the ad hoc advisory groups;

3. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on this subject to the Council at its substantive session of 2004.

Burundi

In 2003, the Economic and Social Council set up an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi to study and monitor the country’s economic and humanitarian situation with a view to post-conflict reconstruction, following Burundi’s request [E/2002/86] to do so.

(For information on the Security Council mission to Burundi in June, see p. 149.)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 21 July [meeting 43], the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2003/16 [draft: E/2003/L.34/Rev.1] without vote [agenda item 7 (b)].

Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi

The Economic and Social Council, recalling its resolution 2002/1 of 15 July 2002 on the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict, in which it decided to consider creating, at the request of any African country emerging from conflict, a limited but flexible and representative ad hoc advisory group at the ambassadorial level, in consultation with all regional groups and the national authorities of the country concerned, drawn from the membership of the Economic and Social Council and its observer States, including representation from the country concerned, and in so doing to take into account the need to include countries that could make a positive contribution to the objectives of such a group.

Recalling also its decision 2002/302 of 4 October 2002, in which it decided to entrust the President of the Economic and Social Council with the holding of consultations regarding the modalities for establishing an ad hoc advisory group on Guinea-Bissau, and its decision 2002/304 of 25 October 2002, in which it established that group,

Taking note of the letter dated 26 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Council, in which the authorities of Burundi requested the Council to set up an ad hoc advisory group on Burundi to study and assess the economic and humanitarian situation in that country, with a view to post-conflict reconstruction, in accordance with resolution 2002/1,

Taking note also of the report of the Security Council mission to Central Africa, which visited Burundi from 12 to 14 June 2003, in which the mission expressed its satisfaction as to the peaceful transfer of power in Burundi,

Conscious of the need for providing adequate budgetary and economic support to the transitional Government, given the risk that all gains achieved thus far could collapse if such assistance was not provided immediately,

Urging donor countries to fulfil the commitments that they made at the Paris and Geneva conferences on assistance to Burundi, and welcoming the convening of a donor round table organized by the Government of Burundi, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme, scheduled for September 2003,

1. Decides to establish the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi;

2. Also decides to entrust the President of the Economic and Social Council with the task of holding consultations and making recommendations, within the framework outlined in resolution 2002/1, on the composition, terms of reference and relevant modalities for the creation of the Advisory Group by the end of August 2003, so as to enable it to participate in the donor round table.

In August, the Council adopted decision 2003/311 [draft: E/2003/L.48] without vote [agenda item 7 (b)].

Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi

At its 50th plenary meeting, on 22 August 2003, the Economic and Social Council, recalling its resolution 2002/1 of 15 July 2002 on the establishment of an ad
Ad Hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict and resolution 2002/16 of 15 July 2002, by which it established the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi, decided:

(a) To appoint the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of Belgium, Burundi, Ethiopia, France, Japan and South Africa to the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi and to appoint the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations as Chairperson of the Group;

(b) That the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi would invite the participation in its work of the Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations, in his capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council, and the Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa;

(c) That the Ad Hoc Advisory Group would examine the humanitarian and economic needs of Burundi and review relevant programmes of support and prepare recommendations to the programme of support, based on Burundi’s development priorities, through the integration of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development into a comprehensive approach to peace and stability, as well as provide advice on how to ensure that the assistance of the international community was adequate, coherent, well-coordinated and effective and promoted synergy;

(d) To request the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi, taking into consideration the unique character and needs of the situation in Burundi, to submit a report on its recommendations to the Council by mid-January 2004.


Advisory Group activities. Following its first meeting on 11 September, the Group held a series of briefing sessions and meetings in New York with major UN and international interlocutors to discuss various aspects of development assistance to Burundi [E/2004/11]. From 19 to 26 November, the Group undertook a mission to Burundi to meet with government authorities, major socio-economic interlocutors, UN entities active on the ground and other development partners. During its visit, the Group observed a strong UN involvement regarding political support, humanitarian assistance, rural development, health and education.

Guinea-Bissau


During its visit, the Group participated in tripartite consultations between the Government, the UN system and the donor community. It drafted a discussion document containing an outline of a possible compact between the Government and the donor community, which was transmitted to the country’s President and annexed to the Group’s report. On its return from Guinea-Bissau, the Group gave an account of its impressions and continued consultations with key stakeholders, including with high-level UN officials and with the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank Group and IMF).

The Group recommended a partnership between the Government and the international community, based on common objectives and on a long-term development strategy. For short-term assistance, the Group recommended to the Economic and Social Council that the partnership be in the form of a compact, which could be based on the discussion document (see above). The proposed compact would have a high-level national steering committee to provide political oversight and monitoring of its performance, and a supporting operational committee composed of government representatives, the UN system and principal donors. It could have, as a central instrument, a temporary trust fund to address urgent short-term needs, to which the donor community could contribute $12 million to $15 million. Trust fund management could be linked to a set of policy benchmarks critical to improving economic and political governance and could include election planning and preparations, a time line for Supreme Court elections, a time line, strategy and process to clarify and promulgate the Constitution, and stability and continuity of the ministerial team. Further short-term recommendations were addressed to the UN system, the Bretton Woods institutions and the donor and international communities. Long-term recommendations to the Government included the promotion of political stability, the development of an economic diversification strategy and improved conditions for private sector activity. Further long-term recommendations were made to the Bretton Woods institutions, the UN system and the donor community.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION (January)


Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau

The Economic and Social Council, Recalling its resolution 2002/1 of 15 July 2002, in which it decided to consider creating, at the request of any African country emerging from conflict, an ad hoc
advisory group at the ambassadorial level, inter alia, to examine the economic and humanitarian situation of the country concerned, prepare recommendations for a long-term programme of support and provide advice on how to ensure that the assistance of the international community was adequate, coherent, well-coordinated and effective.


