

45. Claims that zionism was a national liberation movement were totally unacceptable since Zionist leaders co-operated with South Africa, the greatest enemy of legitimate national liberation movements in southern Africa and elsewhere. Furthermore, the international community was aware of the treatment of young and elderly people, women and children, by the soldiers of zionism in the territories under illegal Zionist occupation.

46. In conclusion, he recalled the decisions taken at the International Conference on Namibia and Human Rights, held at Dakar in January 1976, which demonstrated the determination of all anti-racist forces in Africa, Asia and Latin America to remain united in the struggle to eradicate all forms of racism and racial discrimination, including zionism, *apartheid* and neo-colonialism, from the face of the earth.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

1994th meeting

Wednesday, 5 May 1976, at 11.05 a.m.

President: Mr. Siméon AKE (Ivory Coast).

E/SR.1994

AGENDA ITEM 10

Review of the situation in Guatemala in consequence of the earthquake of 4 February 1976 (E/5796 and Corr.1 and 2, E/L.1708, E/L.1711)

AGENDA ITEM 11

Measures to be taken following the cyclones in Madagascar (E/5788, E/L.1712)

AGENDA ITEM 2

Assistance to the drought-stricken areas of Ethiopia (E/5762 and Corr.1, E/L.1715)

1. Mr. BERKOL (United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Guatemala (E/5796 and Corr.1 and 2), reviewed the magnitude of the disaster, but said that he had been greatly encouraged not only by the massive response of the international community, but most of all by the brave spirit and determination of the Guatemalan people to cope with their overwhelming problems. Well before the end of the critical phase of the emergency, estimated by the Guatemalan Government at 28 February, the consolidation and reconstruction phases had begun. However, as Chairman of the Guatemalan emergency committee had said, the emergency would not end until the last of the demolished houses had been rebuilt. Since much of the assistance given during the emergency had been of a type which could also be used in the reconstruction phase, it was difficult to distinguish between contributions relating to relief only and those which were also used for rehabilitation and reconstruction. The lists of contributions made available to delegations were therefore the most accurate that could be established to date and did not include donations of which his Office had not been informed.

2. It had been difficult to arrange regular local co-ordination meetings with donors working in the field because of the wide geographical area covered by the disaster, the danger that roads might be blocked by further landslides and the urgency of immediate attention to tasks in the rural areas.

3. The measures now to be taken to enable the Government and people of Guatemala to complete the work of rehabilitation and reconstruction would depend on

two major factors: the effect of the rainy season, which had just begun, and the relative priority to be given to shelter and agriculture. The makeshift buildings which had been erected, particularly in the *colonias* on the outskirts of the cities, offered no security against bad weather and water-borne diseases. Through the generosity of donor sources, he had been able to arrange for the purchase of 10 water-tank trucks to provide a more regular supply of purified water to those new communities; 37 static tanks had also been bought with funds given to UNDRO. In some of the rural areas, the emphasis had been on providing semi-permanent housing. In that connexion, he wished to make special mention of the Canadian Government's contribution of a production unit that would eventually provide 2,500 houses. In areas where in-depth development work had been carried on for years, the people had given priority to agriculture in a desire to protect their next harvest and had deferred their housing needs until the next dry season in November. Meanwhile, groups were being formed to build community houses out of local materials, using earthquake-resistant designs in an initial effort which might serve as a model for large-scale reconstruction at a later stage.

4. The success of all programmes, however, depended on the maintenance of passable roads to bring in building materials or bring out local produce. In mountainous terrain where many landslides had occurred, there was an obvious need for a much greater stock of earth-moving equipment. Water was another element on which progress in rehabilitation depended: because of changes in the natural drainage systems, many communities had lost their water supply and much work had to be done to drill new wells or provide piping to tap new sources of water. In addition, new health posts, schools and community buildings had to be provided. The proposals of UNICEF alone, designed to meet the needs of mothers and children, would cost almost \$3.5 million and the Executive Director of UNICEF was appealing for over \$2.2 million towards the cost of that programme.

5. Over 20 potential emergency situations could arise during 1976 as a result of heavy rains, a major volcanic eruption or another earthquake. While the national emergency committee felt they could be handled with local resources, they might produce a situation in which further international assistance would be

required. Indeed, the continued efforts of the international community were going to be needed for a long time to come.

