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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 11th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. PAPADATOS (Greece)
later: Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN informed the Committee that the Bureau had met to consider the matter of status of documentation, and had noted that a large number of reports had not yet been issued. An explanation had been requested from the Secretariat, which had been contacted at the highest level. The situation would require that changes be made in the dates on which the consideration of some agenda items had been scheduled.
2. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee) gave further information on the documentation relating to agenda items 86 and 87, which were to be considered at the current meeting, and to items 79 and 12. Concerning the latter items, he suggested that their dates of consideration should be reversed, since all but two of the reports on item 12 had been issued. The problem of late documentation was not new; it arose each year. The Secretariat had to contend with an increasingly heavy work-load. In addition, at the current session, the situation had been made worse by constant Security Council meetings, whose documentation always took priority, and which had created a glut of work.
3. Mr. MUCHANGA (Zambia) agreed that it would be logical to reverse the dates of consideration of items 79 and 12. Regarding the reports on Angola (A/45/551) and on special assistance to front-line States and other bordering States (A/45/479), he would like their consideration to be postponed to the week of 22 October.
4. Mr. OSMAN (Somalia) requested that the consideration of document A/45/483 on assistance to his country, listed under item 89 (b) of the provisional agenda, should be postponed to a later date; that document had just been issued, and his delegation would like to have more time to study it in order to make helpful comments.
5. The CHAIRMAN said that he agreed to postpone the consideration of that report.
6. Mr. KOIKE (Japan) approved of the change in the dates of the consideration of agenda items 79 and 12, and asked whether items 12 (a) and 12 (1) would be taken up later.
7. The CHAIRMAN said that those two sub-items would be considered together at a later date.
8. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia) asked whether the change in the scheduling of items 12 and 79 would apply to all the meetings allocated to those two items.
9. The CHAIRMAN said that a revised programme of work would be distributed to Committee members at the following meeting.

10. Mr. MORAIS (Angola), pointing out that the report on international assistance for the economic rehabilitation of Angola (A/45/551) had just been issued, requested postponement of its consideration to a later date.
11. Mr. MISSARY (Yemen) said that he was concerned by the delays in publication of Committee documents, particularly the addendum to document A/45/358. He asked why assistance to his country had not been made the subject of a separate document, as was the case for a number of countries.
12. Mr. ADEI (United Nations Development Programme) said that he would provide further information on that subject in the statement he would make at the current meeting.
13. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should adopt the proposed changes to its programme of work.
14. It was so decided.

ACENDA ITEM 86: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (A/45/224, A/45/598)

- (a) OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR (A/45/3, A/45/271 and Corr.1-E/1990/78 and Corr.1)
- (b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (A/45/3, A/45/358 and Add.1, A/45/479, A/45/483, A/45/505, A/45/547, A/45/562, A/45/566; A/C.2/45/2)

15. Mr. MAYRHOFER GRUNBUHEL (Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator), introducing the report on UNDRO activities in 1988-1989 (A/45/271), noted with concern that the frequency of natural disasters was growing and that communities were increasingly vulnerable because of the concentration of population and economic assets in urban and coastal areas. In addition, there appeared to be a correlation between environmental degradation, particularly global warming, and disasters such as cyclones, floods and drought.

16. Nevertheless, the new international situation had provided the opportunity to concentrate on the concept of security, a concept which must encompass the adoption of preventive measures against the threat of ecological disasters and natural disaster management. The strengthening of international co-operation in that area coincided with remarkable progress in science and technology which had assisted in mitigating the effects of disasters.

17. Where displaced persons in the Middle East were concerned, the consequences of the Gulf Crisis occupied the greater part of the Office's attention and resources. The situation had considerably improved, with the number of refugees in Jordanian camps falling from 100,000 to 4,600 persons, who should be leaving Jordan in the very near future. The United Nations system had responded well to an enormous challenge, considering that about 800,000 persons had fled Iraq and Kuwait since 2 August 1990. Jordan had taken the brunt of the crisis, having hosted more than

(Mr. Mayrhofer Grunbuehl)

600,000 displaced persons in transit, and had dealt with it admirably despite limited resources. Having already spent more than \$50 million in that effort, Jordan had been obliged to request assistance from the Office of the Co-ordinator, who had launched an appeal to the international community. The response had been generous, with a total of \$38 million in pledged contributions.