Recognizing the importance of respecting the sovereignty of Guinea-Bissau and its full participation in the implementation of the mandate of the Advisory Group,

Taking into account the current and specific circumstances prevailing in Guinea-Bissau and the urgent need to address the critical situation that persists in the country,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, welcomes the recommendations contained therein and endorses the partnership approach it sets out;

2. Invites the Government of Guinea-Bissau and, within their respective mandates, the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions, the donor community and the international community as a whole, to give full consideration to the recommendations formulated by the Advisory Group and to take specific and concrete steps to give effect to the partnership approach, with a view to addressing the short-term needs and implementing a long-term programme of support;

3. Decides to extend the mandate of the Advisory Group until the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council to be held in July 2003;

4. Also decides that the Advisory Group shall invite the participation in its work of the Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations, in his capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council for 2003, the Permanent Representative of the Gambia to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Group of Friends of Guinea-Bissau, and the Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chairperson of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa;

5. Requests the Secretary-General and the United Nations Development Group, as well as other relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, to continue to assist the Advisory Group in accomplishing its mandate, and invites the Bretton Woods institutions to continue to cooperate to that end;

6. Recognizes that the present resolution is specific to the situation prevailing in Guinea-Bissau and that future decisions and resolutions will continue to take into account the specific circumstances of any other African country emerging from conflict that requests the establishment of an ad hoc advisory group.

Further Group activities. By a 1 July letter [E/2003/95], South Africa, in its capacity as Chairman of the Advisory Group, transmitted a supplementary report updating the Group’s activities. The Group visited Guinea-Bissau from 26 to 28 June, jointly with the Security Council (see p. 226). The Group met with high-level government representatives, including the country’s President, and members of political parties and civil society organizations and NGOs, the private sector and religious leaders. It learned that the political, economic and social situation had deteriorated; donors were willing to assist Guinea-Bissau; and the electoral process was deadlocked. The elections, scheduled for July, were postponed to October. The Group recommended that the Economic and Social Council further appeal to donors to consider funding the elections.

An 18 September statement by the Group [E/2003/105] called on donors to consider extending emergency assistance for Guinea-Bissau to enable it to return to democratic rule following the resignation of its President. It hoped that the emergency assistance would improve the socio-economic conditions in the country.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION (July)

On 24 July [meeting 48], the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2003/53 [draft: E/2003/ L.25/Rev.1] without vote [agenda item 7 (h)].

Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 2002/1 of 15 July 2002, in which the Council decided to consider creating, at the request of any African country emerging from conflict, an ad hoc advisory group, and its decision 2002/304 of 25 October 2002, in which the Council decided to establish such a group on Guinea-Bissau,

Recalling also its resolution 2003/1 of 31 January 2003, in which the Council took note with appreciation of the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, welcomed its recommendations, endorsed the partnership approach it set out and decided to extend the mandate of the Advisory Group until the substantive session of the Council in July 2003,

1. Takes note with appreciation of the supplementary report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau, and welcomes the interaction and cooperation that has taken place between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council, within their respective mandates, on the situation in Guinea-Bissau;

2. Reiterates the need to foster a comprehensive approach to the problems faced by Guinea-Bissau in its post-conflict phase, in particular to prepare a long-term programme of support, based on its development priorities, through the integration of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development needs;
3. Reiterates its invitation to the Government of Guinea-Bissau, and, within their respective mandates, to the organizations of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, the donor community and the international community as a whole to give full consideration to the recommendations formulated by the Advisory Group and to take specific and concrete steps to give effect to the partnership approach that it set out, with a view to addressing the short-term needs and implementing a long-term programme of support;

4. Welcomes the progress made with the creation by the United Nations Development Programme of the Emergency Economic Management Fund, following the recommendations made by the Advisory Group in its report and the trust fund set up for the elections, and appeals to donor countries to contribute to these funds;

5. Decides to extend the mandate of the Advisory Group until the organizational session of the Economic and Social Council in January 2004, with the current membership, including those invited members, with the purpose of monitoring the implementation of its recommendations, following closely the humanitarian situation and economic and social conditions prevailing in the country and providing an assessment of its work through a report to be submitted to the Council;

6. Requests the Secretary-General, the United Nations Development Group, as well as other relevant United Nations funds, programmes and the specialized agencies to continue to assist the Advisory Group in accomplishing its mandate, and invites the Bretton Woods institutions to continue to cooperate to that end.

**Other economic assistance**

**Central America**

In response to General Assembly resolution 56/105 [YUN 2001, p. 854], the Secretary-General, in an August report [A/58/266], described the activities of UNDP and other UN system entities, during the period from August 2001 to December 2002, to implement a new sustainable development strategy in Central America. The region received support for consensus-building processes, the strengthening of democratic institutions, social vulnerability and poverty eradication, agricultural development, health and nutrition, public finance and economic growth, and the environment and sustainable development.