6. Turning to the situation resulting from the cyclones in Madagascar, he recalled the facts given in the letter from the Malagasy representative (E/5788) and reminded the Council that UNDR0 had allocated \$20,000 from its emergency funds in March 1975 for relief of the victims of a similar disaster which had occurred in January of that year. WFP had contributed food at that time and over half a million dollars had been donated by voluntary agencies and donor Governments. To meet the new needs, UNDR0 funds had been used to procure medicines, in collaboration with WHO, and to transport them to Madagascar. One consignment had already arrived and the balance should arrive in May to meet the emergency requirement. The new medical needs enumerated in the Malagasy Government's request for assistance were being met by UNDR0 and UNDP from their emergency allocation. The balance of the UNDP contribution was being used to re-establish wireless communications with outlying centres and for fuel to ensure the distribution of relief supplies.

7. However, the far more substantial assistance required for rehabilitation and reconstruction now demanded attention. It involved long-term economic aid and required integrated planning. That aid would, he was confident, be provided by UNDP. For its part, UNDR0 was prepared to help Madagascar to cope with future seasonal disasters of the same kind, using as a guide the report of a 1973 UNDR0 technical co-operation mission on pre-disaster planning which had made important recommendations, particularly with regard to the training of relief personnel and the organization of stocks of relief goods.

8. Referring to the Secretary-General's report on the drought in Ethiopia (E/5762 and Corr.1), he offered an assessment of the current situation based on the most recent UNDR0 mission to that country and on consultations with the Office of the UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Representative at Addis Ababa.

9. According to the latest report of the Ethiopian Relief and Rehabilitation Commission, full rations and medical care continued to be provided for some 80,000 people in the Ogaden region, mainly women, children and elderly persons, and that situation would prevail indefinitely or until families became self-sustaining again. The rate at which they could be taken off the ration rolls would depend on the effect of the current rains on restoration of grazing lands and watering facilities. Although the rains had been late in reaching the most seriously affected areas, tentative forecasts indicated a favourable rainfall trend. The situation in the Ogaden area, however, affected a relatively small population; a much larger population, about 500,000 out of a total of 27 million, in other parts of Ethiopia lived in constant fear of drought emergencies and was receiving some form of food aid. That situation applied equally to other drought-sensitive parts of Africa and was likely to continue, with large numbers of the rural population maintaining a precarious existence from one rainy season to the next, until the root problems of over-population, over-grazing, poor land use and inadequate infrastructure were overcome. In order to monitor the progress of the current rainy season, the field reporting capacity of the Relief and Rehabilitation

Commission would have to be strengthened by forming mobile teams which could quickly report their assessments of current and potential needs in sensitive areas to headquarters. In any event, even if the rains proved adequate, most of the drought victims on rations would continue to need help throughout 1976. In that connexion, there had been a significant response over the past two and a half years from the international community and the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission's ability to mobilize local resources should not be underestimated. Current food requirement had been tentatively estimated at some 82,000 tons.

10. The operation in Ethiopia was in the transitional phase where emergency relief was gradually being phased out and rehabilitation projects were being implemented. It was on those projects that international technical and material aid should be focused at the current stage with a view to attacking the root causes of famine emergencies. UNDR0 would be prepared to step in should the situation deteriorate to the point where a new emergency request had to be made. However, the time had come for it to terminate its two-and-a-half year involvement and for the UNDP Regional Representative to take over co-ordination of the recovery and rehabilitation phase.

11. In the course of UNDR0's missions, it had become clear that machinery for international co-ordination of post-emergency recovery and rehabilitation had not yet been "institutionalized" within the United Nations system. In the case of Ethiopia, that fact should present no problem because the UNDP Regional Representative had worked effectively with UNDR0 to co-ordinate external assistance efforts. He and the National Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner merited continued confidence and support from Member States.

