



Chairman: Mr. Carlos GIAMBRUNO
(Uruguay).

AGENDA ITEM 61

Assistance in cases of natural disaster and other disaster situations: report of the Secretary-General (A/8703, chap. XV, sect. C; A/8854, A/C.3/L.1974)

1. Mr. BERKOL (Disaster Relief Co-ordinator) introduced the first report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Disaster Relief Office (A/8854). Since the preparation of the report, relief had been provided to a number of other countries where disasters had occurred. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI), the Secretary-General had authorized an allocation of funds for assistance to be sent to the victims of the earthquake in northern Pakistan in September, and for vaccine, according to the specifications provided by FAO, to be flown to the Philippines to arrest an epidemic of foot-and-mouth disease which had broken out in October 1972. That same month, the Government of Fiji had appealed for assistance following a hurricane which had also caused extensive damage in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. Allocations had been made by the Secretary-General in both cases. In Afghanistan in September and October the prolonged drought had led to acute famine conditions in certain areas; important assistance had already been rendered from bilateral and multilateral sources and the Disaster Relief Office had been asked to arrange for the purchase of 10 lorries for the distribution of food supplies. In addition, two requests for assistance were being examined, one from Democratic Yemen, which had suffered storms and floods, and the other from Somalia, where a hurricane had struck in November.

2. During the period since the report before the Committee had been drafted, he had had conversations with several more donor Governments and was continuing to compile an information bank on the assistance available. He had also had the honour of being received by His Holiness Pope Paul VI, who had expressed his satisfaction at the fact that the United Nations was extending its activities in the field of disaster relief and had assured him of the fullest support for the Secretary-General in that endeavour.

3. During the same period, steps had been taken to strengthen the relations of the Disaster Relief Office with a number of international and non-governmental organizations. To begin with, the international organizations had been approached one by one in order to

explore more deeply the areas in which co-operation would be possible. The time had come, however, to consider a more general approach and he hoped that early in 1973 it would be possible to arrange a meeting with the United Nations bodies most directly concerned, in order to exchange information on the working procedures and to define more clearly the role of each. Meanwhile, the clearing house and information centre which was being set up would have started to operate. As his Office was not yet installed in its permanent premises in the Palais des Nations at Geneva, it had not been possible for the centre to start operating, but the move to permanent premises would take place in the near future and the Office would then be able to play its full co-ordinating role.

4. With regard to the financing of the Office of the Co-ordinator, in paragraph 9 of his report the Secretary-General proposed that the arrangement whereby Governments could be given assistance in the elaboration of their preparedness plans, and such assistance could be paid for by using any unspent balance of the \$200,000 which he was authorized to advance each year from the Working Capital Fund for emergency assistance, should be maintained. It seemed, however, that some delegations thought that it would be more appropriate to provide funds on a recurring basis; a modest provision of \$25,000 was envisaged for 1973. He hoped that the Committee would be prepared to make such a recommendation, for otherwise there would be no means of fulfilling that part of his responsibilities under General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI). Permanent arrangements for the financing of those activities would have to be worked out later.

5. Secondly, the General Assembly was being asked in the revised budget estimates for 1973 for funds to cover the cost of a limited increase in the staff of the Office. Without those few extra posts, it would not really be possible to undertake the tasks placed upon the Office by the General Assembly. He assured the Committee, however, that he would see to it that the Office was kept small and streamlined and that strict economy would be practised. He pointed out that the amounts which were being requested were small indeed in relation to the need for action of that kind.

6. In conclusion, he said that he would greatly value any advice that Member States might care to give him to ensure that the Office, which was only just starting to operate, would perform the kind of work intended by the sponsors of the text adopted as resolution 2816 (XXVI) and all the other States which, since the adoption of the resolution, had shown their interest and

given their support for that new United Nations activity.

7. The CHAIRMAN announced that Austria, Belgium, Egypt, Iceland, Jamaica, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and the Syrian Arab Republic had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1974.

