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REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Japan and Morocco: draft resolution

International Decade for Natural Hazard Reduction

The General Assembly,

Recalling that the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide facilities for co-ordinated multidisciplinary research at the regional level aimed at synthesizing, integrating and advancing existing knowledge on the interrelationships between population, resources, environment and development, in order to assist Member States, particularly the developing countries, and the organizations of the United Nations system in their efforts to cope with the complex and multidimensional problems related to this field in the context of social and economic development, 1/

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 2/ which calls for new national and international approaches in dealing with the various factors affecting the environment, including natural disasters,

Considering that natural disasters, such as those caused by earthquakes, windstorms (cyclones, hurricanes, tornadoes, typhoons), floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, fires and other calamities, such as drought and desertification, have claimed about three million lives world wide in the past two decades, adversely affected the lives of at least 800 million more and resulted in immediate damages exceeding \$23 billion,

1/ Resolution 3345 (XXIX).

2/ Our Common Future (Oxford and New York, Oxford University Press, 1987).

Recognizing that the effect of such disasters may severely damage the fragile economic infrastructure of developing countries, especially the least developed and island-developing countries, and thus hamper their development process,

Recalling that the Secretary-General has urged Member States to share the existing scientific knowledge and the implementation of practical programmes of preparedness with a view to preventing natural disasters or minimizing their effects to the extent possible, 3/

Taking note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the existing mechanisms and arrangements within the United Nations system for disaster and emergency assistance and co-ordination, 4/

Convinced that an international decade for natural hazard reduction would give genuine impetus to a series of concrete measures at the international level, and in particular at the national and regional levels,

Recognizing that the primary responsibility for defining the general goals and directions of efforts undertaken in the framework of an international decade for natural hazard reduction and for implementing the measures that would result from its activities lies with the Governments of the countries concerned,

Considering that the concept of a global programme such as the international decade for natural hazard reduction is predicated on collaborative efforts among culturally and economically diverse nations, together with relevant organizations of the United Nations system and other national and international non-governmental organizations, including the scientific and technological institutions concerned,

1. Recognizes the importance of natural hazard reduction for all nations, in particular for developing countries;

2. Recognizes further that scientific and technical understanding of natural hazards and of ways to reduce both human and property losses has progressed sufficiently so that a concerted effort to assemble, disseminate and apply this knowledge through a world-wide programme would have very positive effects, particularly for developing countries;

3. Proclaims the 1990s the International Decade for Natural Hazard Reduction, to be observed under the auspices of the United Nations;

4. Decides that the objective of the Decade is to reduce catastrophic loss of life, property damage, and social and economic disruption caused by natural hazards, such as earthquakes, windstorms (cyclones, hurricanes, tornadoes, typhoons), floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions and fires; and that its goals are:

3/ Statement made by the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1987.

4/ A/42/657.

- (a) To devise new guidelines and strategies for applying existing knowledge, taking into account the cultural and economic diversities among nations;
- (b) To foster scientific and engineering endeavours aimed at closing critical gaps in knowledge in order to reduce loss of life and property;
- (c) To disseminate existing and new information related to measures for assessment, prediction, prevention and mitigation of natural hazards;
- (d) To implement these measures through programmes of technical assistance and technology transfer, demonstration projects, education and training, all tailored to specific hazards and locations, and to evaluate their effectiveness;
- (e) To improve the capacity of each country to expeditiously and effectively mitigate the effects of natural disasters;

5. Requests the Secretary-General, in co-operation with the organizations of the United Nations system concerned, and relevant scientific, technical, academic and other non-governmental organizations, to submit a report developing an appropriate framework to attain the objective and goals of the Decade to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session;

6. Recommends that, if necessary, extrabudgetary resources be provided for the preparation of the above-mentioned report and for related activities, and considers that, for this purpose, voluntary contributions by countries, competent international organizations and other organizations wishing to participate in the implementation of the Decade, are highly desirable;

7. Calls on all Governments to participate in the Decade and, if appropriate, to establish national committees, in co-operation with the relevant scientific and technological communities, with a view to surveying available mechanisms and facilities for the reduction of natural hazards, assessing the particular requirements of their respective countries or regions in order to add to, improve or update existing mechanisms and facilities and develop a strategy to attain the desired goal;

8. Further calls on Governments to keep the Secretary-General informed of their countries' plans and of assistance which can be provided so that the United Nations may disseminate information concerning the activities of the Decade, thus enabling each Member State to benefit from the experience of other countries;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-third session on progress made in the preparation of the Decade.