12. Mr. JOSEPH (Deputy Regional Director for Africa, United Nations Development Programme) recalled that at the request of the Government of Madagascar, based on recommendations of a UNDP consultant, UNDP had initiated a four-year project in 1971 to assist in developing a hurricane forecasting and warning system and had earmarked \$1.2 million for that purpose. Three long-range radar centres had now been installed and were operating satisfactorily. However, progress still had to be made on a cyclone-warning system and suggestions were being made to local authorities concerning methods of organizing such a system. Two UNDP-financed installations had become operational in 1976 and had been used in issuing warnings early in the year. Although UNDP was to end its participation in that project, it was assessing the situation and there were indications that it might maintain it for a further period. UNDP assistance amounting to \$20,000 had been approved for medical supplies in the areas affected by hurricanes and a special allocation of the same amount had been made to cover fuel costs and recent damage to north-west Madagascar.

13. The UNDP Governing Council had been discussing the Ethiopian drought regularly since 1974. Since its twenty-first session, in January 1976, UNDP had received information that the harvest in Ethiopia was expected to be larger than it had been in recent years in some areas of the country, although certain crops would be poor and the situation might be serious in areas which had experienced the 1973 drought. The UNDP Resident Representative was actively partici-

pating in Government efforts to alleviate conditions. In 1974, the Governing Council had authorized \$2 million over the indicative planning figure for the period 1972-1976, which had been used for resettlement of drought victims, health needs, livestock and water development. The UNDP country programme for Ethiopia took full account of drought conditions and Ethiopian development needs. The situation in the belt of Africa which included Ethiopia was changing and requirements had to be flexible until such time as the national development programme could withstand drought. UNDP's activities were in the rehabilitation phase, but the threat of an emergency persisted because of the uncertainty regarding rainfall trends. The Governing Council would continue to keep the situation under review and the Resident Representative would continue to report to UNDP and to UNDRO.

14. Mr. OLIVERI LOPEZ (Argentina) said that his Government had sent five planes to Guatemala with medical supplies and food following the catastrophic earthquake in February 1976. The people of Guatemala now faced the challenging problem of reconstruction, after the incalculable devastation that had occurred in every sector of their country, and their Government had made tremendous efforts to ensure general participation in the national reconstruction effort. Estimates of damage ran as high as \$1 billion and, significantly, ECLA had estimated that the impact of the earthquake would slow Guatemala's anticipated economic growth rate for 1976 by 50 per cent.

15. The magnitude of the disaster in Guatemala required exceptional and urgent international co-operation, including massive additional technical assistance and access to credit at favourable rates or where possible on a non-reimbursable basis. Such action would be facilitated by the decision of the Board of Governors of the United Nations Special Fund at its third session providing that Guatemala should be included in the list of "most seriously affected countries".¹

16. His delegation was pleased, on behalf of all the sponsors, to introduce a draft resolution on the subject (E/L.1711). He noted that Afghanistan, Austria, the Ivory Coast, Italy, Romania, Uganda and Yugoslavia were to be added to the list of sponsors.

17. No comment was necessary on the preamble and the first three operative paragraphs of the draft resolution. Operative paragraph 4 was an appeal to specialized agencies urging favourable consideration of the requests of the Government of Guatemala for funds for national reconstruction. He proposed the deletion from that paragraph of the words "in co-operation with the Office of the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator" in lines 4 and 5. In operative paragraph 5 the word "decelerated" should be corrected to read "accelerated". In that paragraph the Governing Council of UNDP was requested to take urgent steps to provide special technical assistance to Guatemala. He stressed the important role played by the UNDP Resident Representative as emergency co-ordinator, and urged that, despite the difficult financial situation, the Administrator of UNDP make every effort to follow the recommendations in the draft resolution.

18. In the final operative paragraph, the World Bank and all other regional and international financial insti-

tutions were requested to give urgent consideration to requests for assistance made by the Government of Guatemala.

19. He hoped that the Council would unanimously support the proposed draft resolution (E/L.1711) to minimize further suffering by the unfortunate people of Guatemala.

20. Mr. GUCOVSKY (Chief, Division for Regional Projects, Regional Bureau for Latin America, United Nations Development Programme) summarized the activities of UNDP following the earthquake in Guatemala. He noted that the UNDP office in Guatemala had co-ordinated all relief and assistance operations in the country and was actively engaged in co-ordination of activities relating to reconstruction. In that context, the UNDP office was placed at the service of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator for the purpose of facilitating speedy action.

