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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 28th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 15 July 1999, at 10 a.m.

<u>President</u> :	Mr. FULCI	(Italy)
later:	Mr. SYCHOV (Vice-President)	(Belarus)

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SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (agenda item 5) (continued) (A/54/129-E/1999/73, A/54/130-E/1999/72, A/54/153-E/1999/93 and A/54/154-E/1999/94; E/1999/82, 97 and 98; E/1999/CRP.2 and CRP.3)

Miss LICONA ALLAM (Honduras) said that the disaster caused by hurricane Mitch provided an example of how national and international mechanisms could be used effectively to save lives and alleviate hunger (A/54/130-E/1999/72). Her Government was grateful for the professionalism shown by the United Nations Resident Coordinator, who, together with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and other institutions, had acted to coordinate help to the people of Honduras. The response by OCHA, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) should be integrated in development programmes.

Honduras had suffered most from hurricane Mitch, whose effects were comparable to those of a devastating war. The greatest damage had been done to agriculture: not only had the harvest been lost, the torrential rains had also washed away the topsoil. Banana production, the principal source of the country's income, would take 16 to 18 months to recover. According to World Bank estimates, Honduras alone had suffered losses of around €3,000 million, setting the country back 25 years. The hurricane had left a trail of death and desolation and the work of generations in creating a climate of peace had been undermined. The whole population had been affected in one way or another, but the material and psychological effect on the most vulnerable sectors of society had not yet been fully comprehended. Honduras had, however, got back on its feet and, with the help of the international community, its people was working to reconstruct the country.

Hurricane Mitch had exposed the vulnerability of the region to that kind of disaster, which clearly reflected a change in the world environment. It underlined the imperative need to include environmental protection in educational curricula, since a change in the educational system was the best hope for progress in human development. Her Government was determined that measures to achieve the country's sustainable development would be adopted as soon as possible.

Her delegation believed that the Agreed Conclusions should reflect the concern about the increase in natural disasters and environmental emergencies, which had the heaviest impact on the countries with the fewest resources, and the need to mobilize financial and human resources to support essential rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes. The Government was making every effort to meet the needs of the hundreds of thousands of victims in the country, but it had to accept that it lacked the resources to deal with the ills consequent on a natural disaster: increased poverty, malnutrition, infant mortality, ignorance and ill-health. At the Consultative Group Meeting for the Reconstruction and Transformation of Central America, held at Stockholm, the Government had submitted its Master Plan of Reconstruction and National Transformation, the basic objectives of which were to reactivate the economy through job creation by developing the productive sectors and the infrastructure, to consolidate and expand macroeconomic reform, to work for human development through action to mitigate extreme poverty and improve the quality and coverage of basic social services, to reduce vulnerability through the sustainable management of natural resources and an appropriate system of disaster prevention, and to promote democratic participation, with social equality, in the various aspects of national life. The Plan had been fully accepted by the international community. She hoped that the technical and financial assistance that had been given in the past would continue so as to enable the objectives of the Master Plan to be achieved.

Mr. DHAHAWI (Observer for the Sudan) said that, over the past two decades, the Sudan had witnessed repeated calamities of drought, torrential rains and floods, in addition to the influx of refugees from neighbouring countries and the internally displaced persons who had fled the armed conflict in southern Sudan. The effect on the country's economic infrastructure and service sector had been severe. Almost all the humanitarian problems in his country were by-products of the armed strife in the south, which had erupted on the eve of independence in 1956. Successive Governments had tried in vain to find a lasting solution.

The current Government had exerted tremendous efforts to reach a peaceful settlement, culminating in the conclusion of the Khartoum Peace Agreement, which had later been incorporated in the Constitution adopted in 1998. Efforts were still under way to convince the only remaining rebel

faction to join the peace process. To that end a new round of peace talks was scheduled to take place shortly at Nairobi. The southern Sudan had been accorded a high degree of autonomy and the Peace Agreement stipulated self-determination after four years. He hoped that the coming talks would not be subjected to any foreign intervention that might prevent progress.

The Government had invited the United Nations to coordinate the humanitarian assistance provided by the Government and the international community. Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) had thus come into existence as a model for humanitarian action in conflict areas. Its success depended, however, on the observance by all parties of the principles of national sovereignty, impartiality, transparency and accountability. There had been excellent cooperation between the Government and the United Nations and the delivery of relief over the past year had been stable and regular. The Government had offered full assistance to humanitarian agencies working under the OLS umbrella. In June 1999 a United Nations humanitarian inter-agency mission had visited the Nuba Mountains with the aim of assessing the needs of the population. He expressed his Government's appreciation of General Assembly resolution 53/10 on emergency assistance to the Sudan.

In contrast to the Government, the rebel movement in the south had continued its disregard for humanitarian principles, diverting relief assistance to its soldiers. The rebels had repeatedly turned down government offers of a comprehensive ceasefire. Most recently they had abducted and later assassinated four Sudanese nationals conducting humanitarian work with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in April 1999.

The Government saw rehabilitation and development as the foundations for cementing peace in the stable areas and had therefore started implementing giant developmental schemes within the oil and agriculture sectors and rehabilitating the infrastructure, with a view to advancing from emergency activities to reconstruction and development. He appealed to the international community to encourage those efforts and support the development schemes.

He drew attention to some negative actions that contravened the Charter of the United Nations. The United States of America believed it had a right to interfere in other countries' internal affairs on the pretext of democracy and human rights. His was not the only country to suffer, but the air strike

against the Shifa pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum in August 1998 had deprived the Sudanese people of life-saving medicines and drugs. The use of trains to transport relief to the needy civilian population in the south had been denied by the United States through its embargo on the delivery of vital spare parts for American-made locomotives.

Moreover, whenever the Government and the rebels were due to meet for negotiations, the United States adopted measures against the Government which led to intransigence on the part of the rebels, with resulting failure to make any progress towards peace. That had been the case in 1994 and 1997 and the pattern had been repeated in the recent call by the House of Representatives for flagrant and open intervention in southern Sudan and for material and moral support for the rebel movement. His Government hoped that the United States would follow a policy of good intentions towards the country and place humanitarian principles higher than political considerations.

