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Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 23 July 1999, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. SYCHOV (Belarus)
(Vice-President)

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In the absence of Mr. Fulci (Italy), Mr. Sychov (Belarus),
Vice-President, took the Chair.

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

SPECIAL ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (agenda item 5)
(continued)

Briefing on the situation in the South Balkans

Mr. VIEIRA de MELLO (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs/Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that visitors were struck, above all, by the appearance of normality in post-conflict Kosovo: traffic on the roads, fields being harvested, once-empty villages hosting bustling markets, shops with new glass fronts. The same tractor-trailers that had once carried refugees to an uncertain exile were being used to transport materials for building repairs. Returnees had pitched tents in the shells of their burnt-out houses and were beginning the arduous task of reconstruction. In certain towns, such as Priština, the damage was not as severe as television images had led one to expect, and the cafes were full. Were it not for the patrolling paratroopers, one might imagine oneself in a normal southern European town which had never known the conflict and cruelty of only a few weeks previously.

It was only an appearance, however. The signs of a vigorous new beginning masked huge challenges, which were perhaps the greatest the United Nations had ever faced. Economic activity was occurring in the absence of any regulatory framework. The civil administration had collapsed and various forces - not always representative or legitimate - had moved in to fill the vacuum. Kosovo continued to lack a police force; of the 3,000 international police required, less than 200 had arrived, and those that had come were mostly borrowed from Bosnia and Herzegovina. There was little recourse when crimes were committed against minorities or between Albanians. Although the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) had managed to nominate some 37 members of the judiciary from various ethnic origins, more were required.

A durable solution would depend upon progress towards self-government and a final political settlement based on the will of the people. Law and order was currently the top priority for UNMIK and the Kosovo Force (KFOR) in a situation where killings, persecution, rape and abduction of minorities

continued. Each day, some four to six Kosovars - mostly Serbs and Romas - were killed, often in front of their families; there was also an average of eight house-burnings a day, as well as forced evictions. Not only did many shops refuse to serve Serbs, they could not go to work without KFOR protection.

Acts against Serbs were motivated by blind hatred and an indiscriminating desire for revenge fuelled by the uncovering of crimes carried out during the conflict. Every day, up to three new alleged mass grave sites were being discovered; each day, British troops in Podujevo also uncovered the bodies of some 10 Albanians killed during the conflict. It was not yet known exactly how many people had died during the dark months from March to June. The International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia was still unable to investigate all the sites and many known war criminals were still at large within the province. In the absence of a police force, people were tempted to take the law into their own hands.

In addition to crimes against minorities, organized crime and crime between Albanians were also in evidence. Kosovo adjoined parts of Europe where organized crime was highly developed, and gangs had little trouble in entering Kosovo in the absence of border police.

On 2 July 1999, after a long and painful meeting, Serb and Albanian leaders in Kosovo had issued a joint statement on law and order and respect for human rights. At the first meeting of the Kosovo Transitional Council on 16 July 1999, security had been at the top of the agenda. Real progress would depend, firstly, on a sustained commitment to tolerance and to the rule of law on the part of political leaders and, secondly, on the urgent deployment of a credible international police force and a new local police. It was to be hoped that the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Police Academy would be inaugurated in Vu...itrn by mid-August.

With a view to establishing a civil administration, UNMIK had deployed regional administrators to the five main districts and was in the process of deploying civil affairs officers to all 29 municipalities in Kosovo. Process had admittedly been slow. In the absence of international administrators, local leaders, often associated with the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) had filled the vacuum. UNMIK had made it clear that they enjoyed no official status and that they would be removed if they acted undemocratically, or in

contravention of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). Where they helped in assisting the community in a just and equitable manner, they should be allowed to continue under international supervision.

The most delicate task for all administrators was to accommodate the demands of the returning Albanians with those of the remaining Serbs, against whom they had very legitimate grievances. In the various sectors, such as health, education, power, water and the media, 10 Joint Consultative Commissions had been established comprising Serb and Albanian technical representatives with UNMIK staff members in the Chair. The Interim Administration continued to insist on the principle that one injustice was not rectified by another.

