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INTERNATIONAL DECADE FOR NATURAL DISASTER REDUCTION

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.39

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with
rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under the terms of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.39, the General Assembly would:

(a) Endorse the Declaration of the Special High-Level Council and encourage the members of the Council to embark actively on the implementation of their tasks, with particular attention to increasing public awareness of the potential for disaster reduction and raising support for the activities of the Decade from Governments, funding organizations and the business community (operative para. 1);

(b) Endorse the recommendations contained in the first annual report of the Scientific and Technical Committee on the Decade, while recognizing that implementation by disaster-vulnerable countries of the targets set by that Committee would constitute significant progress in reducing the impact of disaster during the Decade (operative para. 2);

(c) Endorse also the proposal of the Scientific and Technical Committee concerning the convening in 1994 of a world conference of representatives of national committees for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, which would bring together participants from a broad range of sectors of activity, including the scientific and technological sector, the business sector and the industrial sector, as well as non-governmental groups, and which would serve as a substantive contribution to the mid-term review of the implementation of the International Framework of Action for the Decade, called for in its resolution 44/236 (operative para. 3);

(d) Request the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the activities of the Decade (operative para. 8).

B. Relationship of the proposed requests to the medium-term plan and the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993

2. The activities referred to in the draft resolution are related to major programme VII, programme 37 (Disaster relief and mitigation, and special emergency programmes) subprogramme 2 (Disaster mitigation) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997. 1/ They are also related to, but not programmed under, section 30 (Disaster relief operations) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993, 2/ in which it is indicated, in paragraph 30.1, that details on staff and resources for the Decade secretariat are to be provided separately.

C. Activities by which the proposed requests would be implemented

3. With regard to the activities for the Decade as envisaged for the biennium 1992-1993 (A/46/266-E/1991/106/Add.1), it is understood that the Special High-Level Council would continue to provide the Secretary-General with overall advice for the implementation of the objective and goals of the Decade. The Council would meet annually during the biennium and focus on improvement of capabilities at the national level, particularly human resources, mobilization of support for disaster mitigation activities from the public and private sectors, increased involvement of the media, development of incentives for natural disaster mitigation, and international coordination. The Scientific and Technical Committee would meet twice in 1992 and once in 1993 and continue to develop, within the International Framework of Action for the Decade, specific programmes to reduce losses from natural disasters, paying attention to priorities and gaps in technical knowledge identified at the national level, and continue to assess and evaluate the activities carried out in the course of the Decade, as envisaged in document A/46/266-E/1991/106/Add.1. The Committee would continue to report annually to the Secretary-General, making recommendations on the above-mentioned programmes.

4. The Decade secretariat, established at the United Nations Office at Geneva, in close association with the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), and under the overall guidance of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, would provide substantive and secretarial support to the Special High-Level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee and facilitate the exchange of information between those bodies. The secretariat would also provide support to national committees in the development of national disaster reduction plans; assist the Member States in the development and implementation of disaster mitigation projects; coordinate Decade activities with other organizations of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations;

undertake research and disseminate information material, in consultation with the Scientific and Technical Committee and national committees; and issue a bi-monthly newsletter Stop Disasters. The Decade secretariat would continuously monitor the implementation of the International Framework of Action and the achievement of the Decade targets and goals, and prepare the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Decade for submission to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

D. Modifications required in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993

5. As indicated in paragraph 2 above, activities related to the Decade are not programmed in the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993. Accordingly, the work programme under section 30 (Disaster relief operations) subprogramme 2 (Disaster mitigation) of the proposed programme budget for that biennium would need to be modified by adding the following activities:

(a) International cooperation

Emergency and humanitarian relief services

Support services for the work of the Special High-Level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee, including the facilitation of information exchange between these bodies; provision of support to national committees in the development of national disaster reduction plans; liaison with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with achieving the objective and goals of the Decade (extrabudgetary);

(b) Parliamentary services

Parliamentary documentation

Report to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on activities implemented in the context of the Decade (extrabudgetary);

(c) Published material

Recurrent publication: bi-monthly Decade newsletter Stop Disasters (extrabudgetary);

(d) Operational activities

Advisory services on development and implementation of disaster mitigation projects (extrabudgetary);

(e) Coordination, harmonization and liaison

Coordination of activities in the context of the Decade with other United Nations programmes and with specialized agencies of the United Nations system (extrabudgetary).