18. Mobilization and co-ordination of assistance, as well as disaster management in the field were the primary goals of UNDR0. To that end, the Office had held frequent meetings with representatives of donor and affected countries, NGOs and other United Nations agencies involved. It worked in liaison with the UNDP/UNDR0 resident representatives in various refugee transit countries. Assistance and repatriation programmes had been implemented in Egypt, Iran, Syria and Turkey. The operation had encountered a number of problems, but co-ordination generally had proved to be effective, and UNDR0 wished to thank the International Organization for Migration, WFP, UNICEF, UNRWA, WHO, UNHCR, the International Committee for the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, and Médecins sans frontières for their co-operation.

19. It was evident that recently the distinction between natural and man-made disasters had become increasingly blurred. In both instances, it was imperative to intervene rapidly and effectively in order to alleviate the suffering of the victims and the techniques of co-ordination and assistance were similar. It was more relevant to distinguish between sudden and "slow-moving" disasters. Pre-disaster planning was essential in order to reduce the effects of disasters.

20. General Assembly resolution 44/236, in which the 1990s were designated the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, reaffirmed the mandate of UNDR0, assigning it a special role in the implementation process. That mandate called for a preventive approach through disaster mitigation. UNDR0 had always striven for the implementation of practical measures to reduce disasters and their impact. Thus, it considered that the Decade represented a political recognition of one of its major concerns, and that it should further intensify its efforts. UNDR0 already had played a major role in the preparatory phase and was determined to spare no effort to ensure the success of the Decade.

21. The three elements of a successful disaster mitigation campaign referred to by the Co-ordinator two years previously remained valid and included an international strategy, international solidarity and efficient co-ordinated relief action. Provision was made for the strategy within the framework for the Decade. In that connection, UNDR0 insisted that the success of the Decade depended upon the integration of disaster mitigation into national development plans. On the basis of that conviction, the Office had made considerable efforts to strengthen its co-operation with UNDP. The two organizations had embarked on a joint training strategy and were soon to issue a disaster management manual. A further priority for UNDR0 was the development of its information-management and office-support systems.

22. International solidarity, the second element of a successful campaign, had been impressively demonstrated recently on the occasion of the disaster relating to

(Mr. Mayrhofer Grunbuhel)

the evacuees from Iraq and Kuwait and the earthquakes in Iran and Armenia. The number of donors was increasing as was the size of their contributions. It was, however, necessary to mention two problems, the first of which was the problem of forgotten disasters. For example, the crisis in the Gulf had overshadowed the catastrophic situation in Liberia. Secondly, Governments found it easier to contribute to relief operations than to prevention and preparedness activities. That attitude should be changed to conform with the philosophy underlying the Decade, which was to invest now in order to reduce damage and the need for relief later on. Support of UNDR0 was an expression of the kind of solidarity required. The report under review made it clear that the resources available to UNDR0 were inadequate. Assistance from the international community was thus essential for keeping the activities of UNDR0 at their current level and then for exceeding that level in terms of the efficiency and diversification needed if UNDR0 was to fulfil its mandate.

23. The third element was related to the rapid co-ordination of relief. The UNDR0 situation reports, which were distributed by a computerized system to several hundred addressees, were very useful in that regard. The improvement of information as the central mechanism of co-ordination was a constant concern of UNDR0, particularly in respect of the work done by the United Nations International Emergency Network, whose activities were complemented by the work done in connection with disaster communications, as evidenced by the International Conference on Disaster Communications organized by UNDR0 in March 1990. It was also essential to ensure the credibility of the information disseminated, which required close co-operation in the assessment of damage and needs with UNDP, other United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and donor countries and a constant effort on the part of UNDR0 to improve the professionalism of its staff and to enhance its procedures.

24. Although disaster relief and mitigation were first and foremost activities of a humanitarian nature, they were also closely linked to development; yet the tie between disaster management and development efforts should not obscure the fact that disaster relief was an entirely different activity and that disaster mitigation demanded skills which were not always available within the framework of development programmes. The fact that the administrative procedures of the United Nations and of some donor Governments were not normally geared to deal with emergencies was a problem to which increasing attention would need to be paid.