Non-reimbursable cooperation in the region had been reduced significantly over the past two years. Donor countries had targeted their work at the national level, focusing on some themes common to the region (see above). In order to cover their investment priorities, Central American countries were forced to increase their levels of debt. In addition, domestic resources for investment had declined considerably as a result of natural disasters and a crisis in the coffee sector. That had taken place against the background of a competitive international context and as Central American economies went through a process of economic restructuring.

The Secretary-General urged the international community to offer concessional support to reintegrate Central America into the world economy, and for its political and economic integration. The region required continuity in bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the priority areas of strengthening democracy and its institutions, and support to the dialogue and consultation process, and overcoming poverty throughout the region. Other priority areas were food security, health care and the promotion of sustainable development and the environment.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 17 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/117 [draft: A/58/L.42 & Add.1 without vote [agenda item 46 (b)].

**International assistance to and cooperation with the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America**

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming all relevant resolutions of the General Assembly that emphasize and acknowledge the importance of international, bilateral and multilateral economic, financial and technical support, cooperation and assistance given by the United Nations system, the international community and non-governmental organizations, which provide a framework for the provision of aid to the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America, in support of national efforts to make the region a zone of peace, freedom, democracy and development,

Noting that the Central American countries have achieved significant progress towards the consolidation of democracy and good governance, the strengthening of civilian Governments and respect for human rights and the rule of law, all as a tool for promoting sustainable development and regional integration, reflecting the desire of the Central American peoples to live and prosper in a climate of peace, solidarity and social justice,

Stressing the importance of the commitments, and their implementation, as undertaken by the regional summits and ministerial meetings, in particular in those areas included in the programme initiatives of the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America in the political, economic, social and ecological fields, which allow a progressive improvement in the quality of life of the people of the region,

Noting that the various natural phenomena which have affected the region are one of the factors that have put at risk the biodiversity of Central America,

Emphasizing that the progress made in complying with the commitments established in the programme of the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America creates the necessary conditions for implementing the policies for reducing the vulnerability of the region to natural disasters,
Noting that the framework of the Puebla-Panama Plan includes the Mesoamerican Initiative for the Prevention and Mitigation of Natural Disasters, as well as others that promote the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, and encompasses the strategy for the transformation and modernization of Central America in the twenty-first century, presented during the Regional Consultative Group meeting, held in Madrid on 8 and 9 March 2001, and the Strategy for the South-Southeast of Mexico,

Noting also the adoption in 2001 of the Regional Mechanism of Coordination of Mutual Assistance in Case of Disasters, as well as the successful work of the Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America and, in particular, its mandate to hold the Mitch +5 Regional Forum, and the Regional Programme for Risk Management in Central America of the Coordination Centre and the United Nations Development Programme,

Welcoming the adoption of the Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and Central America, which should result in the conclusion of future agreements strengthening the San José Dialogue process and expanding it to, inter alia, economic areas, migration and the campaign against international terrorism,

Recognizing the progress made in the elimination of anti-personnel mines from Central American territory, as well as the need to rehabilitate and reintegrate mine victims in their communities in order to restore normal conditions for the full development of the region,

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General;

2. Notes the significant reduction in the last two years of the non-reimbursable international assistance and cooperation extended to the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General;

3. Supports the decision of the Central American Governments to promote in a harmonious and balanced way the sustained economic, social, cultural, environmental and political development of its member States and the development of the region as a whole through programmes which help to consolidate democracy and resolve social inequalities and extreme poverty;

4. Reiterates the importance of supporting and strengthening the efforts of the Central American countries in the implementation of the Regional Mechanism of Coordination of Mutual Assistance in Case of Disasters and the Regional Plan for Disaster Reduction as well as the implementation of the Strategic Framework for the Reduction of Vulnerability and Disasters in Central America and, in particular, of taking measures for the prevention and mitigation of damage, with special emphasis on the most vulnerable groups and sectors;

5. Requests the Secretary-General, the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and all States, international financial institutions and regional and subregional organizations, as appropriate, to continue providing the support needed to attain the objectives of the programme for the sustainable development of Central America, including those which are being pursued within the framework of the Quinquennium for the Reduction of Vulnerability to and the Impact of Natural Disasters in Central America;

6. Notes with appreciation the revision of the subregional cooperation programme in Central America of the United Nations Development Programme, launched in 1996, and of the national programmes of other United Nations agencies and other humanitarian agencies on the basis of the priorities established in the regional development strategy for the transformation and modernization of Central America, contained in the initiatives of the Puebla-Panama Plan;

7. Encourages the Governments and disaster-related organizations of Central America to continue implementing the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in order to reduce the vulnerability to hazards, and urges the international community to contribute to these efforts, including, as appropriate, through cooperation and technical assistance;

8. Notes with satisfaction the renewal, in December 2002, of the commitment by the bilateral and the multilateral development organizations to the Meso-American Biological Corridor as one of the pillars for sustainable development comprising the conservation of natural resources, economic competitiveness and efforts to alleviate poverty, which is being developed with assistance from the United Nations Development Programme's own funds, the Global Environment Facility through the World Bank, the United Nations Environment Programme, the Inter-American Development Bank, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation and the United States Agency for International Development;

9. Recognizes the efforts and achievements relating to mine clearance in Central America, and calls upon the relevant organs of the United Nations system, the Organization of American States, as well as the international community, to continue providing the material, technical and financial support needed by the Central American Governments to complete mine clearance, mine-awareness and victim assistance activities in the region, in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction;

10. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-sixth session on the implementation of the present resolution as part of a consolidated report under the item entitled “The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development”.