21. In co-operation with ECLA, UNDP had joined in two missions which had assisted the Government in preparing a comprehensive programme for reconstruction, including an action plan. UNDP was currently giving consideration to a \$3 million supplementary assistance request from Guatemala to help support activities in regional and urban planning and development, housing and human settlements, rural development and training for reconstruction and rehabilitation of productive sectors. The Administrator would submit his recommendations to the Governing Council in June, giving due attention to any resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on the matter.

22. The UNDP office in Guatemala would continue to serve UNDRO as the focal point in the co-ordination of reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes in Guatemala and would continue to render for that purpose all possible assistance to the Government and people of Guatemala.

23. Mr. RABETAFIKA (Observer for Madagascar), speaking at the invitation of the President, said that, in the interval since the inclusion of the item proposed by his delegation in the Council's agenda, the southern part of Madagascar had experienced a prolonged and catastrophic drought. The province of Fianarantsoa, affected by microclimatic factors, had sustained widespread damage, including the total loss of its important rice crop on which large segments of the population of the area depended. In the light of that new development, the Council might wish to alter the title of the item to read "measures to be taken following the cyclones and drought in Madagascar". He also informed the Council of a cyclone which had occurred in Antalaha on 27 March 1976 and which added to the urgency of the situation.

24. He noted that Madagascar was situated almost entirely in a tropical zone affected each year by cyclones. Its vulnerability was clearly reflected by the fact that in the period from 1971 to 1973 alone 500 cyclones had been recorded in the south-western part of the Indian Ocean. As shown in the documentation before the Council, in the 60-year period from 1911 to 1972, some parts of Madagascar had been affected by cyclones 55 times, on an average almost once every year, while others, that were less vulnerable, had experienced cyclones 31 times, or approximately once every two years. The cyclones were accompanied by violent winds, torrential rain and devastating floods which were responsible for most of the deaths and injuries.

¹ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 21 (A/31/21), annex I, para. 2(c).

25. Loss of life occurred each year but he would refer only to years in which the greatest losses had occurred: 300 dead in 1959, 65 dead in 1960, 57 missing and 102 dead in 1972, 14 dead in 1973 and 7 in 1975. In addition countless people were injured and many families were left homeless.

26. In addition to the untold human suffering, cyclones also had a serious effect on the economic life of the country. Statistics on material losses in recent years were revealing: damage had amounted to \$15 million in 1969, \$14 million in 1972, \$7 million in 1973 and \$60 million in 1975. As indicated in the note transmitted with the letter requesting inclusion of the item (E/5788) final figures for 1976 were not yet available but undoubtedly substantial losses had been sustained.

27. He stressed that his country's already weakened economy suffered adversely as a result of the economic, social and administrative losses caused by cyclones, to say nothing of direct personal losses. While the financial implications of cyclones could be calculated, there was no way to assess the physical and moral suffering or the dislocation of life in every sector.

28. Madagascar had already taken steps to ensure prompt assistance to the affected areas through the creation of a national relief committee and co-operating provincial and local committees. The armed forces and private organizations were also participating in the relief operation and in reconstruction efforts. Madagascar had also co-ordinated its efforts with international efforts undertaken through the United Nations and the specialized agencies.

29. Within the framework of the activities of WMO, a committee on tropical cyclones for the south-western part of the Indian Ocean consisting of the United Republic of Cameroon, France, Kenya, Mauritius, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda, the United Kingdom and Madagascar had been established and had met in 1973 in Madagascar to elaborate a technical plan on the subject of cyclones. As already mentioned in the meeting, Madagascar had, with UNDP assistance, strengthened its system of cyclone detection and warning through three radar installations.

30. Madagascar had been one of the initiators of the proposal leading to the establishment of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator which had assisted Madagascar in setting up its relief operation. The Government of Madagascar had spared no effort to reduce loss of human life and to meet the problems besetting its people and its economy. The people of Madagascar had made great sacrifices to help their fellow countrymen but voluntary and nationally organized collections covered only a small part of the losses incurred. The Government had instituted a new solidarity tax but it would not yield the sums needed in the circumstance.