He appealed to the international community for a stronger response to the 1999 consolidated appeal for the Sudan. The response so far had reached only 36 per cent of the total required by Operation Lifeline Sudan. The Government also appealed to all in the field of humanitarian work to avoid any politicization. It called on the international community to exert pressure on the rebel movement to heed the call of peace and accept the comprehensive ceasefire unilaterally proclaimed by the Government.

Mr. GRIMALDI (International Association of Lions Clubs) said that the Association was the largest humanitarian aid organization in the world, and performed 30,000 services a year. It was able to provide grants of up to US\$ 10,000 a time in response to a request from any of its 741 districts around the world. Its other activities included its task force, established in 1994, which had 150,000 members willing to volunteer their time; a disaster relief manual, which was widely used; and work on preventable and reversible blindness, on which it had spent \$74 million in 73 countries across five continents. For rehabilitation and reconstruction it gave grants of up to \$75,000 for any one project. All of its grants came from voluntary contributions.

There should be more effective cooperation between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the United Nations system in respect of humanitarian assistance, particularly in the exchange of information. His Association had

been disappointed that, in 1995, the United Nations had turned down an offer to make use of its task force. More credit should be given to NGOs, including his own, which had 82 years' experience of helping people in need and was anxious to work in harmony with the United Nations for a better world. Its mission was to serve.

Ms. COMOGLU-ULGEN (Turkey) said that the response to humanitarian emergencies required in-depth examination, particularly in view of the current shortcomings of the humanitarian and development agencies in ensuring a soft transition from relief to development. Despite the efforts made, the problem had not been overcome and further work was needed. Complex emergency situations presented an enormous challenge to the international community in determining where relief ended and development and rehabilitation assistance began. People working in the humanitarian and development fields should try to find the dividing line in good time, so that development activities could complement political stabilization.

The Kosovo crisis constituted a significant test case. The emergency relief activities - for which the international community, and particularly OCHA, deserved great praise - had reached saturation point. The time had come to start the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase. Her Government had worked in Kosovo not only to bring about a peaceful solution but also to alleviate the humanitarian tragedy. It had sent considerable amounts of aid to refugees in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and had set up tent cities in both countries, giving shelter to almost 8,750 refugees. It had also received the largest number of refugees - about 20,000 - and dispatched a unit of 163 soldiers to Albania to provide security and logistic services for the camps. It had recently sent an assessment team to Kosovo in order to draft plans for further humanitarian assistance and work programmes. The team was currently engaged in consultations with the local authorities, the representatives of civil society and the representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other agencies.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. HUANG Xueqi (China) said that recent years had witnessed more frequent natural disasters and emergencies and the response by the international community to the resulting increase in urgent humanitarian requests had been far from adequate. His delegation was deeply concerned. It

was imperative to ensure the availability of sufficient funds for humanitarian relief activities and to call on the major donors to respond to the various appeals in General Assembly and Council resolutions, at the same time respecting the principles of neutrality and impartiality. Uneven responses and a selective approach would lead to undesirable effects.

If the smooth implementation of current programmes and projects within the United Nations development system was to be ensured, resources for humanitarian assistance should not come from funds earmarked for development assistance. Furthermore, in formulating consolidated appeals and identifying priority areas, the views of recipient countries must be fully taken into account. Making use of indigenous capability and participation was also important for the effective execution of programmes on the basis of consensus.

The United Nations was assuming ever more responsibilities in strengthening inter-agency coordination for rapid relief and humanitarian assistance. His delegation was in favour of the Council's providing policy guidelines for humanitarian activities and serving as a forum for an exchange of views. It trusted that the draft Agreed Conclusions, which were the product of extensive discussion, would be adopted by consensus.

Mr. FEDOTOV (Russian Federation) said that, though strong in its analysis of United Nations activities in coordinating emergency humanitarian assistance, the Secretary-General's report (A/54/154-E/1999/94) was weak in recommendations. His delegation supported the conclusion that the early launch of reconstruction and development activities in a post-conflict environment could complement and underpin political stabilization. Although fraught with difficulties, the demobilization and reintegration of former combatants into civilian life was also crucial, in such "hot spots" as Kosovo, Angola, Tajikistan and Sierra Leone. It would be interesting to hear the views of UNHCR and OCHA in that regard. The draft Agreed Conclusions should reaffirm the basic principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

His delegation looked forward to the Secretary-General's report on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. He hoped that the report would be a balanced one, adequately reflecting events in the Balkans, especially the incidents in which the civilian population had been subjected to bombing by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). His delegation strongly believed that there should be humanitarian limits to sanctions. A sanctions

regime should be guided by clear criteria taking into account the adverse effects of the sanctions both on the target population and on third countries. The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) should intensify its activities in that regard. The coordination of the humanitarian aspects of Security Council and Economic and Social Council activities should also be strengthened.

The establishment of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti, by Decision 1999/4, was a welcome contribution by the Council to the post-conflict rehabilitation of that country. It was, however, clear that the Haiti scheme could not serve as a blueprint for other post-conflict situations.

His delegation fully supported the conclusions and recommendations of the Inter-Agency Needs Assessment Mission dispatched by the Secretary-General to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, particularly those relating to the elaboration of a comprehensive regional strategy to provide emergency relief for the civilian population throughout the country and the transition to long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction. The report (E/1999/82) emphasized the extent of injury and loss of life suffered by civilians and the large-scale destruction of the physical infrastructure and means of production.

His Government had succeeded in bringing the Kosovo issue back to the Security Council. The Economic and Social Council should ensure that the United Nations system would, while resolving the pressing humanitarian and economic problems, facilitate the establishment of an environment conducive to political stabilization throughout the Balkan region. Post-conflict rehabilitation should embrace the entire territory and population of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Unless prompt and adequate measures to ensure humanitarian aid to the civilian population were adopted, there was a risk that by wintertime there would be a huge wave of refugees seeking asylum both within and outside the region. In collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, the United Nations should establish an inter-agency task force for the social, economic, environmental and humanitarian recovery of the region.

