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New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 18th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 86: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/45/224, 584 and 598)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/45/3, 479, 483, 494, 505, 547, 562, 566; A/C.2/45/2)

AGENDA ITEM 87: INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE ECONOMIC REHABILITATION OF ANGOLA (continued) (A/45/551 and 598)

1. Mr. ESSAAFI (Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator) praised the exemplary international solidarity shown in support of the victims of the major earthquake in north-western Iran in June 1990. UNDRO, in its co-ordinating role, had taken steps to avoid duplication of work, co-operate with all sources of internal and external assistance, and provide rapid and sound information on the damage and needs. United Nations agencies - such as the United Nations Development Programme, through its Disaster Management Team - had provided valuable co-operation. The work of the Disaster Management Team, particularly its assessment missions, had been facilitated by the co-operation of the national and local authorities and population of Iran.
2. After the relief phase, UNDRO had co-ordinated a multi-agency technical team in order to prepare proposals for a technical co-operation programme. Every effort had been made to ensure that mitigation was fully taken into account in reconstruction plans. The documents prepared for the technical co-operation programme included an international appeal for building materials and equipment; a technical report on the characteristics of the earthquake and an overview of the main causes of damage; and a draft project document entitled "Assistance to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Implementation of a Post-Earthquake Emergency Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Programme". The project was to be financed from UNDP's Special Projects Programme resources and through cost-sharing.
3. UNDRO had carried out its work in close co-operation with, inter alia, the Iranian Housing Foundation. On completion of the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/494), UNDRO had based its activities on reports of the Iranian Government dealing mainly with housing reconstruction and budgetary matters.
4. In conclusion, UNDRO appealed to all donor countries to provide the financial support required for meeting its programme objectives within the proposed time-frame.
5. Mr. BAKER (Director, Unit for Special Emergency Programmes) reiterated the guiding principles of emergency assistance in conflict situations, namely, (a) that delivery of humanitarian assistance by the United Nations must be recognized as a neutral act; (b) that such assistance must be provided to all persons in need without discrimination, wherever they were situated; (c) that adequate security conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance must be guaranteed; and

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(Mr. Baker)

(d) that needs must be assessed and deliveries monitored in order to ensure that the level of assistance was appropriate and that the supplies reached the intended recipients.

6. He then introduced the report of the Secretary-General on emergency assistance to the Sudan and Operational Lifeline Sudan (A/45/547). Operational Lifeline Sudan was an example of a successful United Nations relief operation - the outcome of agreement, reached by both sides to a conflict, on a common relief effort. While generous donations for food had averted mass starvation in the Sudan, funding for non-food sectors was inadequate, which meant that health, water and sanitation programmes might be curtailed or discontinued and that new programmes could not be initiated. Insufficient rainfall in the first half of 1990 would certainly aggravate the food shortage, which also affected Chadian and Ethiopian refugees in the Sudan.

7. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on emergency assistance to Somalia (A/45/483), he stressed that interim assistance measures must be followed up by long-term, structured programmes, including resettlement and repatriation. Until such programmes were in place, continued food assistance from donor countries would be appreciated.

8. The report on special assistance to front-line States and other bordering States (A/45/479) outlined the activities undertaken by Member States in 1990 in response to appeals for assistance and United Nations activities to assist front-line States in their social and economic development.

9. The report on emergency assistance to Mozambique (A/45/562) showed the evolution of the emergency relief programme and provided a sectoral breakdown of responses to the 1990/91 appeals for assistance. It also highlighted the painful truth that international support tended to diminish for prolonged crises. Indeed, in the fourth year of Mozambique's emergency assistance programme, donor contributions had dropped from \$330 million in 1987 to a current low of \$104.4 million. That dwindling support had limited the Government's ability to assist 1.4 million internally displaced persons and more than 200,000 voluntary returnees from neighbouring countries. With the opening of roads to inaccessible areas and the liberation of other zones, further thousands of externally displaced persons would return.

10. The report of the Secretary-General on international assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola (A/45/551) detailed United Nations activities and focused on a donors' round table in 1991, to be organized by UNDP. In preparation for the round table, economic planning projects in Angola were being strengthened and the World Bank and the African Development Bank were preparing sectoral studies. Assistance to Angola was expected to amount to \$179 million in 1990 and an additional \$240 million in 1991.