31. While expressing gratitude for the international assistance provided bilaterally and through the United Nations, he indicated that to date the assistance received had been only symbolic in nature. His delegation had already expressed concern, in connexion with General Assembly resolutions 3243 (XXIX) and 3410 (XXX), at the limited resources made available to the Office of the Co-ordinator, and had advocated increased resources to make possible effective mobilization and co-ordination of relief. Unfortunately that had not yet been achieved.

32. In view of the regularity and frequency of the cyclones which affected Madagascar, his Government appealed to the Economic and Social Council to mobilize more direct, prompt and adequate economic assistance for reconstruction and to ensure that such assistance was independent of ordinary development assistance. It was encouraging that the international community had expressed its solidarity with countries suffering natural disasters and had recognized the need to do more to assist such countries. The efforts of those countries alone would be fruitless if assistance were not granted to re-establish or replace the infrastructures damaged or destroyed by disasters. He was confident that the Council would give consideration to other aspects of the problem which fell within its purview, including loss of crops which endangered the domestic food supply and loss of crops for export resulting in serious trade-balance complications.

33. Accordingly it seemed essential to go beyond the Special Fund for emergency relief and create a fund for United Nations action in cases of natural disaster.

34. Mr. DORUM (Norway) noted with satisfaction that, judging from the Secretary-General's report (E/5796 and Corr.1 and 2), the acute emergency situation in Guatemala had been brought under control and that the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase was already well under way. That was a most impressive achievement and there was every reason to compliment the Government of Guatemala for its efficient leadership of the relief operations through its National Emergency Committee. Credit was also due to Governments and private organizations of various countries and to the relevant United Nations bodies for the immediate and efficient action they had taken in response to Guatemala's urgent need. Private organizations in Norway had collected some 10 million kroner in addition to Government grants of 4 million kroner. Such public response showed a true spirit of international solidarity. The task of reconstruction was immense and would require further international assistance. Norway had recently contributed \$90,000 to the UNICEF rehabilitation programme and \$53,000 to help UNDRO provide pre-disaster technical assistance. As one of the sponsors of draft resolution E/L.1711, his delegation joined in the appeal to the relevant agencies of the United Nations to support the courageous people of Guatemala in their struggle to rebuild their ruined homes, their factories and farms.

35. The PRESIDENT, speaking in reference to the suggestion made by the representative of Madagascar that the title of the agenda item dealing with his country be changed, assured the representative of Madagascar that the title would be reviewed at the following session of the Council.

36. Mr. HACHANI (Tunisia) introduced on behalf of its sponsors draft resolution E/L.1712 on measures to be taken following the cyclones in Madagascar. The Council was bound, in response to Madagascar's appeal to the international community, to take the necessary decisions to help it deal with the urgent situation it was facing and to help it obtain the necessary means to avert such disastrous situations in the future. The members of the Council would notice that the wording of draft resolution E/L.1712 was like that of other resolutions adopted in similar situations in the past, especially with respect to its preambular part.

37. His delegation noted with satisfaction that initial measures had already been undertaken by UNDP and

said that UNDR0 had an important role to play in such situations under General Assembly resolution 3440 (XXX). He was pleased to announce that some African and other delegations intended at the next session of the Council to submit suggestions to strengthen the ability of the United Nations to take more effective action in the area of disaster relief, such as the establishment of a permanent fund for such situations.

38. Mr. WILDER (Canada) said that his country was glad to be a sponsor of draft resolution E/L.1711, and hoped that other potential donors would contribute further to relieve the situation in Guatemala. He noted with satisfaction that the response of the Canadian Government and people in material aid directed to the people in the disaster area had materialized more quickly in the case of Guatemala than in previous emergencies of that kind. The aid included \$825,000 in an immediate direct grant of food, 50,000 blankets and orthopaedic materials, \$100,000 in cash to the League of Red Cross Societies, and \$3 million in building materials for house construction. Reconstruction efforts included the clearing of rubble-strewn streets and housing areas, the provision of building tools and the transport of all equipment and materials directly to the intended recipients. Long-term assistance to develop hygienic water systems at a cost of \$3 million had also been offered to the Guatemalan Government. A \$500,000 interest-free loan had been provided to assist in developing co-operatives for coffee producers and a \$1 million interest-free line of credit had been opened for any development purpose.