In that context, he drew attention to a joint initiative by the Governments of the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Greece and Austria on

humanitarian aid to the Yugoslav people, including those of Kosovo. The operation, known as "Focus", should be closely coordinated with those of the United Nations system.

The issue of United Nations involvement in post-conflict recovery in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Sierra Leone should be considered during the humanitarian segment of the Council's substantive session in 2000. The international community's involvement in resolving Balkan problems should, however, in no way decrease the attention paid to other, no less critical or important, post-conflict situations or to the consequences of natural or man-made disasters.

He commended United Nations efforts to coordinate the response to hurricanes Mitch and Georges and to the floods in east and south Asia. The attention paid to the problem of Chernobyl, whose effects were still critical, was most welcome. He hoped that a new appeal prepared by OCHA to fund three priority projects would meet with an adequate response. Attention should also continue to be paid to other areas of past or continuing conflict in Africa, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and elsewhere.

Mr. LEPATAN (Observer for the Philippines), having stressed the importance of a comprehensive approach to humanitarian crises, said that the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States should be fully respected. Humanitarian assistance should, moreover, be provided with the full consent of the affected country, and based on the national requirements for rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

For the Council to be in a better position to provide guidance for future activities, its humanitarian segment should involve discussion of situation reports, ideally with the participation of country teams. The Council might also consider holding special meetings as and when humanitarian disasters occurred so as to enable it to mobilize international assistance.

The United Nations response to emergencies was currently constrained by an inadequacy of resources and an uneven level of funding in terms of geographical and sectoral distribution. The international community should be urged to provide generous and timely contributions in response to natural disasters. The Philippines, despite its meagre resources, had made its own,

albeit modest, contribution to 11 countries in Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe through OCHA. The efforts of the Secretary-General to place OCHA on an assured financial basis were most welcome.

With a view to ensuring an effective system for strategic monitoring and evaluation, the Council should be involved in the strengthening of the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) on a needs-based approach, particularly in the area of prioritization among the organizations of the United Nations system.

Countries with strong economies and a high level of development should seek to provide an enabling environment to assist the developing countries towards sustainable economic growth and development. Such an environment was a prerequisite for durable peace and the mitigation of humanitarian disasters. It was crucial, moreover, that Official Development Assistance (ODA) targets be met.

Mr. SOARES DAMICO (Brazil) said that the 1990s had been a decade of natural and man-made disasters, producing human suffering on a mammoth scale, in the form of violence against civilians, provoking hordes of refugees and internally displaced persons, human rights violations and genocide. Humanitarian aid personnel, risking their lives for a lofty ideal, had not been spared. Even the efforts of the international aid agencies and donors' good will had been unable to meet even the minimum requirements of those human tragedies, largely in the developing countries, and especially in Africa.

Humanitarian activities were remedial and should not be seen as a substitute for the United Nations active conflict-prevention and dispute-defusing role enshrined in the Charter or as a "second best". The new International Criminal Court would certainly do much to uphold respect for international humanitarian law and human rights instruments. His Government intended to hold a seminar to examine the relationship between the Brazilian Constitution and the Rome Statutes.

Brazil firmly believed in humanity, neutrality and impartiality, the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, and also in respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of the State receiving such assistance. It had been argued that the element of consent could be abandoned, since there was often no Government in control. Even so, local authorities could still authorize access for humanitarian personnel and the

delivery of assistance. In that regard, he had noted a further refinement of consent in the "principles of engagement" referred to in the Secretary-General's report.

His delegation, dismayed by the uneven funding of the CAPs, largely because certain crises claimed precedence, agreed with the Secretary-General that such an imbalance undermined the basic humanitarian principle of the provision of aid, irrespective of political and other considerations.

With regard to the transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development, his delegation endorsed the clear distinction between the measures to be adopted in natural-disaster transitions and those arising from complex emergencies. It also agreed with the Secretary-General that natural disasters called for comprehensive disaster-reduction strategies, and was looking forward to studying his report on what action the United Nations should take in that regard at the end of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

On the subject of complex emergencies, he approved the Secretariat's contextual approach of applying different strategies to different situations. He noted that the CAPs for post-conflict countries consistently lacked adequate support. Brazil, having been involved in the peace-building efforts in Guinea-Bissau, was very aware of the likelihood of a relapse into conflict if the fragile peace were consigned to oblivion.

Peace-building should go hand in hand with conflict-prevention, preferably through the creation of an enabling international environment for sustained economic growth and sustainable development as preconditions for lasting peace and development.

Mr. DUONG CHI DUNG (Viet Nam), having endorsed the statement by the observer for Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the unprecedented number of natural and man-made disasters over the past year alone highlighted the need for comprehensive and coherent strategies both for international relief assistance, and for rehabilitation and reconstruction for sustainable development. Most United Nations bodies appeared aware of that need. In the context of diminishing resources, however, inter-agency cost-sharing should be promoted. Moreover, cooperation between the Council,

the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and OCHA should be enhanced. There should also be a clearer distribution of responsibilities between humanitarian agencies, particularly at the field level.

His delegation shared the international concern at the current decline in international response to the CAP, particularly in view of the devastating long-term effects on the social and economic fabric of countries of natural phenomena such as El Niño. The resources available were insufficient to meet the need of relief assistance, let alone the cost of rehabilitation, reconstruction and development activities. The continuing decline in ODA was a further cause for alarm, as was the uneven funding of the CAPs which jeopardized the basic principles of humanitarian action. Above all, contributions to humanitarian assistance must not be made at the expense of development assistance.

In view of its importance in enabling countries to prevent and overcome crises and in furthering the transition from humanitarian aid to rehabilitation and development, capacity-building should be the long-term strategy of all humanitarian relief efforts. The delegation wished to thank the international community for the humanitarian assistance extended over the years to Viet Nam, especially for local capacity-building in the aftermath of natural disasters. As part of national disaster mitigation efforts, his Government had established an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism and action plan.

The resolution of humanitarian situations called for a genuine humanitarian approach. It was to be hoped that the basic principles of humanitarian assistance would be reflected in the Agreed Conclusions.