(Mr. Baker)

11. In response to the appeal for emergency assistance to the drought-stricken provinces of southern Angola, an expanded special relief programme was expected to become operational on 1 November. The programme was intended to reach famine victims, in both drought-stricken and conflict areas.

12. The continued success of the special emergency assistance programmes depended on a commitment by the affected Governments, effective co-ordination by the United Nations system, and a generous response from the international community.

13. Mr. ABU-JAWDEH (Officer-in-Charge, Office of the Co-ordinator of United Nations Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon (A/45/566), drew attention to the violent and unstable situation in Lebanon during the past year. Armed conflict had resulted in loss of life, heavy damage to the country's basic infrastructure, greatly reduced economic activity and increased poverty. Public services had not been operational for five months, in early 1990, affecting half the Lebanese population. Tens of thousands of people continued to emigrate.

14. Since the end of the reporting period in July 1990, there had been major developments. At the national level, reunification of the Lebanese army had re-established the Government's authority over greater Beirut, breaking a two-year deadlock. At the regional level, the Gulf crisis had seriously affected the Lebanese economy. Since early August, 55 000 Lebanese had returned from the Gulf area, aggravating the country's unemployment situation. There was great concern about Lebanese bank deposits and physical and business assets in Kuwait. It was estimated that trade and service-related losses for the second half of 1990 would amount to \$US 300 million as a result of the Gulf crisis and that damage to the economy would be equivalent to more than 20 per cent of Lebanon's gross domestic product. The country's annual oil bill would cost an additional \$US 1 million. Depreciation of the Lebanese pound by 46 per cent had triggered another inflationary spiral. Those economic developments had grave consequences on the social situation of Lebanon. So far, economic assistance had been limited to \$US 100 million from Saudi Arabia.

15. None the less, the past year had seen some positive developments, including the launching of the national reconciliation process on 13 October, the proposal by the Tripartite Committee of Arab Heads of State to create an International Fund for Assistance to Lebanon, and the provision of sufficient emergency relief and rehabilitation assistance, from official sources and international organizations, to meet the needs of the Lebanese population. The United Nations system had maintained its active role in Lebanon, co-ordinating nearly 20 per cent of the total commitments from official sources - amounting to \$US 20 million - in 1989 and, most likely, in 1990 as well. UNDP had reactivated its operations in Lebanon on a case-by-case basis at the Government's request and would resume large-scale technical assistance when peace and stability were restored.

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(Mr. Abu-Jawdeh)

16. At a time when the plight of the civilian population was more serious than ever, a firm commitment from donors was of great importance. In that connection, UNDRO, in co-operation with the Office of the Co-ordinator of United Nations Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon, had organized a donor information meeting at Geneva in 1990. The United Nations was endeavouring to mobilize additional resources in order to maintain certain essential programmes.

17. During the new reporting period, emergency relief and assistance for the rehabilitation of essential socio-economic services would also include training and basic data generation as part of an integrated approach. Other, traditional, elements of that approach were distribution, basic support to delivery systems, promotion of self-reliance and income earning.

18. United Nations assistance would continue its efforts to involve government structures in the planning and implementation of assistance programmes and non-governmental organizations at the field level; to promote and support national programmes, and to select projects and beneficiaries on the basis of need.

19. In conclusion, adequate human and financial resources were necessary to enable specialized agencies and programmes of the United Nations to pursue their activities. The restoration of peace and stability in Lebanon was a prerequisite for implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/180.

20. Mr. ADEI (United Nations Development Programme) said that, on 22 May 1990, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen had merged to form the Republic of Yemen. Before unification, the two countries had been in the least developed country category and the same held true for the unified Republic of Yemen. For that reason, the Governing Council of UNDP in its decision 90/34 had decided that the indicative planning figure (IPF) for Yemen in the fifth cycle would be no less than the combined IPF of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic in the fourth cycle. Had that decision not been taken, the IPF for unified Yemen for the fifth cycle would have been considerably lower.