25. 1991 would mark the twentieth anniversary of the founding of UNDR0 by General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI). The concepts contained in that resolution were still valid. The idea of creating an effective organization to co-ordinate international disaster relief and to stimulate preparedness and prevention had stood the test of time, and UNDR0 was more than ever striving to ensure that that idea became a reality by strengthening its capacities and trying to obtain additional resources. Given such features as the many actors involved in disaster management, the execution of the mandate of UNDR0 was not a simple task; however, he and his colleagues were convinced that it could be carried out with support from the international community.

26. Mr. ADEI (United Nations Development Programme), referring to the report of the Secretary-General on special economic and disaster relief assistance (A/45/358), reviewed the situation in the eight countries which had been helped to deal with special difficulties in their efforts to develop or reconstruct their economies. Six of them were classified as least developed countries. In Benin, the new Government had decided to continue implementing its structural adjustment programme, the principal measures of which were described in the report of the Secretary-General.

27. The Central African Republic was also continuing to implement its structural adjustment programme. The financial difficulties it faced as a land-locked country had been exacerbated by the weakness of world coffee and tobacco prices. As recommended at the round-table conference held at Geneva in June 1987, a number of sectoral meetings had been organized and others were scheduled.

28. With regard to Chad, he said that the third round-table conference of donors had been held in June 1990 and that a number of sectoral consultations were scheduled. The United Nations system was providing Chad with substantial assistance especially in the areas of health and food. In addition, he said that in 1989 the international community had provided \$US 6,727,000 to deal with a plague of migratory locusts.

29. With regard to Madagascar, he noted that the report referred to the beginnings of economic growth in 1988 after a decade of efforts aimed at financial stabilization. Increasing attention was now being given to the social and environmental dimensions of adjustment.

30. Yemen had experienced disastrous floods in March 1989. UNDP assistance was being directed both to reconstruction and to efforts to strengthen the countries' capacity in disaster-recovery management.

31. Djibouti had launched a budgetary austerity programme in an effort to reduce its trade deficit. Signs that the situation was improving were already noted. WFP, UNHCR and UNICEF were providing substantial assistance.

32. The difficulties confronting Vanuatu had been compounded by two cyclones which had caused considerable destruction in 1988 and 1989. A round-table conference of donors had been held in 1988 for the purpose of integrating various sources of assistance into the countries' overall development plan.

33. Although considerable economic progress had been recorded in Ecuador in 1989, the country was still confronted with serious problems which impeded its development.

34. All the countries referred to had benefited from special programmes of economic assistance. The idea was to co-ordinate and integrate that assistance into their individual development plans. It should be borne in mind that the adjustment programmes currently being implemented had significant social cost implications and that the countries concerned could not attain the financial

(Mr. Adai)

stability and economic growth to which they aspired without generous support from the international community.

35. Mr. MILINTACHINDA (Thailand) said his country attached great importance to the role of UNDR0 in co-ordinating emergency relief operations. His Government had been able to observe the effectiveness of UNDR0's work on the occasion of the floods which had devastated southern Thailand in 1988. In an effort to mitigate the impact of disasters, Thailand had established a committee for co-ordinating emergency relief. Special efforts had been made to rehabilitate the people displaced from their homes as a result of the floods. The Chulabhorn Research Institute also implemented rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes with assistance from UNDP. In addition, the Government of Thailand had, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 42/169, created a committee to co-ordinate its relief activities with those undertaken by the United Nations system.

36. Thailand had incorporated disaster prevention and mitigation measures into its seventh Economic and Social Development Plan. To facilitate the integration of such measures, the country would welcome assistance from UNDP and UNDR0, which could, for example, provide advice on the use of the early warning systems or on the implementation of disaster contingency plans.

37. Thailand attached great importance to the Special Economic Assistance programmes which might, in certain cases, be supplemented by additional assistance on a bilateral basis. As part of its humanitarian efforts, Thailand had contributed to the Trust Fund to assist Mozambique; it had also provided assistance for the drought victims in southern Angola and intended to continue contributing to the world-wide effort in respect of disaster mitigation.

38. Thailand reaffirmed its support for the activities of UNDR0 and asked the international community to strengthen the effectiveness of the measures taken to help countries affected by disaster by supporting the efforts being made by UNDR0 and other United Nations bodies.

39. Mr. FONDI (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Community, said that natural disasters were becoming more frequent: the number of people affected by them had more than doubled in the 1980s compared to the 1960s, increasing from 28 million to 64 million.

40. The toll was particularly severe in developing countries because average yearly losses during the past 20 years had amounted to more than 2.5 per cent of GNP in the 17 most disaster-prone countries, and more than 5 per cent of GNP in six of them.