Mr. ZAFERA (Observer for Madagascar), having supported the statement by the observer for Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that Madagascar was prone to frequent cyclones and associated flooding, which caused considerable loss of life, rendered many persons homeless and brought about untold destruction, further damaging a weak national economy. The country was also prey to other meteorological phenomena such as drought, tornadoes and hailstones. As he spoke, three quarters of the country was afflicted by a plague of locusts.

The people and Government of Madagascar were grateful to the international community for its support for national mitigation and relief

efforts, provided inter alia through the United Nations system. Such support had gone some way towards addressing needs. Further support from the international community would, however, be essential. Most natural disasters affected developing countries which could not even afford the resources needed to eradicate the extreme poverty with which they were afflicted, let alone the huge levels of funding required for disaster mitigation, relief and construction efforts. The situation was further exacerbated by the cyclic nature of many weather-related disasters.

The efforts of the United Nations funds and programmes deserved particular mention, as did the new approach which involved the incorporation of relief efforts into global development strategies. It was a cause for concern, however, that the resources available to the United Nations for such purposes were so limited. The simultaneous decline in development assistance and in UNDP core resources and the uneven geographical distribution of funding were further constricting factors.

Mr. PONIKIEWSKI (Poland) was also concerned at the devastation caused by natural and man-made humanitarian disasters, including those provoked by ethnic cleansing. The increasing vulnerability of certain areas, largely associated with demographic pressures, was a further cause for alarm.

The United Nations must continue to play the lead role in providing humanitarian relief. No other international organization was capable of drawing upon the expertise of such a range of specialized agencies and bodies. Other actors, such as the ICRC, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), European Union, NATO and NGOs, must also be integrated into relief programmes once emergencies arose. The role of the military component deserved particular attention: not only should military units be given clearer mandates, but civil and military cooperation in emergencies should be strengthened. The proposed 10 per cent increase in funding for OCHA was most welcome.

It was also important that United Nations specialized and humanitarian agencies must be accorded unimpeded and safe access to crisis regions. In situations of armed conflict, it was vital also to ensure the security of civilians, who were typically the first victims. The International Criminal Court would play a key role in holding violators of humanitarian principles to account.

Poland hoped to increase humanitarian activities in other countries as part of its needs-based development assistance strategy. National teams had recently been involved in international humanitarian efforts in Kosovo, in countries struck by hurricane Mitch and in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Lastly, the Council must make an effort to strengthen United Nations capability of mobilizing international assistance for those crises which failed to attract the attention of the mass media.

Mr. MARCH (Observer for Australia) said he wished to emphasize the importance of coordination at the earliest stages of planning so as to ensure a smooth transition from relief to development. In post-conflict situations, it was difficult to draw a distinction between the two, given the importance both of peace-building and of long-term relief programmes for refugees.

His delegation supported the Secretary-General's suggestions for a comprehensive approach to inter-agency collaboration of operational activities, which were particularly relevant to humanitarian and disaster relief activities.

Lastly, the case of three Australian humanitarian workers convicted on espionage-related charges in Yugoslavia posed a serious security issue for all international aid operations in that country. The persons in question had merely supplied basic aid operations information to their headquarters. Any steps taken by the international community to press for their release would be much appreciated by his Government.

Mrs. RUIZ de ANGULO (Observer for Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Central American Group of countries, said that the Central American region had shown its determination to overcome the conditions of war and political, social and economic stability in a way which had made it a living example of how conflicts could be resolved through dialogue, negotiation, respect and peaceful coexistence of all the segments of its social fabric. In the 1990s, increased intra-regional trade and some 4 per cent economic growth had been achieved through programmes within the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America (ALIDES).

Hardly had the Central American countries begun to recover from the ravages of war and reap the benefits of democratization and economic reform, however, when they were hit by hurricane Mitch, the region's worst natural

disaster in two centuries. Some weeks earlier, the Dominican Republic had been devastated by hurricane Georges. Although each country suffered different damage, the vulnerability was regional, as long-term responses and strategies should be.

The Central American Presidents had established sustainable development targets for genuine transformation of the region, in the interests of improving the quality of life of all Central Americans. They were committed to taking up challenges that included poverty reduction, environmental protection, disaster prevention, infrastructure, boosting agriculture and efficient land-use management. That long-term task, requiring a firm political will called for the strong support of the international community. The Central American countries had transformed their tragedy into a commitment to reconstruct the region on the basis of the transformation of their social, productive and political structures.

She expressed appreciation for the participation of the United Nations, and particularly OCHA, in the efforts to assist the Central American countries' rehabilitation efforts. Its participation at the early stages of the disaster had contributed to independent damage assessment, the mobilization of the international community's response, and the provision of reliable and timely information. The deployment of United Nations staff locally had also made it possible for the appropriate decentralized decisions to be taken.

The efforts of the countries concerned, enhanced by the work of the United Nations and the international community's generosity during the emergency phase, had furnished an innovative model of international cooperation for rebuilding and transforming the region, which could serve others in similar situations. The establishment of the Consultative Group for the Reconstruction and Transformation of Central America, consisting of the region's Governments and civil society, the donor countries and regional and multilateral agencies, ensured that national plans were discussed in regional terms, on the understanding that regional cooperation and integration were starting-points.

So it was that, at the second Consultative Group Meeting, held in Stockholm in May 1999, the Central American Governments and the international community had decided to share responsibility for the reconstruction and

transformation of the affected countries, on the basis of long-term priorities defined by the countries themselves. The Central American Governments had demonstrated their ability to confront emergency situations and use them as new opportunities for the region's integral development. It was important, however, that international support should be given to implement their initiatives.

Mr. HILDAN (Norway) said a hallmark of the past year had been enormous natural disasters of all kinds, which had caused many civilian casualties throughout the world. However, it had also been a year of marked progress in improving institutional coordination mechanisms which had enhanced the capacity to respond to humanitarian issues. Closer links between the humanitarian and political elements of the multilateral system had led to a number of high-level meetings with the United Nations Security Council.