21. The unification of Yemen had underscored that country's need to build up a national capacity to manage both development and disasters. Apart from the initial costs of the unification and restructuring process, the recent return of a large number of Yemeni workers from the Gulf countries would place added demands on Yemen's limited resources. Initial estimates received from the Government of Yemen on the economic impact of the Gulf crisis on Yemen were just below \$1.7 billion. Even if the final figure was different, it was clear that the Yemeni Government would be unable to deal with the problem. That matter was being pursued by representatives of Yemen in appropriate international forums.

22. Mr. MORAIS (Angola) said that, for more than 13 years, Angola and its people had suffered tremendous losses of life and property as a result of South African aggression, and the country was in dire need of external assistance. In its resolution 44/168, the General Assembly appealed to the international community to render the substantial financial, material and technical assistance necessary for the economic rehabilitation of Angola.

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(Mr. Morais, Angola)

23. Since 1988, the Government of Angola had taken a series of measures to stabilize the economy. It had developed its Programme of Economic and Financial Reform in order to reduce the budget deficit, reformulate credit policies, review the system of price and exchange rate control, and restructure State enterprises. However, that Programme, which was being followed closely by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, entailed extremely high social costs, and Angola required the international community's assistance in sparing the war-battered Angolan people from making further sacrifices. Moreover, such assistance was indispensable for an overall solution of the country's problems.

24. The Government of Angola welcomed the proposal by UNDP to hold a donors' round table, and hoped that it would provide the assistance necessary for carrying out its priority objectives, namely, rural replanning throughout the country; the development, jointly with Namibia, of the water potential of the Kunene River; the economic development of its southern provinces through the promotion of agriculture and mining; the restoration of transport links with neighbouring countries; the rational use of fishing resources; and the development of energy and mining resources in order to finance economic and social development.

25. Angola hoped that the Secretary-General would continue encouraging the international community to mobilize the resources necessary for the economic rehabilitation of Angola.

26. Mr. OSMAN (Somalia) said that the termination on 31 August 1990 of the Extraordinary Interim Emergency Programme had been untimely and, on 1 September 1990, the President of Somalia had sent a message to the Secretary-General requesting an extension of the Programme in order to ensure that the displaced persons and refugees would not suffer unduly from the Programme's abrupt end. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) had also requested that the Programme should be extended for at least six months. Despite those appeals, the Emergency Programme had been terminated, causing great hardship and human suffering.

27. Somalia had always supported voluntary repatriation as the best solution to its refugee problems. So far, it had managed to repatriate only a few hundred of the refugees awaiting repatriation. It could not be blamed if its repatriation programme was not being carried out within the expected time-frame, because the termination of the Emergency Programme had had an adverse effect on Somalia's refugee programmes.

28. Somalia required assistance to meet the long-term reconstruction and development needs of the people living in the north-western districts. Unfortunately, the response of the international community had so far been inadequate. Donors had been reluctant to provide resources for reconstruction activities so long as conditions in the affected areas remained unstable. However, the situation in the north-western districts had improved, and the international community and organizations of the United Nations system could resume their assistance to that part of the country.

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(Mr. Osman, Somalia)

29. His Government had recently taken far-reaching steps towards political liberalization. It had adopted a new Constitution, released all political prisoners and enacted legislation providing for elections, a multiparty system and a free press. As Somalia entered a new era in its history, its government and people would expect support and co-operation from the international community. Somalia called upon the Secretary-General to reconsider the termination of the Emergency Programme. The General Assembly at its current session should adopt interim measures for providing humanitarian assistance to displaced persons and refugees until the situation in the north-western districts was stabilized. His Government intended to submit a draft resolution on emergency assistance to Somalia at the appropriate time.

30. Mr. AL-ALFI (Yemen) said that the General Assembly had adopted resolution 44/179 on assistance to Democratic Yemen, in which it requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session in 1990, on the implementation of that resolution. His delegation wished to know what had become of that report and why there had been only an oral presentation from the representative of UNDP. It also requested confirmation as to whether the Secretary-General had submitted a report to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council. Consideration of the matter of assistance should be deferred until the report was received.

31. The CHAIRMAN said that it would not be possible to provide the representative of Yemen with an immediate answer. The Committee secretariat would look into the matter and answer his questions at a subsequent meeting.