39. He wished, however, to bring to the attention of the Council that, although the co-ordination of international relief had been generally well handled in the Guatemalan situation, the UNDR0 reports, albeit containing useful and accurate information, had been too slow in appearing, so that it had been difficult to co-ordinate national and international decisions. He felt that the role of the Office in gathering and disseminating information must be speeded up considerably if it was to be more effective in future disaster situations. He regretted that there was no representative of WMO present at the current Council meetings dealing with natural disasters.

40. Mr. WILDEBOER (Observer for the Netherlands), speaking at the invitation of the President, said that his Government had contributed to the emergency measures taken by the Red Cross and UNDR0 and he wished to inform the Council that it would make an additional contribution to the reconstruction of Guatemala of \$475,000 to be channelled through private, non-commercial organizations and allocated mostly for the repair and rebuilding of houses and for the elimination of bottle-necks in the infrastructure.

41. Mr. KARIM (Bangladesh) said that his country was a frequent victim of natural disasters which wrought havoc with the lives of its citizens and the economy, and could therefore readily understand and share the feelings of the peoples and the Governments of other countries who unfortunately fell victim to natural disasters. His delegation hoped therefore that the Council would take constructive and effective measures to alleviate the sufferings caused by such disasters and lend a helping hand to the Governments of the people concerned in their efforts for reconstruction and rehabilitation. In that connexion, his delegation was happy to be one of the sponsors of the two draft resolutions before the Council.

42. Considered in a global perspective, natural dis-

asters constituted a constant and recurring problem for developing countries and were not isolated incidents. They caused human suffering and seriously affected the economic infrastructure of the countries involved and thus jeopardized their long-term economic development programmes by compelling Governments to divert scarce resources from development programmes to emergency operations. Thus the problem of natural disasters must be dealt with not only by immediate emergency relief but also through long-term development. That aspect of the question had been emphasized by the General Assembly at its seventh special session. As a follow-up action, the General Assembly had adopted resolution 3510 (XXX), which set out a possible course of future action for United Nations bodies in dealing with the problem of natural disasters in a comprehensive manner.

43. Mr. MALAFATOPOULOS (World Health Organization), wishing to supplement the information given by the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator on WHO and Pan-American Health Organization (WHO/PAHO) activities to assist Guatemala, said that two days after the earthquake the Director-General of WHO had taken steps to obtain the WHO Executive Board's approval for the use of \$100,000 from the Board's Special Fund to help the Government of Guatemala to meet part of the urgent health needs in consequence of the earthquake. The Board's approval had been obtained within a week and the Director-General had issued instructions to utilize the funds for urgently needed health supplies and related equipment.

44. On 14 February 1976 the WHO Regional Office for the Americas had provided Guatemala with emergency surgical supplies and medicaments at an estimated cost of \$12,000. On 20 February the Deputy Regional Director of the WHO Regional Office had completed a four-day visit to Guatemala at the Government's request to assess the health situation and advise on emergency health needs and rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. He had proposed that WHO funds amounting to \$100,000 be utilized to meet about 75 per cent of the cost of restoring water supply systems in rural areas, as one of the most effective preventive measures against epidemics and intestinal ailments. By 25 February the WHO Regional Office had expended, over and above the Executive Board grant of \$100,000, the sum of \$215,000 on an emergency latrine programme, trucks and other vehicles, medicines, dog poisons, anti-rabies serum, the emergency restoration of an electrical substation and equipment for the Institute of Nutrition for Central America and Panama, and miscellaneous emergency medical equipment and supplies. In the first week of March a joint WFP/WHO mission had explored with the Ministry of Health the possibility of using food available through the WFP to assist in the development and rehabilitation of health programmes. In connexion with an emergency plan for basic sanitation in the disaster area, prepared by a country emergency team assisted by WHO/PAHO, the following activities were being implemented: the purchase of water supply materials, vehicles and materials for latrines; the installation of those materials with community participation; the formation of two teams of community promoters and the assignment of a full-time WHO/PAHO engineer for six months to co-ordinate the purchase of materials and vehicles and work directly with the Guatemalan authorities in supervising installation.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.