His delegation expressed its appreciation of the past year's work in a number of areas and called for its continuation. It appreciated the more operational and interactive approach of the Council's second humanitarian segment and hoped that it would adopt clear and focused agreed conclusions, which could guide all the humanitarian actors in the year ahead. He praised the implementation of the 1998 Agreed Conclusions by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and IASC and urged that they be followed up.

Humanitarian policy was a Norwegian priority, as evidenced by the work of the Minister for International Development and Human Rights to devise a national humanitarian strategy for a more cohesive approach to the pertinent issues. A major element of that strategy was to address the root causes of conflict and disaster, most of which lay in the economic and social area, and emphasis was placed on measures to combat poverty and address human rights issues. Other important requirements were integrated crisis response, and the inclusion of development objectives in the basis for humanitarian action.

Integration of the development dimension into humanitarian work called for enhanced cooperation and interaction among the various actors, and integration and more effective use of the existing frameworks. He also drew attention to the Brookings Institution's important work in filling institutional and financial gaps.

On the institutional side, his delegation attached great importance to the IASC and welcomed the decision to make it function as an executive

decision-making tool. He encouraged executive heads and the IASC to follow up and welcomed the clarification of the roles of IASC and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs respectively.

On the subject of financial arrangements, he echoed the Secretary-General's call for simplification of existing financing mechanisms. A start had been made on Norway's own resource mobilization instruments. His delegation would report on progress to the Council's next humanitarian segment.

While welcoming the December 1998 joint launch of all consolidated appeals, he expressed his delegation's grave concern that the CAP's positive development had not solved the problem of inadequate and very uneven funding and recommended that OCHA should make it clear what the consequences of current funding levels would be. He encouraged the continuation of efforts to build operational links between the CAPs, UNDAF and other fund-raising mechanisms.

The development dimension was an important aspect of the response to natural disasters, and capacity-building initiatives should be integrated into immediate-relief, prevention and mitigation efforts. His delegation therefore attached great importance to the follow-up to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, in which development actors should assume a central role.

His delegation firmly supported international humanitarian and human rights law. Victims of conflict and disasters should enjoy better access to the protection and justice that were their right. Perpetrators of violence must be brought to justice, and his Government attached paramount importance to the establishment of the International Criminal Court, and renewed its call for ratification of the Rome Statutes.

Mr. MOZHUKHOV (Belarus) said that the events of the previous year had highlighted the interdependency between peace and international security and efforts to further poverty eradication, sustainable development, respect for international law and national capacity-building to deal with socio-economic and environmental crises, many of which were outside the control of the Member States.

The destructive military action in the Balkans had only exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the region, arresting development there and causing

environmental degradation. The international community must acknowledge the urgency of inter-agency action to resolve ethnic conflicts by non-military means in the interests of peace and human rights, with respect for the basic principles of international law. Force should be used only with the approval of the Security Council. The Economic and Social Council should adopt recommendations and resolutions on the subject of post-conflict rehabilitation in the Balkans, the financial burden of which should be borne primarily by those responsible for the bombing.

Belarus supported the efforts to implement the conclusions of the Council's first humanitarian segment held in 1998. It was to be hoped that the World Bank's membership of the IASC would make it possible to increase contributions to humanitarian assistance and disaster mitigation, including support for the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

For its part, Belarus had provided humanitarian assistance, inter alia to Tadjikistan, and the former Yugoslavia. The Government had also taken steps to strengthen national emergency preparedness, including coordination of international assistance, the basic principles of which must be respected by all players.

Ms. BAUER (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) (FAO) said that FAO was strongly committed to cooperating with its member States and the United Nations system in humanitarian emergencies. While it was clear from the previous day's discussions that considerable progress had been made on coordination among the system's country teams, financing should be better adapted to filling the gap between emergency assistance and development initiatives. Having studied the new guidelines set by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for facilitating a more flexible donor approach, she said the lack of adequate funding had hampered FAO's emergency action which was aimed precisely at filling that gap.

The Secretary-General's report (A/54/154-E/1999/94) highlighted the importance for the transition of integrating early planning and establishing priorities, national capacity-building, timely and adequate funding, and specialized relief and recovery. FAO was highly relevant to the theme of the discussion, since most victims of disasters and emergencies were rural communities. Its prevention activities included continuous global monitoring

of food supply and demand, early warning of impending food problems, assessment of affected countries' food and agricultural needs, and a global watch for pests and epidemics, so as to reduce the vulnerability of rural communities.

FAO provided the international community with reports on the impact of emergencies on agricultural systems and the victims' access to food, action crucial to effective international relief and rehabilitation programmes. It promoted national disaster-reduction capabilities and food vulnerability assessment capacity in disaster-prone countries, using remote-sensing technology and policy guidelines for food-security reserve stocks. The FAO inter-departmental Emergency Coordination Group facilitated its crisis-management capacity, building on its 110-strong field-office network. There had been a dramatic increase in its work in response to recurrent emergencies worldwide. It had implemented some 200 emergency projects in the past two years, at a value of US\$ 160 million, of which US\$ 21 million for emergency activities had come from the regular budget. FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme permitted the immediate release of resources for its assessments and for the provision of agricultural inputs, and contributed to the fast recovery of food production capacity. Clearly, the additional extrabudgetary funding could not have been mobilized without close collaboration with other partners.

FAO had three main types of relief and rehabilitation responses to natural disasters or complex emergencies. First, there was agricultural relief assistance which provided disaster-affected farming communities, internally displaced persons, returnees and refugees with basic inputs, and supported the demobilization of ex-combatants.

Secondly, there were early development-oriented rehabilitation activities - funded by the major international financing institutions - such as seed multiplication, income-generating activities and technical assistance to countries in formulating post-disaster or emergency programmes.

The third type of intervention focused on technical assistance and coordination of the numerous agricultural organizations, mostly NGOs, by establishing an FAO agricultural coordination unit that liaised between them

and the Government, advising the latter and enhancing its national and local agricultural relief capacity. It also helped the Government move beyond the emergency phase and assisted in monitoring the crop and food supply situation.