32. Mr. DUARTE (Cape Verde), speaking on agenda item 86 (a), expressed his thanks for the report of the Secretary-General (A/45/271 and Corr.1) and the remarks of the representative of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator. He also welcomed the emphasis placed on the role of UNDR0 in General Assembly resolution 44/236, proclaiming the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. The international community and UNDR0 were to be commended for their humanitarian assistance to countries dealing with natural and man-made disasters. His delegation particularly appreciated the continued contacts between UNDR0 and the Organization of African Unity in the context of disaster relief, preparedness and prevention activities in Africa.

33. Over the years, United Nations programmes of special economic assistance to developing countries had unfailingly been supported by the Committee in its draft resolutions. He commended the documents before the Committee under the item and expressed support for the statement made by the representative of Mozambique at the eleventh meeting.

34. Turning to agenda item 87, he expressed full support for the statement made by the representative of Angola and his delegation's solidarity with the people of that country. The report of the Secretary-General on international assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola (A/45/551) gave an excellent overview of

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(Mr. Duarte, Cape Verde)

Angola's efforts to implement its economic recovery programme and of the assistance from the international community in that undertaking. He appealed to the United Nations system and international donors to participate in the round table meeting to be organized by UNDP and to respond more effectively to Angola's request for assistance at such an important stage in the country's history.

35. Mr. WEIBGEN (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), speaking on agenda item 87, recalled that the commercial agricultural sector and commercial infrastructure of Angola had collapsed with the departure of Portuguese farmers and traders on the eve of independence. While the Angolan Government had originally implemented an agricultural policy based on the formation of peasant associations and co-operatives, policy reorientations in the past two years had recognized that the traditional farming sector should be both the beneficiary and the agent for overall socio-economic development.

36. While Angola possessed extremely rich fishery and forestry resources, both those sectors had encountered major problems following independence, as had the livestock industry. The food, nutrition and health status of the Angolan population had also been deteriorating since 1985.

37. Co-operation between FAO and Angola had begun soon after independence. A number of emergency and regular projects had subsequently been financed by the FAO Technical Co-operation Programme, which had been instrumental in responding to urgent and unprogrammed needs of the Angolan Government over the years. The Government appreciated the simplified presentation, speed of approval and implementation of development projects under that Programme, which had attracted increasing amounts of bilateral and multilateral assistance.

38. The second UNDP country programme for Angola, for the period 1987-1991, had been approved with an IPF allocation of \$24.5 million, of which \$8.7 million had been earmarked for agriculture, forestry and fishery projects. A serious problem faced by FAO in the execution of such projects was the fact that its principal counterpart technical institutions were all situated in the province most seriously affected by UNITA acts of sabotage. Nevertheless, FAO was prepared to expand its co-operation with the Government of Angola in its efforts to rehabilitate and strengthen its economy in general, and the agricultural, forestry and fishery sectors in particular.

39. Mr. MAHMOUD (Lebanon), speaking on agenda item 86 (b), said that the Secretary-General's report on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Lebanon (A/45/566) gave a detailed account of the Organization's activities in his country. As a result of the continuing instability in various parts of the country, those activities had been restricted for the most part to the humanitarian field, focusing on the provision of basic necessities to victims of the emergency situation. That situation had affected all aspects of public and private life, as described in chapter II of the report.

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(Mr. Mahmoud, Lebanon)

40. The crisis in the Gulf had also had tremendous adverse effects on the Lebanese economy, currency and standard of living. Of particular importance was the fact that the Lebanese communities in Kuwait and Iraq, estimated at 45,000 and 20,000 respectively, had been the main financial support of thousands of families in Lebanon. Given that Lebanon imported 70 per cent of its needs, those remittances had been crucial in offsetting the deficit in the balance of trade. Lebanese returning from Iraq and Kuwait were likely to face unemployment.

41. Exports to the Gulf region in recent years had constituted 40 per cent to 50 per cent of all Lebanese exports; the events in the Gulf had caused exports to decline, resulting in losses estimated at \$425 million per annum. Sharp increases in oil prices would also cost the Lebanese economy \$300 million per annum, and the services sector, traditionally oriented to serving the Gulf countries, would suffer a \$250 million loss per annum. All those factors had brought about a sharp decline in the value of the Lebanese currency and a fourfold increase in the cost of living.