In Priština, the UNMIK team had spent a great deal of time negotiating with Albanians who wished to resume jobs from which they had been displaced by Serbs. UNMIK had at least succeeded in ensuring that Serb and Albanian civil servants could work alongside one another in certain hospitals and in the municipal building in Priština. In Mitrovica, where the communities were divided by the river, UNMIK had succeeded in negotiating an agreement on freedom of movement.

No civil administration could operate without a budget. An international civil administration unable to pay the salaries of its civil servants could command little respect and loyalty, and even less authority. In Kosovo, many salaries were several months overdue. At least DM 32 million were required to cover needs for the first three months. To that end, a trust fund had been established to which France, the Netherlands, Norway and the United Kingdom had made generous contributions. It was to be hoped that other States would follow suit as a matter of urgency.

Some of the formidable tasks before the civil administration included the reissuing of identity and travel documents and the licensing of cars. The administration had also to resolve property disputes, maintain public utilities, begin collecting revenue, restore telecommunications, bring radio and television back on to the air and ensure environmental protection. In order to meet those urgent challenges, UNMIK depended on donor expertise and on political and financial support.

Damage to the economy appeared, at least on the surface, to be less than expected. The basic infrastructure - roads, railway lines and most bridges -

was intact. In some urban centres, home to 65 per cent of the population, the damage to housing was less than UNMIK had feared. In the west and central areas, however, particularly in the villages, the damage was actually worse than expected.

The way in which the economy had revived of its own accord was quite astonishing. Although much spring planting had not been undertaken, agricultural activity was under way. The first small factories were being started up again, and trade with neighbouring countries was booming.

Those activities were, however, occurring in the absence of any regulatory framework. The economy was based on cash or barter, with no customs or excise, no quality control, no taxation and no banking system. Children who ought to be at school were selling smuggled goods on the streets. The market place had yet to be reconstructed, the use of utilities regulated and financial market systems introduced. Coal, cement and steel factories should be reopened to provide employment to the thousands of workers who might otherwise be up to mischief on the streets. The first steps had already been taken to deploy customs officers on the border. The new Head of UNMIK would soon be issuing a decree regulating fuel imports, which would serve as a model for other items.

Much more remained to be done, requiring considerable political courage and imagination. The necessary economic and financial expertise was only just beginning to arrive in Kosovo. Any delays to accommodate political sensitivities would result only in a flourishing of the black market and organized crime. It was important, too, that aid efforts should not smother the emerging economy, and that agricultural surpluses should not be dumped on Kosovo. Some external inputs were, of course, necessary but local supplies must be used and production capacity nurtured.

In the area of civil administration, security and the economy, the sustainability of efforts would depend upon the development of a stable and democratic political base embracing all the communities in Kosovo. To that end, UNMIK had created the Kosovo Transitional Council, which was to be the highest political body in Kosovo. The Council consisted of 14 members selected according to the Rambouillet formula, namely eight Albanians from the main political groupings, two Serbs and one representative each of the Muslim and Turkish communities. The Council was designed to ensure that the views of

all nationalities of Kosovo were taken fully into account from the outset by the international interim administration. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General would take decisions whenever consensus could not be reached.

Despite all the difficulties facing the international community and its representative in Kosovo, UNMIK, there were a number of grounds for optimism. Success demanded an integrated approach, facilitated by UNMIK's unique structure which brought the main actors together under one umbrella. Cooperation between KFOR and UNMIK could not be better. Furthermore, the international community, the United Nations and KFOR enjoyed a huge amount of goodwill on the part of the population of Kosovo, Albanians and Serbs alike. There was a genuine desire to work with UNMIK and KFOR to build a better, more stable future. Every beginning constituted an opportunity.