Comoros

On 17 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/120 [draft: A/58/ L.45 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 40 (b)].

Special emergency economic assistance for the recovery and the development of the Comoros

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 51/30 F of 13 December 1996 and 55/1 F of 16 November 1998 on special emergency economic assistance to the Comoros,

Noting that since 1995, the Comoros has been subjected to several major events, including a secessionist
conflict, which created serious political instability and caused economic and social trauma.

Considering that the unfavourable and insular situation of the Comoros, which is among the least developed countries, the decline in the gross domestic product of the country caused by the fall in the prices of its export products, the poverty of its soil, the scarcity of its natural resources and the diminutive size of its domestic market have adverse economic consequences and increase the impoverishment of the population.

Aware of the efforts made by the Government of the Comoros to assist the most affected and deprived sectors of the population and to reallocate to that end, as a matter of great urgency, the major part of the budget required for the functioning of the State;

Welcomes the signing of the Fomboni Agreement of February 2001, which created prospects for a peaceful resolution of the separatist crisis;

Reaffirms its support for South Africa, the African Union, the International Organization of la Francophonie and other countries of the region in the mediation efforts to resolve the Comorian crisis;

Welcomes the recommendations contained in the statement signed by the Friends of the Comoros in Paris on 29 October 2003 and the declaration of the Indian Ocean Commission issued in Moroni on 30 October 2003;

Urges the Government of the Comoros and the governments of the autonomous islands to pursue the efforts under way, to accelerate the organization of legislative elections and to establish the remaining national institutions as stipulated by the Constitution;

Reaffirms that the primary responsibility for the well-being of the people and the development of the economy rests firmly with the Government of the Comoros and the governments of the autonomous islands;

Expresses its appreciation to all States and to all the international organizations concerned, including United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, for the assistance they have provided for the relief of the Comoros;

Stresses that the financial resources available remain nonetheless insufficient vis-à-vis the most basic needs for ensuring the humanitarian, economic and political recovery of the country;

Requests Member States, international organizations and other relevant organizations of the United Nations system, in the event of an agreement between the Comoros and the authorities of the autonomous islands, and while awaiting the finalization of the Fomboni Agreement by early 2004, to direct their financial and technical assistance towards assisting the most affected sectors of the population during and after the transition period, achieving reconstruction and sustainable development and enabling the country to re-engage with the international financial institutions;

Requests the Secretary-General to make efforts to mobilize Member States, relevant United Nations specialized agencies and other organizations in order to provide the Comoros with necessary financial, economic and technical assistance, particularly in debt forgiveness, in order to enable it to fully implement the Fomboni Agreement, particularly to organize legislative elections;

Also requests the Secretary-General, in collaboration with all relevant United Nations departments and specialized agencies, as well as international organizations already working in the Comoros, to gather relevant information and assess the needs of the country and the possible assistance from the international community;

Further requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

Haiti

In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/22 [YUN 2002, p. 922], the Secretary-General submitted an April report [E/2003/54] on progress achieved in implementing a long-term programme of support for Haiti. A governance support programme, covering the period from 2003 to 2006, was drawn up and approved by the Government in January, which aimed at facilitating cooperation among all partners contributing to improving governance. Its main objective was to support Haiti’s institutional normalization, build democratic institutions and strengthen governance. The programme also had a sustainable development component and dimensions relating to advocacy, public debates, the issue of parity and methods of drawing up strategies and policies. The UN system, together with bilateral and multilateral donors and NGOs, finalized an integrated humanitarian programme of assistance to vulnerable populations, which sought to strengthen medium- and long-term development efforts while supporting vulnerable populations to access essential services and vital commodities. The report also detailed progress made regarding Haiti’s report on the MDGs [YUN 2000, p. 51], assistance by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (see p. 1248), UNDP activities in the area of justice, the compilation of social data, such as living conditions, relief operations and activities to manage risks and calamities resulting from natural disasters, and a national plan of action on education for all.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 23 July [meeting 46], the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2003/46 [draft: E/2003/L.35] without vote [agenda item 7 (c)].

Long-term programme of support for Haiti

The Economic and Social Council,


Taking note of the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General,
Welcoming the efforts of the Organization of American States, including its Special Mission to Strengthen Democracy in Haiti, and of the Caribbean Community to mediate dialogue and promote reconciliation in order to strengthen the political environment in Haiti necessary for the promotion of economic and social development and the alleviation of poverty.

Welcoming also the report of the United Nations independent expert on the situation of human rights in Haiti, noting the statement by the Chairperson of the Committee on Human Rights at its fifty-ninth session, and further encouraging the work of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on Human Rights in this regard,

Noting the launching of the Integrated Emergency Response Programme: Targeting Vulnerable Groups and Communities in Haiti by the United Nations country team for Haiti on 22 April 2003,

1. Requests that the Secretary-General, in coordination with the United Nations resident coordinator in Haiti, report on progress achieved in implementing the long-term programme of support for Haiti and that the report be prepared for the Economic and Social Council on the basis of developments in Haiti;

2. Decides to include the item entitled “Long-term programme of support for Haiti” in the provisional agenda of its substantive session of 2004.

(For information regarding the human rights situation in Haiti, see p. 683.)