42. It was to be hoped that new political developments in Lebanon would bring greater peace and stability, thereby enabling United Nations agencies to increase their presence in the field and to resume implementation of their projects. The Lebanese Government was about to establish a new body which would report directly to the Prime Minister; it would bear responsibility for reconstruction and development projects and co-ordinate bilateral and multilateral assistance programmes.

43. He appealed to the United Nations system and the international community to contribute towards the planning, implementation and financing of projects for rebuilding the country's infrastructure so that basic services could be provided and health, education and human resources institutions rehabilitated. He also expressed the appreciation of the Lebanese Government and people for the assistance rendered by donor countries, the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations, and commended the ongoing commitment of the Secretary-General to emergency relief efforts in Lebanon.

44. Mr. CORREIA (Guinea-Bissau) said that, like other delegations, his delegation fully supported the provision of international assistance to Angola. Accordingly, he appealed to the international community to redouble its efforts to that end.

45. Mr. DA COSTA PEREIRA (Portugal), speaking on agenda item 87, said that his Government had followed the situation in Angola with concern and had supported the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/168 on international assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola. He welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on that topic and expressed the hope that rehabilitation measures could be implemented as soon as possible. International co-operation would complement the efforts being made by the Angolan Government. In that connection, he looked forward to the outcome of the forthcoming donor round table being prepared by UNDP.

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(Mr. Da Costa Pereira, Portugal)

46. Peace talks between the parties to the strife in Angola were being held at Lisbon under the auspices of his Government. It was to be hoped that Angolans would ultimately be able to live in a climate of peace and stability conducive to their economic development which would contribute to peace throughout southern Africa.

47. Mr. RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that his delegation attached great importance to agenda item 87. Cuba had witnessed the acts of aggression and destabilization perpetrated in Angola by South Africa and other foreign Powers, and therefore welcomed the concern shown by the United Nations on those matters.

48. He was pleased to note in the Secretary-General's report the number of donors that had pledged to assist the Angolan people in addition to the many which had already done so. Cuba would continue, to the best of its ability, to assist the Angolan people, to whom it had close ties. Cuba was well aware of the important role that that people had played in southern Africa and in the cause of Namibian independence. The United Nations system must take adequate measures to assist the Angolan Government, and the international community must participate actively in the UNDP donor round table.

49. Mr. HAMADZIRIPI (Zimbabwe) commended the Secretary-General for his report on special assistance to front-line States and other bordering States (A/45/479) and expressed gratitude to all States and organizations of the United Nations system that had reported on their implementation of General Assembly resolution 44/181. However, while many more countries and organizations than those listed in the report had assisted the front-line States in their quest for economic development and self-reliance, the number of States informing the Secretary-General of their activities had declined as compared with the previous year. He therefore urged all States to facilitate the preparation of a more comprehensive report by reporting fully on their assistance.

50. Significant developments had taken place in southern Africa during the preceding year which held out real hope for improvement in the political and economic environment of the region. Nevertheless, the effects of past and current acts of aggression and destabilization, particularly in Angola and Mozambique, continued to impede the development efforts of the countries of the region.

51. Complacency was therefore inappropriate. Continued assistance was urgently needed. In that connection, he welcomed the Nordic countries' long-term perspective on aid in the post-apartheid era, which was reflected in paragraph 42 of the report.

52. Mr. CARVALHO (Brazil), speaking on agenda item 87, said that United Nations efforts for the economic rehabilitation of Angola constituted a timely initiative which deserved the support of all Member States. Brazil, for its part, had had a long-standing commitment to help Angola overcome acts of aggression and destabilization. The time had come for the international donor community, particularly the developed countries, to focus on the plight of the Angolan people.

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(Mr. Carvalho, Brazil)

53. It was unfortunate that the Secretary-General's report did not provide more information on South-South co-operation over the years, including the efforts of Brazil to assist Angola despite its own economic difficulties. During the past year, Brazil had helped the Angolan Rural Development Institute and Ministry of Agriculture to strengthen their planning capacities, and further ways of co-operation in that area were being sought. Assistance had also been provided for rebuilding the transport infrastructure, and for charcoal production involving the transfer of reforestation technologies and expertise from Brazil to Angola.

The meeting rose at 12.20 p.m.