In conclusion, she stressed the priority FAO assigned to cooperation among all the partners in humanitarian and development assistance. It was a member of the IASC and had close ties with all the other members. FAO also participated in the CAP, providing estimates of agriculture and fishery needs. FAO was ready and willing to pursue its key role in the transition from life-saving activities to development, with the political and financial support of its member States.

Ms. JANJUA (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), said that the Secretary-General's report provided a clear conspectus of the humanitarian-aid coordination and policy issues confronting the United Nations during the previous year.

Concerning action in complex emergencies, she suggested the need to examine the fact that, although the United Nations, especially UNHCR, had been able to respond to the Kosovo emergency, it had been clearly unable, despite overt warnings, to alleviate the resultant suffering at an early stage. Moreover, it had had no access to the people left inside Kosovo.

That crisis had been marked by immense sympathy for the Kosovars fleeing persecution and a conflict involving well-documented human rights violations. It had also been marked by great international solidarity with the refugee-hosting countries, namely, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania, the latter an OIC member and a tiny country whose hospitality at a time of economic difficulty had set an example to all.

OIC member States had been generous in their financial and other assistance to the Kosovars and in their establishment and maintenance of refugee camps. The OIC had taken various initiatives for the peaceful resolution of the conflict, including a visit by an OIC ministerial delegation to several capitals.

Although it was heartening that the Kosovars were returning home, the United Nations faced a major challenge in post-conflict Kosovo. The transition from relief to development must be smooth, and the international community must be as generous in that phase as before. Given the multiplicity of actors in Kosovo, the action that followed the Agreed Conclusions would

need effective coordination. The same was true of other war-induced or conflict situations. Nowhere was coordination more critical than in a humanitarian situation where a minute's delay could mean additional loss of life and increased suffering. She called on the United Nations to develop standard response procedures and coordinate its humanitarian action by ensuring access to anyone in need of assistance; respect for international laws and standards relating to the rights of civilians; and effective preparedness and planning for emergencies.

The international response to natural disasters required a continuing dialogue between the major actors in all disaster-prone countries themselves with an eye to national capacity-building for disaster preparedness and emergency response, as well as among the elements of the United Nations system present in the country. The United Nations system should be involved in both the immediate phase and the aftermath.

Every humanitarian crisis had a specific cause, but most arose from one or two causes: political disputes and the suppression of peoples; and the absence of economic and social development. The United Nations must make determined efforts to promote the pacific solution of disputes and conflicts and needed to play a fuller role as the agent for economic and social development in all countries.

Mr. DECAZES (Sovereign Military Order of Malta) said that his delegation had long been convinced that the many phases of humanitarian assistance should be perfectly integrated so as to avoid any break between the various aims of the process. If there was to be a continuum, preparations for the development phase must involve emergency aid, and rehabilitation plans did not have to wait for crisis relief to end. That was not simply to save time, but to ensure that rehabilitation and development were considered in planning from the start-up of emergency assistance.

In the changing Balkans situation, for instance, the Order of Malta had shown its wish to cooperate and its willingness to coordinate its action with that of all partners in order to provide emergency aid followed by rehabilitation and, later, development assistance.

He gave details of the Order's humanitarian activities in a number of the Balkan countries receiving refugees from Kosovo, as well as in Kosovo itself and in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, activities which evidenced

its readiness to cooperate with international and national partners from the onset of a crisis up to and including the period of reconstruction and development.

In conclusion, he announced that 1999 was the nine-hundredth anniversary of his Order's first humanitarian activity, the building of a hospital in Jerusalem to care for pilgrims and the local population. Its current commitments evinced its continued commitment to its original vocation of service to suffering humanity.

Mr. FERRER RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said that General Assembly resolution 46/182 and the Agreed Conclusions of the humanitarian segment of the 1998 session of the Council constituted the sole legislative framework for the implementation of humanitarian assistance. It was essential that such assistance should continue to be governed by the principles of neutrality and impartiality, with full respect for the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. It was also imperative that assistance should be provided at the request, and with the consent, of States and that the affected State should have the primary role in initiating, organizing, coordinating and implementing humanitarian assistance within its territory.

There was no article of the Charter nor any legislative mandate of the United Nations that authorized a country or group of countries to attack or invade other countries on humanitarian grounds. Humanitarian assistance could not be delivered by force of arms. If a Government wished to make a genuine contribution to humanitarian assistance it should use the immense sums spent on weapons to offset the decrease in ODA.

His delegation wished to express the gratitude of his Government and people to all those Governments, international institutions and organizations of the United Nations system and NGOs which had helped to mitigate the effects of the grave drought experienced in the eastern part of his country and the effects in the same area of hurricane Georges in 1998.

After hurricanes Georges and Mitch had passed over the Caribbean and Central America, Cuba had sent a number of medical brigades to the Dominican Republic. It had cancelled a debt of \$50.1 million owed by Nicaragua and had offered to place medical personnel at the disposal of the Central American countries for as long as required, free of charge. There could be no reconstruction and development in Central America and the Caribbean without an

integrated health plan. Cuba had therefore designed, together with the regional Governments, an integrated health plan providing for the dispatch of up to 2,000 doctors to work in the most distant and backward parts of those countries. Under the plan, 40 Cuban medical brigades were currently distributed throughout the region.

Turning to the conflict in Yugoslavia, he reaffirmed Cuba's repeated offer, first made at the start of the NATO unilateral air attack and the mass exodus from Kosovo to send 1,000 Cuban doctors to provide care free of charge for Kosovar refugees and all civilians of Serbian or other origin living in Kosovo and in the rest of Serbia and Montenegro.

All relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development activities in the Balkans must comply with the basic principle of freedom from political and other considerations. The United Nations must take its proper place in the post-conflict assistance stage to ensure that the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law were respected. All Yugoslav civilians should receive the same treatment, irrespective of ethnic origin, religion, sex or culture. The destruction of homes, infrastructure and means of subsistence had left them in a highly vulnerable situation which, if the international community failed to act promptly, could turn into another human tragedy of incalculable size in the forthcoming winter. The reconstruction of Yugoslavia and the restoration of its territorial integrity was a moral duty of the international community and should constitute a legal obligation for the aggressors.