8. Mr. REYES (Philippines) said that nature had decreed that his country, which the previous year had helped to establish the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator's Office, should be the first major proving ground of the Office when it had suffered flood disasters in July and August 1972. Paragraph 16 of the Secretary-General's report (A/8854) gave some idea of the extent of the disaster, which had caused damage to a value of hundreds of millions of dollars, had cost more than 600 lives, had left 2.2 million people homeless and had set back the national development efforts by three to five years. The Government and people of the Philippines were profoundly grateful for the generous assistance they had received from many countries, with some of which, such as the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union, it had not yet established diplomatic relations. It was also grateful to the United States, which had provided a helicopter airlift service, Japan, Australia and all the other donor countries, as also the numerous organizations which had made contributions, chief among them the International Red Cross. In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 1704 (LIII), which asked United Nations organizations to do their utmost to assist the Philippine Government, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, in particular, had provided considerable assistance. The Administrator of UNDP had complied with the Council's request and was considering modifications in the Philippine country programme made necessary by the flood disaster. UNDP would have an important role to play in the realization of all the reconstruction projects that fell within its competence. Lastly, the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator had already informed the Committee of the technical role played by FAO in the provision of vaccine in the early stages of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in the wake of the flood disaster.

9. Drawing attention to the role played by the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator in connexion with the disaster, he said that not only had the Co-ordinator made available to the Philippine Government, without delay, the \$20,000 at his disposal and later other funds—for he had been given \$70,000 for the purchase of medical supplies and in response to his direct appeal for aid he had received contributions from five countries—but the way in which he had performed his function as Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, in a situation of exceptional severity, had demonstrated the unquestionable usefulness of the tasks entrusted to him by the General Assembly. The smooth co-ordination of assistance, both at Geneva and in the Philippines, showed that good working relations had been established with the various United Nations agencies and with the donor countries. The UNDP Resident Representative, too, had played an effective role at the local level and those efforts had been supported by a high degree of organization on the part of the Philippine Government.

10. His Government was grateful to the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator for the intelligence, efficiency and compassion with which he had carried out his functions at the time of the disaster. It was prepared to support the recommendation for an allocation of \$25,000 to be used to assist Governments to make national plans for preparedness. It also supported the request for a limited increase in the small staff of the Co-ordinator's Office. Those were modest recommendations to meet real needs; his delegation hoped that they would find general acceptance in the Committee.

11. Miss FAROUK (Tunisia), introducing draft resolution A/C.3/L.1974 on behalf of its sponsors, said that the introductory statement made by the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and the statement by the representative of the Philippines facilitated her task considerably. Indeed, it emerged that, on the occasion of the disaster which had struck the Philippines in July and August 1972, the Disaster Relief Office had been in a position to provide very prompt and effective assistance and to ensure co-ordination, thus avoiding overlapping with the activities of other United Nations bodies.

12. The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1974 were countries which had initiated the process that had culminated in the establishment of the Office or which had subsequently associated themselves with that process in recognition of the need for such an Office, as well as countries which had themselves suffered disasters and had received assistance through the United Nations before, and particularly since, the establishment of the Office.

13. The Secretary-General's report on the item, which was remarkably concise, gave an idea of the way in which the Co-ordinator and his staff had carried out the heavy duties entrusted to them by virtue of General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI). During its first year of existence, the Office had already established close working relations with donor Governments and organizations, had made preparations to meet certain disasters and had ensured the adequate co-ordination of relief operations. In the circumstances, it was hardly surprising that a large number of countries had been anxious to reaffirm—within the framework of the draft resolution they were presenting to the Committee—the importance of preventive measures and of disaster contingency planning and to give the Co-ordinator the opportunity to continue exploring ways of strengthening and developing national contingency plans and machinery for disaster relief co-ordination. The funds requested for that purpose were necessary, as they could not currently be charged to any source, but they were very modest and well below real needs. The sponsors hoped that very few countries would raise financial objections to a proposal of that nature. However, they would be interested to hear the views of delegations on that matter.

14. Speaking on behalf of her country, she said that her Government had been able to appreciate the rare negotiating qualities and the great generosity of the Co-ordinator when he had been the Turkish Ambas-

sador in Tunisia. There was every reason to welcome the fact that he had been chosen to act as Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, a role whose scope was out of proportion to the means placed at his disposal.

15. The sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1974 laid special stress on the extremely reasonable nature of the proposals contained in that draft and on the fact that the Co-ordinator would rigorously manage the funds placed at his disposal: the Co-ordinator himself, in his statement, had undertaken to avoid over-staffing his office and had mentioned the urgent need for economy and efficiency. The funds in question represented a minimum amount, and they should be granted to him so that his Office could devote the greatest possible attention to the question of warning systems, preventive measures and disaster preparedness, and make full use of scientific knowledge and modern resources, so that, while means of destruction were being perfected, the contemporary world would also be one in which men were organizing themselves to halt destruction, one in which men's wills were united in the effort to spare human life and where thought gave birth to organization and preparedness to triumph over the blind forces of nature.