Timor-Leste

In response to General Assembly resolution 57/105 [YUN 2002, p. 921], the Secretary-General, in August [A/58/280], reported on the status of implementation of assistance for humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and development for Timor-Leste, covering the period from July 2002 to July 2003.

Recognizing that security and stability were a prerequisite for the rehabilitation and development of the country, the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor (see p. 370) and the UN system intensified efforts to address key institutional challenges of the National Police Force of Timor-Leste, while taking into account the national security and defence framework. Considerable progress was made in developing civil and criminal codes and a review of the justice system identified areas needing technical assistance and support from the international community in order to establish strategies to improve access to justice for Timorese citizens. On the civilian side, the administrative capacity of public servants was being strengthened through on-the-job training. A civil service act, targeting gender equality, was drafted. Progress was also made regarding rural and agricultural development, the delivery of health services and increasing access to primary and junior high school education, together with improving internal efficiency and reducing inequality. During the reporting period, much work was undertaken regarding gender-based violence, including domestic violence and sexual assault. Significant progress had been made in rehabilitating infrastructure, particularly in the power sector, water management and construction-related activities, and the telecommunications sector.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/121 [draft: A/58/L.46 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 40 (b)].

Assistance for humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and development for Timor-Leste

The General Assembly

Recalling all of its relevant resolutions on the situation in Timor-Leste,

Recalling also all of the relevant Security Council resolutions and decisions on the situation in Timor-Leste, in particular resolutions 1473(2003) of 4 April 2003 and 1480(2003) of 19 May 2003, acknowledging the ongoing crucial role of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor and the leadership of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in assisting the people of Timor-Leste,

Recognizing the essential role played by the international community, including the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations, Member States and non-governmental organizations, in supporting the nation-building process of Timor-Leste,

Acknowledging the progress made in the transition from relief and rehabilitation to development in Timor-Leste, while noting continuing vulnerabilities, including the need to strengthen the preparedness and response capacity of the Government of Timor-Leste for addressing humanitarian emergencies, and the significant challenges of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, in particular in the initial years of independence,

Emphasizing the need for continued international assistance to support the development of Timor-Leste in, inter alia, education, health, agriculture, infrastructure, judicial, public administration and law enforcement sectors,

Welcoming the efforts of the Government of Indonesia and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in providing humanitarian assistance to the refugees of Timor-Leste in the Indonesian province of East Nusa Tenggara, in facilitating their return to and reintegration in Timor-Leste or in assisting with their local integration and resettlement, as appropriate, in Indonesia,

1. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General;

2. Also welcomes the commitment of the international community to meet the external requirements for rehabilitation, reconstruction and development activities for Timor-Leste;

3. Urges the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations, Member States and non-governmental organizations to continue to support the Government and the people of Timor-Leste in their endeavours towards self-sustainable nation-building and in facing
the remaining vulnerabilities and challenges, such as nationwide capacity-building in all sectors, national reconciliation and the voluntary return of the remaining refugees to Timor-Leste, and sustainable development;

4. Acknowledges that a transparent, effective and functioning democratic governmental administration is crucial to fostering a stable and secure social, economic and political environment in Timor-Leste, and in this regard urges the international community to continue to support efforts aimed at institution-building and the training of civil servants, in particular in the areas of public finances and senior management and in the development and maintenance of central and local administrative systems of government;

5. Also acknowledges the need to expedite the development of the justice sector of Timor-Leste, and in this regard urges further international support in the areas of law enforcement, the judiciary and the prison system;

6. Welcomes the continuing response of the international community to the need for food aid, and calls upon the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations, Member States and non-governmental organizations to assist Timor-Leste in ensuring sustainable development in the areas of agriculture, livestock and fisheries;

7. Welcomes with appreciation the assistance provided by Member States, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the World Food Programme and all other international and non-governmental organizations in response to the appeals by the Government of Timor-Leste during the floods and drought. These include the assistance for the rehabilitation of public buildings, educational facilities, roads and public services.

8. Takes note with appreciation of the progress made in rehabilitating infrastructure, and recommends that outstanding infrastructure needs remain a focus of international assistance in such areas as the reconstruction and rehabilitation of public buildings, educational facilities, roads and public services.

9. Commends the continuous international response in providing health services to the general population, including the early deployment of immunization and disease prevention programmes and reproductive health-care and child nutrition programmes, while recognizing the need for further assistance to rebuild hospitals, train health-care professionals and enhance capacity-building to meet the challenges to public health posed by such diseases as tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS;

10. Welcomes the progress made in the rehabilitation of schools, the supply and distribution of educational materials and teacher training, while emphasizing the need for capacity-building, particularly in the areas of secondary and higher education, and for continued attention to the rehabilitation needs, including psychosocial support, of children affected by violence;

11. Also welcomes the growing participation of the women of Timor-Leste in all aspects of society, and encourages further efforts to address gender issues, including the needs for research, services and appropriate legislation in order to combat domestic violence and other gender-related crimes;

12. Further welcomes the continuing efforts made by the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation to facilitate national reconciliation and the return of refugees to Timor-Leste;

13. Welcomes the commitment and contribution made by the Government of Indonesia and by the international community to the Special Fund established for former employees and pensioners of the Government of Indonesia in Timor-Leste and the progress made by the United Nations Development Programme in disbursing funds from the Special Fund, and encourages the international community to consider increasing its contributions;

14. Also welcomes the holding, in Dili in September 2003, of the second meeting of the Joint Ministerial Commission for Bilateral Cooperation between Indonesia and Timor-Leste, which emphasized the importance of good relations and of further enhancing and facilitating cooperation in all areas of common interest;

15. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly for consideration at its sixty-sixth session.