In rebuilding infrastructure from scratch, the international community, unconstrained by past practices, could build a laboratory of democracy for the entire region. The resilience and courage of the people of Kosovo also gave grounds for optimism, as did the astonishing progress they had made in rebuilding their province. The humanitarian and political crises in the Balkans could only, however, be resolved through accompanying processes of democratization and economic integration at regional level.

Mr. McNAMARA (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that the humanitarian situation in Kosovo was not a catastrophe, but that it could lead to a serious crisis unless systematically addressed in the coming months.

The first UNHCR-led humanitarian convoy had entered Kosovo on 13 June 1999, two days after the end of the war. United Nations agencies, the Red Cross movement and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) continued to move hundreds of tons of relief supplies into the province. On 16 June, the first 2,000 refugees from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had also started to flood back, ignoring UNHCR pleas for patience. The refugees had voted with their feet. Within three weeks, half a million people had returned, at a peak rate of 50,000 people per day. Currently, only seven weeks after the end of the fighting, some 700,000 Kosovar refugees had returned home, mainly without

assistance. UNHCR had been running a daily bus service into Kosovo from Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro, transporting 8,000 of the most vulnerable cases; that service would continue as long as it was needed.

That dramatic repatriation - although earlier than UNHCR would have liked for security and support reasons - had been a massive boost for the rehabilitation of Kosovo. Once again, the courage and determination of the Kosovar people had been underestimated. UNHCR and the humanitarian agencies must support that unequivocal vote of confidence in the future of Kosovo.

The rapid pace of the return had not, however, been cost-free. Thus far, at least 170 returnees had fallen victim to anti-personnel landmines, at a rate of five persons per day. Various partners were currently collaborating to address the problem; further donor support was urgently needed.

Reports suggesting that Kosovo had not been as badly damaged as expected overlooked the fact that the war had not been a traditional one against military installations and infrastructures. Rather, it had been a vicious, systematic and highly personalized war which had systematically targeted families, town by town, and street by street. Damage to the surviving people and inside their homes was not always apparent at first glance.

All the partners were agreed that humanitarian action was the priority before longer-term reconstruction could subsume the process the following year. If initial estimates, supported by satellite imagery, were correct, 70,000 houses were uninhabitable, meaning that some 500,000 people would need alternative accommodation. At least one winterized room per family would need to be provided by October, as well as electricity, heating, clean water and sanitation. Although 30,000 tents (including 15,000 winterized tents and tent stoves), as well as a quarter of a million plastic sheets and over a million pieces of timber had been provided, further shelter materials were urgently required if a crisis was to be averted. Such assistance must also be supported by basic health, education and social services for a population which was deeply traumatized. In view of the insubstantial harvest and continuing food requirements, the World Food Programme (WFP) would be implementing a food aid programme with NGO support.

National and international aid pipelines and distribution networks were already in place. What was required was support from donors, on an urgent and

sustained basis. All donors should cooperate with UNHCR by indicating in what capacity they could help and how rapidly. Coordination would not involve control of funds, but, rather, the sharing of information and the division of labour with a view to avoiding duplication.

The total unfunded resource requirements for the 13 agencies participating in the revised Consolidated Humanitarian Appeal for Kosovo-related Issues amounted to US\$ 434 million, including US\$ 144 million for post-Dayton programmes, but not including the above-mentioned rehabilitation needs.

When assessing humanitarian needs, it was important not to overlook the key role played by Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro in supporting the refugee population. The former camp locations in those territories had to be rehabilitated and, wherever possible, items for use in Kosovo should be procured from the region, in support of much needed economic rehabilitation. The refugee problem in south-eastern Europe remained a regional one in all its dimensions, from Albania to Croatia.

Humanitarian action in Kosovo should not be a prolonged affair, as it had been in Bosnia and elsewhere, and it must not inhibit or substitute for the resilience and enterprise of the Kosovo people. The aid workers should work vigorously to put themselves out of a job, not to perpetuate it. Increased and pro-active government support was needed immediately. If even a fraction of the international solidarity that had characterized the support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) could be obtained, peace could be secured as quickly and completely as victory. To do so was equally, if not more, important for the future of the troubled region.