Mr. MICHELENA (Venezuela) said that a distinction must be drawn between effective action, carried out in a crisis situation and efficient action, which meant dealing not only with the consequences of the crisis but also with its causes. In addition to speedy and timely assistance, preventive strategies must be developed to prevent crises from arising or to mitigate their effects and, once an emergency had occurred, to facilitate a smooth transition towards rehabilitation, reconstruction and long-term development.

Experience in the field showed that, while speedy humanitarian action in the first phase was generally effective, the long-term objectives, which could bring about definitive solutions, tended to be overlooked. As long as the primary causes were not tackled, international assistance was far from being efficient. To make it so, the United Nations system must engage in a still

greater effort to improve inter-agency coordination and to develop criteria and methodology to incorporate the medium-term perspectives of rehabilitation and reconstruction and the long-term objective of sustainable development.

Prevention was also fundamental. Early warning systems should be developed for natural disasters and preventive strategies put in place for dealing with the causes of other disasters.

Although the primary responsibility for dealing with such situations lay with the State concerned, solidarity was equally important. The questions raised by humanitarian assistance went far beyond State jurisdiction and were matters of common interest to the international community as a whole, involving as they did human rights, humanitarian law and the protection of the environment. It should be stressed, nevertheless, that humanitarian assistance must not, in any circumstances, impair the sovereignty, territorial integrity or unity of States.

Timely and adequate financial assistance was also fundamental and it was most regrettable that the financial contributions of States had declined at a time when crises were on the increase, both natural and man-made. Among the latter, armed conflicts, whatever their causes, were a matter of grave concern. The fundamental role of humanitarian action in such cases was to protect the civilian population, particularly the most vulnerable groups. In that connection, his delegation welcomed the recent adoption by the International Labour Organization (ILO) of the Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, which condemned the use of children in armed conflicts, and urged the completion of work on the optional protocol on the participation of children in such conflicts, currently under discussion in the Commission on Human Rights.

In conclusion, he reiterated his delegations's conviction that the role of the Council should be strengthened with a view to improving coordination between the humanitarian agencies and the development institutions, and its further conviction that, unless the capacity of Governments to prepare preventive measures and strategic development programmes for dealing with the matters that arose in such situations, was also strengthened, the United Nations would continue to deal with mere palliatives that provided no permanent solution.

Mr. MECHALE (Observer for Ethiopia) said that his delegation strongly supported the views expressed by previous speakers concerning the need to integrate emergency, recovery and development programmes.

Recognizing the need for preparedness, his Government had formulated and put in place a number of preventive and preparedness mechanisms which had shown themselves to be of vital importance in disaster mitigation. The Government had also made it a policy to link emergency assistance with ongoing development efforts. Political and humanitarian issues must be kept quite separate and victims, whether of a natural disaster or a conflict, should not be regarded, in any circumstances, as responsible for what had happened to them.

While, according to the reports presented to the Council, some 70 per cent of the 1999 emergency programmes had been funded, the rate of response in the case of Ethiopia had been below 40 per cent. The humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate, with large numbers of people on the move and a high rate of malnutrition. Of the 600,000 metric tons of food aid required for 5.4 million beneficiaries in 1999, more than 382,000 metric tons were still lacking. The rate of response to the needs of persons internally displaced by the conflict, was less than 30 per cent. The United Nations country team in Ethiopia had launched a joint humanitarian appeal, on 12 July 1999 calling for immediate action and warning of the risk of a serious disaster, involving more than 5 million people. In the light of that serious situation, he had been encouraged to hear representatives of the major donor countries commit their Governments to assisting disaster victims regardless of the cause of the disaster.

Ms. JANJUA (Pakistan) said that the humanitarian segment of the Council's agenda gave Member States an opportunity not only to signal their support for the work of the United Nations in that area but also to provide guidance that could be helpful to the operational agencies in dealing with humanitarian crises.

It was essential that the United Nations should use every opportunity to assess and strengthen its capacity to respond to such crises. The Council's theme for the current session was the valuable one of the transition from the phase of immediate relief to that of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

Unfortunately, the fiftieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions was being accompanied by a pattern of systematic violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, both Kosovo and Kashmir offering examples. The Secretary-General's report drew attention to several emergency situations where humanitarian agencies had been denied access to the affected areas, not only by conditions of insecurity but by deliberate policies of Governments and parties to conflicts, often in direct violation of obligations under international humanitarian law. The Council must condemn such phenomena. Full and unhindered access was essential to ensure the full implementation of the Geneva Conventions, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, in all occupied territories.

The United Nations must continue to develop its capacities to assist countries in disaster preparedness and emergency response. Preparedness could go far to decrease the impact of natural disaster and, in that connection, she expressed her delegation's concern that the report made no reference to the recent typhoon that had hit southern Pakistan. All natural disasters, especially those that affected developing countries, had devastating effects on the poor in particular and they should all be treated alike and in an impartial manner.

Strengthening coordinated humanitarian assistance and disaster relief would require great political will and generosity on the part of all donors. She hoped that the generosity shown by the international community to Kosovo would be replicated in other parts of the world, for the benefit of all those who suffered from humanitarian crises. With respect to resources for humanitarian assistance, the fundamental principle should be flexibility. There should also be a flexible and smooth transition from relief to development. Predictability of resources for the CAP was also essential. Shortfalls in funding seriously undermined the capacity of the United Nations system to respond. Explicit provisions should be included in the guidelines for the use of the Central Revolving Fund to respond to requests for assistance in natural disasters. When responding to immediate needs, funding agencies should also undertake a strategic overview of the needs of the transition phase.

Mr. PAVLOV (Observer for Ukraine) said that his country knew from experience that the international community had made substantial progress in

addressing humanitarian emergencies. His Government greatly appreciated the significant and timely assistance provided, both on a multilateral and bilateral basis, in connection with the devastating floods the western Ukraine had experienced in the autumn of 1998. It was most grateful to OCHA for its immediate reaction to the appeal for assistance.