16. Mrs. LAFONTANT (United States of America) said that the Co-ordinator was correct in giving priority attention to developing practical working arrangements with Governments, organizations within the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations and others outside the United Nations system. She was pleased to note that the response to the Co-ordinator's consultations had been uniformly positive.

17. Her country had always attached importance to disaster preparedness and pre-disaster planning and it supported the Co-ordinator's proposal to undertake a review of disaster preparedness arrangements, and of the implementation of the provisions of his mandate.

18. She informed the Co-ordinator that he could rely on her Government's support in the performance of his task. She complimented him on his action to deal with so many disaster situations during the period under review and for having provided timely assistance to Mauritius, Madagascar, Peru, Haiti and the Philippines. Her delegation attached considerable importance to that kind of effort and hoped that the Co-ordinator would prepare an annual summary of his activities, including a description of each disaster for which his Office had provided aid; she emphasized that the summary should indicate the contributions and expenditures for each disaster. Her delegation would also appreciate a financial report covering the whole range of the Co-ordinator's activities during each financial year.

19. Lady ELLES (United Kingdom) said that it was most appropriate, in view of the human suffering that accompanied any disaster, that an Office should have been set up to co-ordinate relief. Such an Office could provide invaluable aid under the direction of the Co-ordinator: in particular, it could draw up and classify information on what help could be provided and by

whom in cases of disaster and, once a disaster had struck, it could rapidly alleviate hardship. Lastly, it could encourage Governments to plan in advance for possible disasters, since it was an unfortunate fact that some countries were disaster-prone.

20. With regard to the financing of such activities, her delegation endorsed the idea contained in General Assembly resolution 2435 (XXIII) to the effect that if, in any year, the authorized amount to be drawn from the Working Capital Fund—\$200,000 for 1973—was not used up, the balance might be spent in the following year on pre-disaster planning, with no more than \$10,000 going to any one country. Pre-disaster planning was essentially the responsibility of Governments; if they required United Nations funds for that purpose, they should apply for them in their country programming applications to UNDP. However, some countries might not have the opportunity to present such requests for a year or two, and for that reason her delegation would have been prepared to see an extension of the idea expressed in resolution 2435 (XXIII) for a period of perhaps three years.

21. It appeared, however, that that solution had not been contemplated by the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1974, since they proposed to authorize the Secretary-General to draw on the Working Capital Fund in the amount of \$25,000 for the elaboration of national preparation to meet natural disasters, a proposal which would have been more acceptable if it had been made clear that no money had been available from the \$200,000 for pre-disaster planning in 1973. But it appeared that the sponsors did not envisage that measure as an exceptional one but as the first of what might turn out to be regular annual payments. Her Government could not accept that principle, which would have the effect, on the one hand, of reducing other possible advances from the Working Capital Fund and, on the other, of establishing in effect a separate fund for activities related to development. She hoped that the sponsors would not insist that the draft be voted upon in its current form. She was sure that a more acceptable formula could be found and she hoped that more explicit mention would be made in the draft resolution of pre-disaster planning and its relationship to UNDP technical assistance.

22. She emphasized that the preceding remarks were in no way a reflection on the work of the Co-ordinator or of his Office, which her delegation fully supported. She also thanked him on behalf of the United Kingdom Government and of the Governor of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands for his help to the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Hurricane Relief Fund. She hoped that the staff of the Disaster Relief Office would soon be brought up to full strength, and said that that was the particular responsibility of the Fifth Committee.

23. Mr. ARVESEN (Norway) stated that for several years his Government had been convinced of the need to enable United Nations agencies to provide quick, co-ordinated, effective and, he hoped, adequate assistance to the Governments and peoples of countries

in disaster situations. It therefore welcomed the adoption the previous year, by an overwhelming majority, of General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI). It was particularly pleased at the way in which the Co-ordinator—who had visited Oslo in September 1972 to discuss various matters relating to the efficient co-ordination of future relief efforts—had approached the task entrusted to him.