E. Financial arrangements and estimated requirements for the biennium 1992-1993

6. Under the terms of the financial arrangements outlined in the annex to General Assembly resolution 44/236, the activities of the Decade are financed from extrabudgetary resources provided by Governments, international organizations and other sources, including the private sector. In 1989, the Secretary-General established a Trust Fund for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, which has financed activities related to the Decade since the preparatory stage, including expenditures for its secretariat.

7. On 1 January 1990, the Trust Fund had an opening balance of \$67,000 accrued from the preparatory activities of 1989. For the biennium 1990-1991, voluntary contributions totalling \$2,010,900 have been received, including contributions earmarked for the biennium 1992-1993, namely a contribution of \$136,000 from the Government of Finland to provide for an economist and \$500,000 from the Government of Japan.

8. During the biennium 1990-1991, the Trust Fund provided the following staff resources for the secretariat:

(a) A temporary L-6 post was established in August 1990 to accommodate a senior scientist through June 1992 and was provided under bilateral arrangements with the Government of the United States of America. The incumbent of the post was subsequently designated Acting Director of the Decade secretariat;

(b) A temporary P-5 post was established for the biennium 1990-1991 and financed from the Trust Fund.

9. Operating costs, including those for general temporary assistance, staff travel, general operating expenses, acquisition of furniture and equipment and supplies and materials, have been met from the resources of the Trust Fund. Total expenditures, including provision for the above posts, amounted to \$1,338,000 for the biennium 1990-1991. In addition, in 1991, the first session of the Scientific and Technical Committee was supported by the Government of Germany, and the second session of the Committee and the inaugural session of the Special High-Level Council were financed by the Government of Japan. During the biennium 1990-1991, the production, translation and printing of three issues of the Decade newsletter Stop Disasters was undertaken by the Vesuvius Observatory of Italy. Moreover, consultants have been provided to the secretariat by the World Health Organization and the World Meteorological Organization on a part-time basis.

10. For the biennium 1992-1993, the full cost of providing conference servicing for the Special High-Level Council meeting at Geneva for one day each year of the biennium and the Scientific and Technical Committee meeting at Geneva for two sessions of one week each in 1992, and for a session of one week in 1993, is estimated at \$828,700 as follows:

| | <u>1992</u> | <u>1993</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | \$ | \$ | \$ |
| <u>Special High-Level Council</u> | | | |
| <u>Conference-servicing costs</u> | | | |
| Pre-session documentation (24 pages, 1 document: A,C,E,F,R,S) | 21 800 | 22 800 | |
| Meeting servicing (Interpretation: A,C,E,F,R,S) | 9 900 | 10 400 | |
| Post-session documentation (5 pages, 1 document: A,C,E,F,R,S) | <u>5 000</u> | <u>5 200</u> | |
| Total | <u>36 700</u> | <u>38 400</u> | <u>75 100</u> |
| <u>Other costs</u> | | | |
| Travel and daily subsistence allowance for 10 members of the Special High-Level Council meeting for one day each year | 31 600 | 33 000 | <u>64 600</u> |
| <u>Scientific and Technical Committee</u> | | | |
| <u>Conference-servicing costs</u> | | | |
| Pre-session documentation (100 pages, 5 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S) | 183 000 | 96 000 | |
| Meeting servicing (Interpretation: A,C,E,F,R,S) | 99 500 | 52 200 | |
| In-session documentation (90 pages, 9 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S) | 165 800 | 87 000 | |
| Post-session documentation (24 pages, 3 documents: A,C,E,F,R,S) | <u>46 000</u> | <u>24 100</u> | |
| Total | <u>494 300</u> | <u>259 300</u> | <u>753 600</u> |
| <u>Other costs</u> | | | |
| Travel and daily subsistence allowance for 25 members of the Scientific and Technical Committee for two sessions of one week each in 1992 and one session of one week in 1993 | 188 900 | 95 700 | <u>284 600</u> |

11. The non-conference-servicing costs of travel and daily subsistence allowance for participants in the meetings of the two bodies, totalling \$349,200, is expected to be financed from a fund of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). However, it is anticipated that the conference-servicing costs for meetings of the Special High-Level Council and the Scientific and Technical Committee would, as was the practice in the current biennium, be funded from the regular budget of the United Nations within the overall conference-servicing capacity of the Organization.