41. In such a situation, the role of the United Nations system, particularly that of UNDR0, was crucial. Logically, the first task of the Office was to improve pre-disaster planning and disaster prevention. It was basically a question of promoting the study and prevention of natural disasters, in particular through the dissemination of information on scientific and technical developments in order to

(Mr. Fondi, Italy)

facilitate the adoption of structural reinforcement measures. In that respect, it was important that UNDRO should help national authorities improve their disaster assessment and relief management capability in order to make preparedness an integral part of national planning. Preparedness and prevention were being given special attention within the framework of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. In that regard, there was a need for close co-operation between UNDRO and the secretariat of the Decade.

42. The fundamental task of the Office, however, was to provide disaster relief in both the area of disaster information and that of relief co-ordination. With regard to the first point, it was essential to gather and transmit accurate and reliable information to ensure good co-ordination. The Twelve appreciated the effective work carried out by UNDRO in that field and fully supported its role as global co-ordinator. It usually succeeded in being the focal point for communication between victims and Governments, on the one hand, and donor officials and the general public, on the other. The Twelve commended in particular the ongoing modernization of its electronic communication system and felt that it was necessary to pursue the idea of establishing a data bank on disaster management and technical expertise available throughout the world. That would make it easy to send experts on field missions immediately after a disaster. The second aspect of the Office's work, namely, relief co-ordination, which involved mobilizing the international community, was crucial in order to provide an immediate and effective response in emergency situations.

43. While recognizing the recent progress made, the Twelve were convinced that the Office could considerably enhance the effectiveness of existing mechanisms and, in particular, improve the co-ordination of assistance to victims. The plight of the refugees from Iraq and Kuwait in Jordan was alarming and it must be admitted that the operations conducted to assist them had not been as satisfactory as one might have wished. At the same time, the Twelve were aware of the fact that the ultimate results of activities carried out by the international community depended very much on the effectiveness of national co-ordination mechanisms. It was essential to improve those mechanisms.

44. The Twelve commended the increasing and fruitful collaboration between UNDRO and UNDP, particularly the Office's intention to strengthen its relationship with resident representatives. It was very appropriate that UNDP regarded disaster preparedness and prevention as essential elements of country programmes. It would thus be easier to integrate disaster mitigation into national development plans. Nevertheless, the nations affected must seek help to improve their preparedness.

45. The European Community expressed satisfaction at the efforts of the Office to strengthen its collaboration with non-governmental organizations, scientific groups and universities. It was well known that very often the effectiveness of the assistance provided was greatly enhanced by the contribution of non-governmental organizations.

46. Mr. DOUTOUM (Chad) stressed that the developing countries were the most affected by the deterioration of the international economic situation and that their situation might worsen owing to increases in the price of oil. For that reason, the second Paris Conference on the Least Developed Countries was important and the commitments undertaken in the Declaration that had been adopted there should be carried out immediately.

47. Throughout the 1980s, Chad had benefited from sustained assistance by the international community above all because it had been the victim of a number of disasters. Its economic activities had suffered from three major events, namely the war of aggression which had impoverished the country, the drought and the ensuing desertification, and the slump in the price of cotton, which was the main source of income.

48. Under those difficult circumstances, the Government had adopted a structural adjustment programme which had received significant international aid (IMF, the African Development Bank, Saudi Arabia, the World Bank and EEC).

49. In spite of the difficulties besetting it, which resulted mainly from its indebtedness, Chad was firmly committed to a reform and restructuring policy and naturally welcomed the holding of the third round-table conference in Geneva in June 1990. It was now a question of consolidating progress made in the reconstruction phase and promoting the country's economic and social development. In that regard, Chad would seek to increase domestic production by modernizing productive structures, increasing the participation of the population in development and re-establishing the general macro-economic balance. Rural development, the first priority, would continue to be given increased attention. The development of human resources was another priority area and particular importance in that regard was attached to women, who must be integrated into the development process and whose access to decision-making bodies must be expanded.

50. The orientation plan approved in Geneva would be reviewed by the Government on the basis of the sectoral and thematic consultations that had been scheduled and should focus on the following points: the technical co-operation policy, the private sector, the environment and measures to combat desertification, rural development, food security and water resources, and, lastly, urban development.