The institutional arrangements recently established had made the delivery of assistance more efficient, but without adequate and timely financial support they could not suffice. His delegation therefore supported the proposal by the Secretary-General, endorsed by a number of speakers, that OCHA funding from the regular budget for the biennium 2000-2001 should be increased.

Ukraine continued to suffer the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, and it believed that the United Nations, other international organizations and donor countries, should continue to provide it with assistance in mitigating those consequences, particularly their medical aspects. In that way, the consequences of the Chernobyl accident could serve to improve the readiness of all countries to protect their populations in the case of radiation catastrophes. He hoped that the visit by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to Chernobyl in October 1998 would provide a further impetus to the implementation of the inter-agency programme of international assistance to areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster.

Mr. MAFFENINI (Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale - AVSI) said that his organization operated in both emergency and long-term development situations, particularly in Africa but also in Central Europe and the Balkans. In most cases, it worked in partnership with United Nations bodies, local public institutions, international NGOs or local civil society bodies. In recent years, it had also been engaged in the management of emergency assistance in cases of natural disaster.

On the basis of his organization's experience, he had two recommendations to make. First, emergency situations should never allow the humanitarian organizations, donors and NGOs to turn aside from the need to respond to concerns regarding development and sustainability. In the last analysis, the objective must be long-term development. Emergency situations could often serve as a catalyst by highlighting an underlying problem or set

of problems. On the other hand, an emergency situation that arose in the context of an ongoing development process could lead to considerable damage as a result of lack of coordination and a short-term perspective. He cited a number of examples from Uganda, Albania and Macedonia. The needs of refugees frequently seemed to be given priority over the needs of the local population, even if the latter was economically and socially deprived. Although it would be morally unjustifiable to neglect the refugees, it was equally imperative that a self-sufficiency strategy should be introduced as soon as possible, the whole host region being taken into consideration.

Secondly, while the dramatic and complex emergency situations had elicited widespread and generous mobilization throughout the world, it had become clear from the emergency assistance operations that knowledge about the real social, cultural and economic conditions of the beneficiaries or targeted populations was very inadequate. That knowledge gap could cause serious constraints and limit the capacity of humanitarian processes to intervene. It could also be one of the major causes of so-called "hit and run" interventions.

His organization's work in connection with Kosovo had been made possible by its presence in Albania since 1997, working on sustainable development projects in the social, educational and health fields. As always, the accent was on involving the human resources existing in the general population. Capacity-building was not just a question of interaction, it was a participatory process involving the humanitarian assistance actors, the development actors and the population concerned, as well as institutions and the Government, all working together for a better world.

Mr. MOUNTAIN (Director, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA)), having acknowledged with pleasure the support expressed by delegations for the work of the United Nations, the ERC, the IASC and OCHA, said that such broad recognition from the Member States was reason for pride and a strong encouragement to the staff members concerned to continue their work on the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

A number of issues had been raised in almost every statement made. In reviewing them, he would start by considering the question of humanitarian principles. With the fiftieth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions at hand, speakers had expressed serious concern over the increasing violations of

international humanitarian and human rights law and, simultaneously, a growing commitment to taking steps to enhance the protection of civilians in cases of conflict. The issue of the application of the basic principles of international humanitarian law, including by rebel forces and other non-State actors, was a continuing concern and it would require a concerted effort by the international community to ensure that the cardinal principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality were observed. He had noted with appreciation the growing concern about the safety of humanitarian personnel working in conflict areas.

Linked to the question of humanitarian principles was the issue of humanitarian access. The right of affected populations to unhindered access to humanitarian assistance must continue to be defended. The Guiding Principles which formed an integral part of General Assembly resolution 46/182 continued to provide a solid basis for any humanitarian action and should be further disseminated to the Member States, whose responsibility it was to implement them. He also welcomed the support expressed for the efforts of the humanitarian system to elaborate specific rules of engagement for the conduct of humanitarian operations in areas of conflict, which the parties to internal conflicts would be required to respect.

Many speakers had drawn attention to the alarming increase in the number of people affected by natural disasters throughout the world. Both the Member States and the humanitarian agencies had become more aware of the vital importance of natural disaster mitigation efforts and emergency response. He had noted the emphasis placed, on the one hand, on the need to allocate far more resources to measures aimed at enhancing disaster preparedness and at reducing the impact of natural disasters in disaster-prone countries and, on the other, on facilitating enhanced response measures. In that connection, he had noted the interest expressed in ensuring a continuation of the work done during the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. He thanked the Council for the support expressed for the system's disaster response activities and, in particular, for the tools utilized in that context, such as the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams.

Repeated references had been made to the financial aspect of humanitarian assistance, attention being drawn to three areas in which improvement was needed. In the first place, although there was broad

recognition of the progress achieved in the CAP, grave concern had been expressed at the generally low and uneven response to the 1999 appeals, especially in respect of countries facing difficulties outside the limelight of publicity. The need for the CAP to be more inclusive of non-United Nations partners had also been repeatedly stressed. Secondly, the need for a more solid financial basis for OCHA had been emphasized in a number of statements, as in the case of the 1998 humanitarian segment. Thirdly, proposals had been put forward for a better utilization of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, including its use in responding to natural disasters. That was another important matter on which OCHA looked forward to action in the General Assembly, later in the year.

The mechanisms currently available for the coordination of assistance, whether during the emergency phase or during the transition to recovery and rehabilitation, had generally been deemed adequate. A number of recommendations had been made concerning coordination during the transition phase and he looked forward to seeing them in the Agreed Conclusions. In particular, there was recognition of the leading role to be played by the Governments and civil society of affected countries and the central importance of good governance in creating the enabling environment in which rehabilitation and development programmes could help to eliminate the need for further humanitarian assistance.

In conclusion, he expressed his appreciation for the opportunity provided by the humanitarian segment of the agenda to engage in a constructive dialogue on all aspects of OCHA's work. The theme of the current segment had been particularly timely, and OCHA would continue to give it priority in the coming months.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.