12. With regard to the Decade secretariat, in addition to the posts referred to in paragraph 8 above, bilateral arrangements with the Government of Finland would provide for a P-4 post for an economist during 1992. Moreover, given the level and scope of responsibilities attached to the Decade secretariat, it is proposed to establish a post for the Director of the secretariat at the D-2 level, effective January 1992, in order to provide overall coordination of the Decade activities and generate much-needed voluntary contributions. Negotiations are also under way with prospective donors regarding provision for two experts in support of national committee and public information activities.

13. On the basis of the above proposals, the staffing of the Decade secretariat and related costs for 1992-1993 would be as follows:

| | \$ |
|--|----------------|
| (a) 1 D-2 post for the Director of the secretariat, responsible for the management and supervision of all work of the secretariat and the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources to support its activities | |
| January 1992-December 1993 | 329 200 |
| (b) 1 L-6 post, funded by the Government of the United States for a senior scientist to provide technical advice on disaster-related issues (consultations with the donor are under way for possible continuation of this arrangement) | |
| January-June 1992 | 75 800 |
| (c) 1 P-5 post for a senior officer responsible for the initiation, planning and coordination of activities for the Decade | |
| January 1992-December 1993 | 284 200 |
| (d) 1 P-4 post, funded by the Government of Finland, for an economist to advise on the cost benefits of disaster mitigation | |
| January-December 1992 | <u>121 700</u> |
| Total | <u>810 900</u> |

14. In addition, it is estimated the secretariat would require \$669,500 for its operation and other costs during the biennium 1992-1993, as detailed below:

| | \$ |
|---|----------------|
| General temporary assistance (equivalent to 48 work/months at the General Service level) | 269 500 |
| Travel of staff | 130 000 |
| External printing | 20 000 |
| General operating expenses | 20 000 |
| Communications | 40 000 |
| Supplies and materials | 18 000 |
| Hospitality | 6 000 |
| Advisory services (operational projects) | <u>166 000</u> |
| Total | <u>669 500</u> |

15. In accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, a programme support provision of 13 per cent, or \$192,400, would be added to the costs of \$1,480,400 estimated in paragraphs 13 and 14 above, amounting to a total of \$1,672,800 to be financed from the Trust Fund for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction in 1992-1993. As mentioned in paragraph 11, the estimated non-conference-servicing costs of \$349,200 for travel and per diem for participants in the meetings of the two bodies in 1992-1993 is expected to be funded from UNDP sources.

F. Potential for absorption

Conference-servicing costs

16. As indicated in paragraph 10 above, the estimates of conference-servicing costs totalling \$828,700 would be provided from the overall conference-servicing capacity of the Organization. These estimates are based on the theoretical assumption that no part of the conference-servicing requirements would be met from within the permanent conference-servicing capacity under section 32 (Conference services) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 and that additional resources would be required for temporary assistance for meetings. The extent to which the Organization's permanent capacity needs to be supplemented by temporary assistance resources can only be determined in the light of the proposed calendar of conferences for the biennium 1992-1993. As indicated in section 32, paragraph 32.5, of the proposed programme budget, however, the level of resources for temporary assistance for meetings in 1992-1993 was estimated on the basis of previous experience to accommodate not only meetings that were programmed, but also additional meetings. In other words, provision

was made in the proposed programme budget not only for meetings known at the time of budget preparation, but also for meetings that would be authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings and conferences in 1992-1993 was consistent with the pattern of meetings in past years. On that basis, it is estimated that no additional resources would be required under section 32 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 as a result of the adoption of the draft resolution.

Non-conference-servicing costs

17. As indicated in paragraph 15, the estimated requirements from the Trust Fund for the biennium 1992-1993 would amount to \$1,672,800. Bearing in mind the expected Trust Fund balance of \$739,900 at the end of December 1991, additional extrabudgetary resources in the amount of \$932,900 would be required to maintain the secretariat and implement activities in the forthcoming biennium.

G. Summary

18. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.39, the additional activities as detailed in paragraph 5 above would be included under section 30 (Disaster relief operations) of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

19. Adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.39 by the General Assembly would have no financial implications for the United Nations regular budget. However, additional extrabudgetary resources in the amount of \$932,900 would be required for the biennium 1992-1993 in order to implement the Decade activities. Should additional voluntary contributions not materialize, the activities proposed would have to be deferred until sufficient resources were available under the Trust Fund.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/45/6/Rev.1), vol. II.

2/ Ibid., Forty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/46/6/Rev.1), vol. II.