24. The Norwegian authorities were pleased that the Co-ordinator had given priority to the establishment of working arrangements with the United Nations agencies and with the non-governmental organizations already active in the field of disaster relief. With regard to the future work of the Co-ordinator, his Government attached great importance to the interpretation given to the expression "other disaster situations", which appeared in resolution 2816 (XXVI). It shared the view of the United Nations Legal Counsel that the Co-ordinator's mandate, and consequently also his responsibilities, covered disaster situations caused by war or civil disturbance, i.e., the so-called man-made disasters.

25. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General (A/8854), he stated, with regard to paragraph 7, that his country attached great importance to pre-disaster planning. It therefore welcomed the efforts currently being undertaken by the Co-ordinator in that field.

26. His delegation endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal in paragraph 9 of the report to authorize the use, for assistance to Governments, of the balance from the Working Capital Fund to the extent that it did not prove necessary in any one year to make advances up to the amount of \$200,000 provided for emergency assistance under paragraph 10 of resolution 2816 (XXVI). It was also in favour of the limited increase in the staff of the Office of the Co-ordinator envisaged in paragraph 18.

27. In the opinion of his Government, the main task of the Office of the Co-ordinator was not to function as an executive organ but rather to become a true co-ordinating unit for international relief assistance in cases of natural disaster and other disaster situations.

28. Norway wished its name to be added to the list of sponsors of the draft resolution before the Committee.

29. Mr. AKYAMAÇ (Turkey) said his Government had no doubt that under the extremely competent direction of the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, the Office would play an important and useful role in the event of natural or other disasters. Both the Office and the Co-ordinator could count on the full support of the Turkish Government.

30. Although the Office had only recently been established and did not yet have a full staff—in that connexion, his delegation had no objection to the limited increase in staff referred to in paragraph 18 of the report—the Co-ordinator had been able to establish working arrangements with other United Nations bodies and

organizations concerned with disasters. He had also established contacts with a number of donor countries who were to be congratulated on their positive attitude.

31. He welcomed the establishment of close co-operation with disaster-prone countries for the purpose of strengthening and developing contingency plans and machinery for the co-ordination of assistance; the contacts established for that purpose would be of benefit to all concerned. Indeed, while the Co-ordinator could assist countries to establish effective machinery, they could supply him with information which would be of assistance in completing the organization of his own Office.

32. In recent years, Turkey had been the victim of numerous earthquakes. In the light of the experience gained, the Government was currently taking measures to set up a standing committee for disaster relief preparedness. Any expert advice which the Co-ordinator's Office could provide in that respect to disaster-prone countries would be of immense value.

33. His delegation had been greatly impressed by the assistance which the Office had already provided to numerous countries. Such direct assistance was, admittedly, modest but it was commensurate with the resources available. He hoped that the funds available to the Co-ordinator would be increased as soon as possible. Meanwhile, his delegation whole-heartedly endorsed the Secretary-General's proposal to the effect that any unused balance of the funds provided under resolution 2435 (XXIII) for emergency relief be made available to the Co-ordinator in the following year. The efficacy of that type of funding was, however, somewhat doubtful in view of the possibility that the entire \$200,000 in question might be expended during the year. Under such conditions, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, for the Co-ordinator to programme his activities relating to pre-disaster preparedness. For that reason, the sponsors, after studying the Secretary-General's proposal, had felt it more prudent to set aside the very modest sum of \$25,000 to enable the Co-ordinator to proceed with such activities.

34. Miss WILLIAMS (New Zealand) stated that her country, which was prone to natural disasters, had unreservedly supported the establishment of the Office of Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and was following its work with considerable interest. Her Government considered two aspects of the Secretary-General's report to be particularly important, namely, co-ordination with other organizations and disaster preparedness.

35. Her delegation was pleased that the Co-ordinator had given priority to the establishment of working arrangements with other agencies and organizations. It also agreed that it was necessary to define clearly the respective functions of and the division of functions between the Office and other bodies, but it was disappointed to note the report dealt only briefly with that question. It had the impression that co-ordination with the various bodies concerned with disaster situations was on an *ad hoc* basis. She hoped the report in 1973

would give a more detailed account of the arrangements. It was essential that the Co-ordinator should establish clearly the role of each of the United Nations bodies and create machinery which would enable them to act as soon as the need arose. In the opinion of her delegation, the main task of the Co-ordinator in a disaster situation was to ensure the harmonization of relief efforts rather than to concern himself with practical arrangements.