Third States affected by sanctions

In response to General Assembly resolution 56/110 [YUN 2001, p. 857], the Secretary-General submitted a September report [A/58/358 & Corr.1] on economic problems confronting the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans, particularly their impact on regional trade and economic relations and on navigation along the Danube and the Adriatic Sea. The report summarized information received from 10 Governments, 8 specialized agencies and various relevant international organizations and concerned regional bodies.

Disaster relief

In 2003, 700 natural events resulted in 75,000 deaths and economic losses of more than $65 billion. One third of the deaths resulted from the Bam earthquake in Iran, which killed 26,000 people (see p. 902). Other types of disasters, such as floods, cyclones and droughts, occurred in vulnerable countries and regions.

In Africa, more than two thirds of the population of Eritrea were exposed to the risk of famine during 2003, following the severe drought of 2002. Successive climatic shocks and their cumulative effects had made some 13 million people in Ethiopia dependent on emergency food aid and on non-food assistance. During the year, Guinea was subjected to a substantial deficit in rainfall in the north-west, a flash flood along the Guinea-Bissau border and a series of bush fires in Forest Guinea and in the Sahel region bordering Mali.
The Southern Africa region was prone to a variety of natural disasters, including drought, floods and cyclones. A severe drought in 2002 and 2003 endangered the lives of 14.4 million people in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Severe drought and perennial flooding affected Somalia. Drought and floods in parts of the Sudan affected over 800,000 people.

Natural disasters were a major cause of severe economic distress for the Pacific region. In 2003, OCHA responded to 24 natural disasters (13 floods/landslides, seven typhoons/storms, two earthquakes, two extremes of temperature). The year began with Cyclone Zoë in Solomon Islands, and Cyclone Ami, which caused far greater losses across Eastern Fiji. Two additional cyclones struck Solomon Islands and another hit New Caledonia. Heavy rain caused a series of landslides in Papua New Guinea, and American Samoa also suffered a disastrous landslide. Meanwhile, Timor-Leste experienced drought and floods through the wet and the dry seasons, respectively.

In Asia, torrential rains led to the most serious flooding and landslides in Sri Lanka since 1947. Severe and continual rainfall that began in late June led to flooding in several provinces of China, affecting 130 million people and resulting in the evacuation of more than 5 million people from their homes and the death of more than 800 persons. Viet Nam suffered serious floods in October for the fifth year in a row.

In May, earthquakes occurred in Algeria and Turkey.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, OCHA assisted the Dominican Republic to cope with floods in November; Mexico with an earthquake in January; and Peru with floods in January.

Excluding contributions in kind and services not costed, OCHA contributions for natural disaster assistance totalled $104.5 million.

International cooperation

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 57/152 (YUN 2002, p. 955), the Secretary-General, in an October report (A/58/434), highlighted key activities undertaken in response to natural disasters and described initiatives to strengthen disaster management at the national and regional levels. The report also provided information on the funding trends for natural disaster response.

The report concluded that it was crucial for the international community to collaborate with vulnerable countries and regions to ensure optimal use of available disaster management tools and initiatives. Member States in disaster-prone regions were encouraged to familiarize themselves with the guidelines of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group to ensure a coordinated, rapid response of international urban search-and-rescue teams in the event of a sudden disaster. The United Nations Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination system continued to be a valuable tool through which disaster management expertise was made available by Member States to respond to sudden emergencies. The system was deploying an increasing number of personnel from disaster-prone regions, although its membership needed to be expanded to Africa. A more precise understanding was also needed of the impact of funding levels on natural disaster response, as it was not clear if adequate support was being provided to address capacity-building and post-disaster recovery needs.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 5 December [meeting 69], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/25 [draft: A/58/L.34 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 40 (a)].

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 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,

Underscoring 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” and “Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”;

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 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 Government 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 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 posi-
tioning 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 sub-regional 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. Requests 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 advisors and disaster reduction advisors 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;

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 effective use of national emergency response agencies, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session.

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

In response to General Assembly resolution 57/256 [YUN 2002, p. 928], the Secretary-General, in an August report [A/58/277], described UN activities to implement the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), which was adopted by the programme forum of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990-2000) in 1999 [YUN 1999, p. 839] and endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 54/219 [ibid, p. 841]. The Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and the ISDR secretariat served as the main mechanisms for the Strategy’s implementation by the UN system.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation [YUN 2002, p. 822], adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, included commitments relating to disaster and vulnerability reduction and improved early warning. Some of the partnerships launched at the Summit in the area of early warning and disaster preparedness, involving ISDR, led to the convening of the Second International Conference on Early Warning (Bonn, Germany, October), in order to consolidate a global programme to integrate early warning into public policies. The partnership for integrating prevention of, preparedness for and response to environmental emergencies in support of sustainable development, led by OCHA and the United Nations Environment Programme, used existing resources and distributed responsibilities and efforts among partners and key stakeholders. Other partnerships were led by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Meteorological Organization and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

A review of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, which had met seven times since 2000, concluded that it represented an essential process for enabling the international community to develop a better understanding of and strategic direction on disaster reduction as a long-term undertaking. However, the review also identified a number of weaknesses and shortcomings. At its seventh meeting, in April, the Task Force discussed the nature and prospective role of its working groups, and the appropriate balance between its own role as an international
forum for discussion and the need to produce tangible guidelines and results-oriented products. Its 2004 work programme included 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.