51. His Government had firmly committed itself to fulfilling its obligations to the international community. In view of the immensity of the task to be carried out, Chad would once again submit a draft resolution which would provide the legal basis for following up action taken 10 years earlier and hoped that it would receive the unanimous support of the Committee.

52. Chad was once again threatened by famine. Agricultural production would undoubtedly stagnate, particularly in the Sahelian region. Crop damage had already occurred and the situation was at times critical. The fragile gains might be endangered and urgent action must be taken by the international community.

53. Mr. BARAC (Romania) noted with appreciation the very important work carried out by UNDR0 during the biennium 1988-1989. Disaster relief operations had significantly increased because of a growing number of natural disasters and their serious human, economic and social impact. The Office had therefore considerably developed its emergency transport and warehousing facility, and its airlift and air-drop operations for emergency relief. Although the Office had also broadened its activities related to disaster preparedness and prevention, it should also expand its disaster mitigation programmes particularly since the cost of such activities was very modest in relation to the loss of life and property losses that they could prevent. Governments recognized the benefits of those activities and disaster mitigation techniques which were better defined and more widely applicable. Romania supported the Office's proposed medium-term plan and the activities planned in that regard, particularly, the dissemination of manuals on disaster mitigation techniques, the organization of training seminars, the provision of technical expertise, the exchange of experience between disaster-prone developing countries, as well as programmes aimed at predicting natural disasters and the preparation of work programmes for the step-by-step application of disaster mitigation techniques on the basis of disaster probability. Studies of the losses caused by past disasters could serve as a guide in evaluating future risks.

54. Romania had received, after the revolution of December 1989, very substantial humanitarian aid from many Governments and various agencies and individuals. The new Romanian authorities expressed their profound gratitude to all donors. Unfortunately, foreign assistance was still required in order to overcome the difficulties facing the Romanian people in the current transition to a market-oriented economy.

55. Mr. VERCELES (Philippines) said that the Philippines was an island developing country prone to natural disasters such as typhoons, floods and earthquakes. An extremely violent earthquake had hit the country a few months earlier, causing hundreds of deaths and affecting more than a million people. Houses, schools, bridges and roads had been destroyed and the damage was estimated at \$1 billion. The international community had provided immediate relief, demonstrating its increasing capacity to cope with the effects of natural disasters. His Government was deeply grateful to all the countries that had provided assistance and to UNDP, UNDR0, the International Committee of the Red Cross and non-governmental organizations. The earthquake and the relief provided clearly showed clearly that the international community must continue to pay particular attention to the problem of natural disasters and to strengthening co-operation in mitigating their effects. They also highlighted the importance of disaster prevention and preparedness. His country was among those that had benefited from UNDR0 efforts in that area. Disaster management training workshops had been organized with the technical assistance of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre. Another project was providing practical guidance in the construction of well-designed, typhoon-resistant, low-cost housing.

56. The international community must also give greater attention to the provision of relief supplies and transport equipment for immediate availability in emergency situations. However, UNDR0 lacked the necessary resources; its budget for the current biennium was a meagre \$7 million. Its funds should be substantially

(Mr. Verceles, Philippines)

increased in order to enable it to respond to requests for emergency disaster assistance beyond the ceiling of \$50,000 per country. That ceiling should be doubled. It was better not to be overly reliant on sudden impulses of generosity on the part of donors.

57. Some disasters were preventable. It was therefore imperative that the international community should give due attention to prevention. That would also allow for sustainable development activities. Natural disasters often cancelled out patient development efforts, with transport and communication facilities, agricultural production and human settlements usually the hardest hit. After a disaster, a country's economy must also make difficult adjustments. Food supplies had to be refurbished and production targets revised.

58. That was the unfortunate experience of the Philippines. The earthquake had occurred at a time when the country was well on the road to development. Having barely recovered from the immediate consequences of the disaster, the country's economy had now been hit by the sharp rise in oil prices caused by the Gulf crisis, which affected many oil-importing developing countries. The Philippines was prepared to act in concert with the international community in urging that the price of oil be maintained at stable and fair levels for both consumers and producers. Statistics apart, the hardships suffered by the victims of natural disasters in their daily lives led him to appeal to the international community to increase its bilateral and multilateral assistance to affected countries.

Mr. Amaziane (Morocco) took the Chair.

59. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia), speaking on behalf of the members of the South Pacific Forum that were members of the United Nations, expressed sympathy to the Caribbean countries recently hit by hurricane Klaus. The year before, hurricane Hugo had caused heavy loss of life and severe property damage. The countries of the South Pacific were all too familiar with such calamities and how they could suddenly cancel out years of patient development efforts. Early in 1990, a number of countries and territories in the region had been hit by cyclone Ofa. That disaster had been the subject of an Economic and Social Council resolution at its organizational session of 1990. Unfortunately, the report on the status of the emergency assistance provided for in that resolution had yet to materialize.

60. In his delegation's view, the system established by UNDR0 should have three objectives: firstly, information, since the United Nations system should provide a forum for stricken countries to bring their plight to the attention of the international community, inter alia, through the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Secondly, relief co-ordination and information about an emergency in a given country, were very useful to the international community, especially donors. He cited the example of the accurate information flow under Operation Lifeline Sudan. Thirdly, UNDR0 should play a more active role in preventing and mitigating the effects of disasters, paying special attention to the many linkages between those efforts and the overall development process. The countries of the South Pacific Forum reaffirmed their confidence in UNDR0 and their

(Mr. Babington, Australia)

support for its mandate and work. In that connection, they welcomed UNDR0's plans to carry out in-country needs identification surveys in order to develop a disaster mitigation work programme in the South-West Pacific, with special emphasis on cyclones. That was consistent with the Forum's recent call for steps in the area of disaster preparedness. He hoped that those plans would soon be implemented, despite resources constraints and that UNDR0 and the secretariat of the South Pacific Forum would strengthen their co-operation.

61. The countries of the South Pacific Forum fully supported the objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, which would reduce the impact of disasters on humanity. In that context, there ought to be the strongest possible linkages between UNDR0 and UNDP. UNDP had responded rapidly to reconstruction and rehabilitation needs after several cyclones in the region. As part of that co-operation, the central co-ordinating role of the UNDP resident co-ordinator of disaster relief and mitigation activities must be firmly established. UNDR0 had also made efforts to co-operate with non-governmental organizations, which often played an invaluable role in emergency assistance and prevention activities.

62. While there was certainly no way to prevent natural disasters, their often terrible effects could at least be mitigated with foresight and preparation. United Nations work in that area was practical and invaluable.

63. Mr. MISSARY (Yemen) said that his delegation had read with great interest the Secretary-General's report on assistance to Yemen (A/45/358). It was grateful to the United Nations and its agencies for their unremitting efforts to mobilize the assistance his country needed and thanked all those who had helped it deal with the disasters it had suffered.

64. His delegation wanted the name "Democratic Yemen" to be replaced in reports once and for all by "Republic of Yemen", particularly since the change of name dated back to 2 May 1990, when the Republic of Yemen had been proclaimed. It hoped that the Secretariat would take note of that observation.

65. Paragraphs 69 to 74 of the report dealt with the disasters suffered by Yemen in 1982 and 1989, the country's political development - particularly the birth of the Republic of Yemen - and the economic situation. The document, which had been prepared after the proclamation of the Republic of Yemen, should have mentioned the process of unifying the institutions of the two States and the attendant additional burdens, which would inevitably affect the country's economic and social development. It should also have mentioned the serious effects of the Gulf crisis for Yemen, particularly the financial repercussions and economic and social consequences of the return of nearly 200,000 Yemeni workers, which were likely to exacerbate the difficulties of an already sorely tried economy.

66. Recalling that the purpose of General Assembly resolution 44/179 had been to determine assistance needs from an overall standpoint so as to enable the country to complete the reconstruction efforts begun after the 1982 disaster, and

(Mr. Missary, Yemen)

particularly to cope with the consequences of the 1989 disaster, his delegation noted that the Secretary-General's report prepared pursuant to that resolution had not fulfilled that purpose. Similarly, document A/C.2/45/L.1/Add.1 (state of preparation of documentation) made no mention of resolution 44/179. He hoped that the Secretariat would explain that omission.

67. Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Committee), noting the points raised by the delegation of Yemen, said that they would be taken into account and that he would keep the delegation informed.

68. Mr. MacARTHUR (United States of America) noted with satisfaction the increasing effectiveness with which the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) was performing its task, particularly its objective reporting of major disaster relief efforts. In the case of the Iran earthquake, in particular, the Office had provided a balanced view of the damage and the response which might not otherwise have been available. More recently, it had co-ordinated assistance to refugees evacuated from Iraq to Jordan. The appointment of a special UNDRO co-ordinator in the field had greatly facilitated the relief effort.