36. Her Government was in favour of the review of disaster preparedness envisaged in paragraph 8 of the report. The necessary investment would be amply repaid through a reduction in the relief assistance needed from the international community in the event of a disaster. However, while it fully supported the general line of paragraph 8, her delegation felt that advice on the matter should be given, if possible, by specialists on the Co-ordinator's staff rather than by outside experts.

37. Her delegation endorsed the ideas expressed in the preambular paragraphs of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1974. It understood that the proposal in operative paragraph 1 had been made because the \$200,000 allocation for disaster relief was likely to be exhausted during 1972, leaving no balance available in 1973 for pre-disaster planning. It could, therefore, support the operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution, but felt it would be more correct if the allocation for 1973 were made from the regular budget rather than from the Working Capital Fund. As the budget appropriation for 1973 had not yet been finalized, the paragraph might be amended along the lines she had suggested.

38. Operative paragraph 2 presented more difficulty, because it was ambiguous and vague. The sponsors' desire to be flexible was highly commendable, but that was precisely where the difficulty lay. She would prefer that provision should simply be made for the allocation of a set sum, for example, \$25,000 a year, for 1974 and 1975, which would enable the Co-ordinator to carry out his task. It should also be stipulated that the General Assembly might review those arrangements at the end of 1974, for example, or, if possible, in 1975. It would also be desirable to allude to alternative sources of financing, such as UNDP. In that regard, her delegation felt that it would be useful to hear a representative of UNDP on those issues before the end of the debate. She had not submitted any amendments but hoped that the sponsors would be able to make changes in the draft resolution, taking into account the comments she had made. It would be desirable for the Committee to be able to express its support for the Co-ordinator by adopting a draft resolution by a large majority which, at the moment, would be rather difficult. In any event, the Co-ordinator and his Office could count on the full co-operation of the New Zealand Government.

39. Mrs. NIGAM (India) said that for the Co-ordinator to carry out his mandate effectively he would have to be able to discharge his duties free from political or other extraneous considerations. It was heartening that the Co-ordinator proposed to undertake a review of disaster preparedness arrangements.

40. Her Government had already taken steps in that direction, especially to check the disastrous effects of cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and floods all over the country. The use of the most modern techniques—radar, detection by satellite and aircraft, telecommunications—enabled it to give timely warnings to the public and concerned authorities. India, which knew from experience the ravages caused by floods, wished to express the deepest sympathy to the representative of the Philippines.

41. Her delegation noted with satisfaction the policy being followed by the Disaster Relief Office, which was to encourage the creation of a co-ordinating group at the national level in each disaster-prone country, in order to ensure all possible assistance. Another important aspect of assistance was pre-disaster planning, involving preventive measures. In the current circumstances, the Co-ordinator's possibilities for action seemed limited. Her delegation would therefore suggest that, firstly, the Co-ordinator should have the necessary resources for effective action in the pre-disaster area. Secondly, more general functions should not detract from pre-disaster planning, because it was at the preventive stage that the Co-ordinator could be most effective. Thirdly, the specialized agencies should play an important role in co-ordinating their activities with those of the Co-ordinator. In that regard, she pointed out that, in course of time, the Co-ordinator would be able to work in liaison with the Executive Director of the environment secretariat in so far as its programmes included the establishment of early-warning and detection systems for cyclones and tropical storms.

42. With regard to draft resolution A/C.3/L.1974, she proposed that, in order to make it more effective a new paragraph should be inserted between the first and second preambular paragraphs, recommending that all the activities and the help to be given to the people at the time of national disasters should be fully co-ordinated with the efforts of the local non-governmental organizations approved by the respective Governments. When a disaster took place, the victims were unable to get the benefits of international help immediately owing to certain essential formalities, such as the recruitment of volunteers. Furthermore, when Governments approached the non-governmental organizations for the supply of volunteers, it took some time for them to get prepared to move into the operational areas. She was proposing that those organizations should arrange to have volunteers in readiness at all times to move to the areas of disaster at the shortest notice. In view of the humanitarian motives which had inspired it, she hoped that no delegation would oppose her proposal for intensive co-operation with the non-governmental organizations.