The Task Force and the ISDR secretariat initiated the 10-year review of the Yokohama Strategy for a Safer World: Guidelines for Natural Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Mitigation and its Plan of Action [YUN 1994, p. 851] to examine progress made to implement disaster reduction, identify gaps and prepare recommendations to guide Member States. The Task Force welcomed Japan’s offer to host the 2005 Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, which was expected to discuss and adopt a set of principles and substantive activities for 2005-2015. A series of regional and thematic consultations regarding achievements and shortcomings in disaster reduction were held. The first regional consultation was convened in Asia and hosted by the Government of Japan (Hyogo Prefecture, January). The South Pacific island States discussed achievements, shortcomings and requirements for the future (Fiji, May), as did the Euro-Mediterranean Forum on Disaster Reduction (Madrid, Spain, October). Progress was made in engaging additional partner organizations to improve implementation of ISDR, including agreements reached on issues such as urban risk through 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 through the International Research Institute for Climate Prediction; and support for public awareness, education and policy integration for disaster risk reduction with the Central American Centre for Coordination of Natural Disaster Prevention. The ISDR secretariat participated in the steering committee of the International Consortium on Landslides and continued to collaborate with the ProVent Consortium, a project-oriented global coalition and flexible network of Governments, international organizations, academic institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations. The Strategy’s regional outreach programmes operated in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Pacific. Other activities that contributed to the implementation of ISDR focused on capacity-building, public awareness, advocacy and guidelines, urban risk, water-related disasters and solutions, and space applications and telecommunications.

The Secretary-General recommended that Member States and international organizations ensure that development plans and poverty reduction strategies included disaster risk assessment as an integral component, and increase their investments to reduce risk and vulnerability. He proposed strengthening the Strategy secretariat by providing it with a more stable and predictable financial base.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 23 December [meeting 78], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee [A/58/484/Add.5], adopted resolution 58/214 without vote [agenda item 94 (6)].

**International Strategy for Disaster Reduction**

The General Assembly,


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

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,

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,

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 activi-
ties 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;

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, 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;

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

(c) To share best practices and lessons learned to further disaster reduction within the context of achieving 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;

(f) 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;

(g) To improve the participation of the private sector and civil society in all phases of disaster risk management;

(h) To ensure the participation of children and young people in all phases of risk management;

(i) To foster the role of women in all phases of disaster risk management;

(j) To promote the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and its Plan of Action;

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;

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, and 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.
ence 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;

10. 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;

10. 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”.

On 23 December [meeting 78], the Assembly, also on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/58/484/Add.5], adopted resolution 58/215 without vote [agenda item 94 (e)].

Natural disasters and vulnerability

The General Assembly,

Recalling its decision 57/547 of 20 December 2002,

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

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 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, 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 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 Change and the parties to the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 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”.

Also on 23 December, the Assembly decided that the sub-item on ISDR would remain for consideration at its resumed fifty-eighth (2004) session (decision 58/565).

**Disaster assistance**

**Ethiopia**

In response to General Assembly resolution 57/149 [YUN 2002, p. 931], the Secretary-General, in an August report [A/58/224], reviewed the political, economic and humanitarian situation in Ethiopia and the assistance provided by the United Nations and its partners.

The report said that Ethiopia was subject to drastic weather patterns, with cyclical periods of drought and heavy rain. The rains, combined with an already weakened population, were creating an environment conducive to the spread of infectious diseases, including water-borne diseases and malaria. Certain areas and large population segments were immediately affected by more severe poverty as soon as harvests were endangered by inadequate rainfall patterns. Despite high levels of emergency assistance, the number of people defined as chronically food-insecure was growing yearly, as a result of inadequate development assistance over the preceding decade. A new approach was required to separate chronic and acute food insecurity, and immediate and substantial action was needed to prevent further deterioration. Special emphasis should be placed on improving nutritional capacity to meet emerging needs, emergency water activities and vaccination campaigns. The outlook for 2004 was difficult to anticipate before the “belg” (cropping season) assessment in November/December, but it was expected that relief needs would continue to grow. A robust rehabilitation strategy for pastoral and agricultural areas and a greater focus on resettlement and policy issues affecting development were critical in alleviating the impact of future droughts.

The joint Government-UN appeal “Emergency Assistance Requirements and Implementation Options for 2003,” a March update, referred to as the “Addendum,” and the appeal update of August identified 11.3 million people in need of 1.4 million tons of food and an additional 3 million at risk. Against the total relief food requirements of 1.8 million tons, 94 per cent was covered by the end of October. Against $108 million required for non-food, about 70 per cent was covered. Revised non-food needs to the end of the year of some $40.4 million were largely unfunded by the end of October, with the exception of support for malaria control.

**General Assembly action**

On 5 December [meeting 69], the General Assembly adopted resolution 55/24 [draft: A/58/1.22 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 40 (b)].