69. It was also encouraging to see UNDRO strengthening its ties with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in both disaster relief and preparedness activities. The Office had also reviewed its information systems and planned to improve them. He hoped that UNDRO would achieve those goals.

70. Mr. HASSAN (Pakistan) said that his country appreciated the efforts of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) to provide timely assistance to countries affected by natural disasters. The developing countries, which lacked the necessary infrastructure and financial resources, were particularly vulnerable to such calamities. It was therefore essential to strengthen UNDRO. It was particularly important for UNDRO to expand its capacity to disseminate timely and reliable disaster-related information and to update its profiles of high-risk countries. Efforts to develop an international disaster management information network must be intensified and co-operation between UNDRO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) strengthened. There was also a need to convene meetings at the regional and international level to facilitate the exchange of expertise for the prevention and control of disasters.

71. On the question of finances, he noted with satisfaction that the Office had been able to gain the support of an increasing number of donor countries. It was imperative that that support be maintained and strengthened.

72. At its forty-fourth session, the General Assembly had adopted nine resolutions on special assistance to a number of countries and regions. His delegation fully supported the programmes envisaged in those resolutions and emphasized the need for them to be implemented in full. While some progress had been made in alleviating the plight of those countries, following the adoption of the resolutions, a great deal more needed to be done. It was essential, therefore, that the international community increase its assistance in order to meet the reconstruction needs of those countries.

(Mr. Hassan, Pakistan)

73. The crisis in the Gulf had seriously strained the economies of many developing countries, including Pakistan, which were already facing serious economic problems. The dramatic increase in oil prices and the suspension of trade and of remittances from nationals employed in Iraq and Kuwait had plunged their economies into deep crisis. Pakistan's current account deficit would increase by \$2 billion in the present year alone. With the low level of foreign exchange liquid reserves, it would be virtually impossible to cope with the situation. It was therefore essential that the international community and the multilateral financial institutions release additional resources to those hard pressed countries and that the United Nations system make its own contribution to alleviating their plight.

74. Mr. ZANDAMELA (Mozambique) said that the international community must give urgent attention to the question of special economic assistance to countries which for various reasons were experiencing serious difficulties in their efforts to achieve economic and social development.

75. Special economic assistance continued to be a matter of great concern for Mozambique because of the protracted war of attrition that had diverted much of its limited resources to the defence of its people and its territorial integrity. That war of destabilization had claimed many victims, inflicted considerable material damage and caused the breakdown of socio-economic infrastructures. As a result of that tragedy, thousands of families had been displaced, deprived of all their possessions and reduced to conditions of extreme poverty.

76. The international donors' conference on emergency assistance to Mozambique recently organized jointly by the United Nations and the Government of Mozambique, had decided, among other things, that assistance would be given only to the population directly affected by the emergency. The response of the international community, although encouraging, had not been sufficient to cover the country's pressing needs.

77. If the situation was to be prevented from deteriorating further, the working relationship between the Government, the donor community, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations must continue to be strengthened.

78. In that context, the proposal to create reserve stocks should considerably improve food security in the most stricken areas. Experience showed that the programme for the distribution of seeds and agricultural tools to displaced persons had, with the support of the Government and donors, reduced their dependence on food aid. That initiative deserved vigorous support.

79. The some 200,000 Mozambican returnees from neighbouring countries posed a major problem for the country. Their resettlement and reintegration was a difficult task which would need strong backing from the United Nations system.

80. At the World Bank consultative meeting held in November 1989, a new economic and social rehabilitation programme for the country had been launched which envisaged a strategy for economic growth and poverty alleviation, especially in

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rural areas. That undertaking would be a point of departure for revitalizing the country's development process.

81. The recent developments in southern Africa, in particular the independence of Namibia which had marked the downfall of the last stronghold of colonialism in Africa, were of paramount importance for the restoration of peace and stability in the region. The new developments in South Africa were encouraging, but there would never be prosperity in the region until its peoples were ready to work together for peace and progress.

82. Internally, the Government was doing its utmost to bring about peace and stability and was ready to discuss any matter of substance that might bring about the fulfilment of that aim.

83. He reaffirmed his Government's determination to continue to work closely with the United Nations system and with governmental and non-governmental organizations towards reducing the suffering of millions of Mozambicans.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.