43. Mr. PAPADEMAS (Cyprus) recalled that his country had from the outset declared itself in favour of the creation of a permanent institution for providing prompt assistance in cases of natural disaster, and he found it heartening that the draft resolution calling for the creation of a permanent centre for the co-ordination of relief in cases of natural disaster had been adopted

unanimously by the Third Committee at the previous session. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the Office of the Co-ordinator had established fruitful co-operation with United Nations bodies and organizations already concerned in one way or another with disasters, as well as with many other international organizations, and had been able to provide prompt and valuable assistance during the first months following its creation when disasters had occurred in several countries. The policy of the Office of the Co-ordinator, both as regards contingency planning and pre-disaster planning and the provision of prompt and effective assistance in cases of disaster, met with the unreserved approval of his delegation, which supported the draft resolution submitted to the Committee on the item.

44. With regard to the scope of the expression "other disaster situations", he was somewhat surprised at the interpretation given by the Norwegian representative and did not, for his part, feel that that expression could include man-made disaster situations.

45. Mr. ARÍZAGA (Ecuador) wished to congratulate the Co-ordinator on the remarkable work he had done, and, in order to demonstrate the gratitude of the Third Committee, he would like to add, after the second preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, a new paragraph to read: "*Taking note with appreciation of the action already taken by the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator since his Office was established*". He hoped that the Third Committee would adopt the draft resolution that had been submitted to it with the amendment he had proposed.

46. Miss LIM (Malaysia) said that her delegation had listened attentively to the introductory statement made by the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and had read with interest the report of the Secretary-General on the subject. Her delegation was well aware that because of the inadequacy of resources and the large number of disaster-prone areas, disaster preparedness activities must necessarily be limited. She nevertheless felt that the experience gained by his Office should enable the Co-ordinator to select certain priority areas, particularly in those disaster-prone areas where early-warning systems, preventive measures and preparedness plans had not yet been well developed or were non-existent.

47. Her delegation noted with satisfaction that the Co-ordinator had given priority attention to establishing relations with a number of international and non-governmental organizations in order to avoid duplication of the work being carried out by other United Nations bodies and so as not to restrict its scope. She noted with interest the relations which had been established with the UNDP Resident Representative at the time of the Philippine disaster, thus demonstrating the key role which Resident Representatives of UNDP should play at the country level. She felt that the steps envisaged for disaster preparedness constituted a first move forward towards "maximum productivity", and she also welcomed the fact that the Co-ordinator intended to streamline the organization of his Office on principles of strict economy. She therefore sup-

ported the draft resolution before the Committee and in particular the fourth preambular paragraph.

48. The amendment proposed by the Indian representative seemed to relate to relief and assistance measures rather than to cases of natural disaster; paragraph 1 (c) of resolution 2816 (XXVI) already contained provisions to that effect.

49. In conclusion, her delegation wished to associate itself with the tribute paid by the Philippine representative to the work undertaken by the Co-ordinator following the disaster which had struck that country earlier in the year, and it wished the Co-ordinator every success, particularly in his disaster preparedness activities, which, if effective, would reduce the claims on the limited resources at the Office's disposal.

50. Mr. DAMMERT (Peru) said he wished to congratulate the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator on the results he had achieved during the Office's first year of existence. Peru had already benefited from his assistance, as was noted by the Secretary-General in paragraph 14 of his report (A/8854), after the floods and landslides, followed by an earthquake, which had taken place in March 1972.

51. His delegation had frequently stressed the need for the establishment within the United Nations system of dynamic and effective permanent machinery which would make it possible to render assistance as rapidly as possible to countries stricken by natural disasters, and for action to ensure that assistance was co-ordinated by experts, in order to avoid confusion and unnecessary delay.

52. Peru was convinced of the great value of the humanitarian task performed by the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, and had had an opportunity to see for itself the competence with which he had discharged the functions entrusted to him. Consequently, his delegation hoped that draft resolution A/C.3/L.1974, of which it was a sponsor, would be adopted unanimously.

53. Begum SULEMAN (Pakistan) thanked the Co-ordinator for the introductory statement he had made on the subject of assistance in cases of natural disasters.

54. Her delegation had on several occasions expressed the view that the financial, technical and even human resources of the developing countries were not adequate to cope with major calamities and must be supplemented by appropriate external assistance. The United Nations was the most appropriate machinery to organize international assistance and ensure that it was delivered in time where it was most needed.