**Emergency humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia**

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 57/149 of 16 December 2002 on emergency humanitarian assistance to Ethiopia,

Noting with concern the recurrent drought that affects Ethiopia, and its consequences,

Recalling the initiatives of the Secretary-General to improve food security, including the appointment of the Special Envoy for the Humanitarian Crisis in the Horn of Africa,

Gravely concerned at the magnitude of the recurrent drought, which affects millions owing to the serious crop failures in drought-prone parts of the country that have weak infrastructures and low development capacities,

Bearing in mind the joint 2004 appeal of the United Nations and the Government of Ethiopia for emergency assistance for Ethiopia, to respond to the food and non-food requirements of households in need so as to prevent the worsening of the current humanitarian crisis,

Noting with serious concern the significant and persistent humanitarian needs in such areas as health, water and acute malnutrition that still exist in parts of the country,

Noting also with serious concern the dire humanitarian situation and its long-term socio-economic and environmental impacts,
Emphasizing the need to address the crisis, bearing in mind the importance of the transition from relief to development, and acknowledging the underlying structural causes of recurrent drought in Ethiopia,

Recognizing that the main responsibility for improving the humanitarian situation and creating conditions for long-term development lies with the Government of Ethiopia, while bearing in mind the important role played by the international community,

Emphasizing the importance of establishing a strong early warning system in order to predict better and respond as early as possible to disasters and to minimize their consequences,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General;
2. Welcomes the coordinated and collaborative efforts of the Government of Ethiopia, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, the donor community, non-governmental organizations and other entities to avert, through their timely and generous response, a major humanitarian crisis in Ethiopia in 2003;
3. Calls upon the international community to respond in a timely manner to the joint 2004 appeal of the United Nations and the Government of Ethiopia for emergency assistance for Ethiopia, covering food and non-food needs, as well as to the urgent needs of programme interventions for 2004, aimed at addressing the underlying causes of food insecurity, and issues of recovery, asset protection and the sustainable development of the affected areas;
4. Welcomes the programme prepared by the Coalition for Food Security in Ethiopia, and encourages the international community to support the Coalition in realizing its main objective, namely, breaking the cycle of food aid dependency within the next three to five years, thereby enabling fifteen million vulnerable people to engage in sustainable productive activities;
5. Also welcomes the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia, the international community and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to strengthen mechanisms already in place to respond to such emergency situations, and appreciates their endeavours to increase the availability of food through domestic production and to ensure the access of households in need to food, health and water facilities;
6. Further welcomes the initiative taken by the Secretary-General in appointing a Special Envoy for the Humanitarian Crisis in the Horn of Africa, with the objective of mobilizing resources for relief support as well as the sustainable development of the affected areas;
7. Invites the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to continue considering ways to enhance the mobilization of emergency relief assistance to cover the remaining humanitarian needs in Ethiopia;
8. Calls upon all development partners to integrate relief efforts with recovery, asset protection and long-term development and to address the underlying structural causes of recurrent drought in Ethiopia in a way that is, inter alia, in line with the poverty reduction strategy paper, including strategies that are aimed at preventing such crises in the future and that improve the resilience of the population;
9. Encourages the Government of Ethiopia to further strengthen its efforts to address the underlying structural causes of recurrent threats of drought as part of its overall economic development programme;
10. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

Iran

On 26 December, an earthquake measuring 6.5 on the Richter scale struck the city of Bam and its surrounding villages in Kerman province in south-eastern Iran, killing some 26,000 people and rendering 75,000 people homeless. It also severely damaged or destroyed about 85 per cent of the houses, commercial units, health facilities and administrative buildings in Bam and surrounding villages, including the 2,500-year-old historic citadel of Bam. The Iranian Red Crescent Society launched a massive rescue and relief operation, which was supported by the international community. Within hours of the disaster, the United Nations dispatched its Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team, which, with UN agencies, mobilized relief items and technical support. The UN resident coordinator initiated the preparation of a Flash Appeal in December, with the support of the UN country team and OCHA.

Chernobyl aftermath

In response to General Assembly resolution 56/109 [YUN 2001, p. 870], the Secretary-General, in an August report [A/58/332], described international efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident [YUN 1986, p. 584].

The report of the multidisciplinary international inter-agency mission [YUN 2001, p. 869], which studied the consequences of Chernobyl 15 years after the accident, was launched under the title “The Human Consequences of the Chernobyl Nuclear Accident: A Strategy for Recovery”. The report made several recommendations for recovery and sustainable development. In order to promote the new strategy for recovery with government agencies and international donors, and to help initiate the implementation of its recommendations, the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl visited the region. At the field level, concrete actions were taken by the UN country teams in the three most affected countries—Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The disbursement of seed money from the United Nations Chernobyl Trust Fund was authorized for three pilot projects, prepared by the country teams in the affected countries, which aimed to support socio-economic rehabilitation and to improve people’s health. Another recommendation of the
report was implemented with the launch, in June, of the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network, to support ongoing international, national and civil society efforts for the sustainable development of the affected regions by compiling, consolidating and coordinating scientific research, commissioning further research, and ensuring its effective dissemination to all stakeholders.

The United Nations saw the need to energize work with donors to secure more systematic support and focused on a number of modalities for approaching them. UN programmes aimed at addressing the consequences of the disaster had been chronically underfunded for many years, and because of the constraints felt by some donors, Chernobyl fell into a budgetary gap. Substantial resources were needed to sustain the international community’s recent initiatives. Annexed to the report were accounts by the Governments of the three most affected States regarding their efforts to overcome the consequences of the catastrophe.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly adopted resolution 58/119 (draft: A/58/L.44 & Add.1) without vote (agenda item 40 (c)).

**Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster**

**The General Assembly,**


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 Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme.
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. 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 catas-