55. The functions of the Co-ordinator had been defined in General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI), and it was encouraging to note that the report before the Committee contained proposals to establish the ways in which the Co-ordinator could ensure that relief was provided in the speediest and most effective manner when a disaster occurred.

56. Another function of the Co-ordinator was in the field of pre-disaster planning; in that area it was necessary *inter alia* to establish and improve every country's own relief machinery, establish disaster contingency plans, appoint a single national disaster relief co-ordinator, establish a stockpile of emergency supplies, make the necessary arrangements for the training of administrative and relief personnel, take appropriate legislative and other measures to facilitate the receipt of aid and improve national disaster warning systems.

57. The scarcity of the resources placed at the disposal of the Disaster Relief Office might seriously hamper the Co-ordinator's discharge of his functions. Several proposals had been made as to how sufficient funds could be made available, and her delegation had suggested at the fifty-first session of the Economic and Social Council that the Secretary-General should be authorized to draw on the resources available under the regular budget in order to provide prompt emergency relief. The resources so drawn by the Secretary-General could be reimbursed to the regular budget from voluntary contributions. However, since some delegations apparently found it difficult to accept that proposal, her delegation would not press it further at that stage. Nevertheless, it seriously urged other delegations to accept the proposal in operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1974 authorizing the Secretary-General to draw on the Working Capital Fund in the amount of \$25,000 for assistance to Governments, at their request, in the elaboration of national preparations to meet natural disasters. Finally, her delegation wished to underline the need to keep the activities of the Office of the Co-ordinator under continuing review in order to provide him with such assistance and support as he might require.

58. Mr. SAYAR (Iran) said that his delegation particularly welcomed the establishment of the Office of the Co-ordinator at Geneva, and was pleased that it had been able to begin operating in March 1972. The Secretary-General's appointment of Mr. Berkol, whose competence and zeal were known to all, was an excellent choice.

59. His delegation had heard with great interest the Co-ordinator's succinct but full statement, the conclusions of which, like those of the Secretary-General's report on the subject, met with his Government's full approval. It was particularly satisfying that useful contacts had been established between the Office of the Co-ordinator on the one hand and organizations such as UNICEF and UNDP on the other, as well as with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies. His delegation noted that, judging by the figures and information given by the representative of the Philippines, the Co-

ordinator had discharged his task rapidly, effectively and devotedly on the occasion of the floods which had devastated a large part of the Philippines, and wished to congratulate him on the work he had accomplished. That disaster had shown once again the usefulness of a co-ordination centre, especially for the developing countries, which lacked material resources and should receive prompt assistance from the international community. His delegation, as a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1974, would be pleased if it was adopted unanimously by the Committee. It felt that the allocations requested by the Office of the Co-ordinator were modest in relation to the breadth of its tasks and responsibilities. Finally, his delegation supported the request for a modest increase in the staff of the Office of the Co-ordinator.

60. Mr. McGOUGH (Argentina) congratulated the Co-ordinator on his introductory statement. His delegation supported the request in paragraph 18 of the Secretary-General's report for an increase in the staff attached to the Office of the Co-ordinator, and regretted that it was giving rise to difficulty. It found that draft resolution before the Committee to be on the whole satisfactory; nevertheless, it would welcome study of the possibility of deleting the words "if necessary" from operative paragraph 2. Finally, he hoped, like the representative of New Zealand, to hear a statement from a representative of UNDP before conclusion of the debate on the agenda item.

61. Miss FAROUK (Tunisia) said that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.3/L.1974, after consulting together on the amendments and comments made during the meeting, had decided to revise the last part of the second preambular paragraph to read "and having heard the introductory statement...". They agreed to add, after the second preambular paragraph, the new paragraph proposed by the representative of Ecuador, and had decided, at the suggestion of the United Kingdom delegation, to replace operative paragraph 2 by the following text:

"2. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to explore various means, including support through the United Nations Development Programme, of making adequate provisions subsequently for this purpose and to report on this matter to the twenty-eighth session of the General Assembly."

The sponsors of the draft resolution appreciated the amendment proposed by India; however, for technical reasons, it had not been possible to incorporate it in the draft resolution, since paragraph 1 (c) of resolution 2816 (XXVI) already contained similar provisions.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.