The next three to six months would be critical to the success of the humanitarian effort. By the end of the summer, up to 1 million people would have returned. The immediate challenge would be to support them through the harsh winter months without a new humanitarian crisis. The United Nations, which had been asked to lead and coordinate that effort, could do so only if it was backed by tangible political and financial support. The very future of multilateralism in such situations would largely be determined by the response.

The humanitarian brief in Kosovo included the protection of and assistance to minorities. Despite the strenuous efforts made by the

United Nations and KFOR, they had to a large extent failed in that endeavour. Since they had entered Kosovo, some 170,000 Serbs, thousands of Krajina Serbs and hundreds of Roma had fled from Kosovo to neighbouring territories and countries. Others lived in constant fear, some under the physical protection of KFOR, in scattered groups around the country. The picture was extremely preoccupying to those who supported a multi-ethnic Kosovo. Tragically, a new refugee exodus had been created. Houses were still being burned even as efforts were being made to bring temporary shelter and building materials to the same areas.

The cycle of violence and revenge must be stemmed if the longer-term rebuilding and reconstruction process was to be effective. Some of those who had fled had doubtless taken part in the recent atrocities, for which they should be held properly accountable. Others - even if they had been silent witnesses - should not become the new refugees of the Balkans, rejected by both sides and a new charge on the international community. Human rights and governance considerations, which were at the heart of the conflict, must equally demand that the refugee cycle in south-eastern Europe be ended once and for all. Humanitarian action should provide relief to all victims of atrocities: at the same time, it must not ignore their preventable causes.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (United Nations Regional Coordinator for Assistance to the Balkans) said that all those who were working or had worked in Kosovo recognized that the objective was to secure a stable and prosperous south-eastern region of Europe, not least in the interests of the people of Kosovo. It was essential, therefore, to reconfirm and stress the importance of the Stability Pact process as being of special significance from the United Nations standpoint.

The various members of the United Nations family were contributing to those discussions in a number of ways. There was, nevertheless, still a risk that the neighbouring countries, Albania, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia itself, Bulgaria and Romania, would be left out of the process despite their continuing economic and social needs. In the case of Albania, whose Government and people deserved substantial gratitude from the international community for their reception of so many refugees and their cooperation with UNHCR in responding to their needs, the emergency management group established under the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to handle

relief was being transformed into a mechanism for rehabilitation and compensation. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was also working in Albania on regional development programmes and early warning indicators. He hoped that those regional efforts, currently focusing on national recovery, would continue to enjoy support.

On the question of assistance to the Republics of Serbia and Montenegro, reference had been made to the revision of the consolidated appeal process (CAP). The revised CAP would indicate some of the preliminary requirements for humanitarian assistance in the Republic of Serbia. When it came out, it would give details of some of the assumptions underpinning the predicted requirements. WFP, for example, predicted a possible 20 per cent cut in food supply, and the World Health Organization (WHO) feared that some 20 per cent of essential drugs might not be available. It was estimated that there were some 700,000 refugees and displaced persons in Serbia and initial forecasts were for an unemployment rate of 40 per cent. Assessments of technical assistance needs were also under way and would be reflected in the consolidated appeal. OCHA and UNHCR, together with the other agencies represented in Belgrade, would look at sectors where, unless investment was made in time for the winter, there would be serious humanitarian consequences. Those assessments would also be brought to the attention of the international community. From a humanitarian point of view, the needs of the people of Serbia were significant, as the inter-agency mission which had visited the area in May had pointed out.

In Montenegro, which had also suffered from the conflict, it was roughly estimated, from visits by United Nations staff under the leadership of UNDP, that tourism, which had formerly accounted for 20 per cent of the national income, was down by some 70 per cent. Of the total population of some 635,000, 500,000 were thought to be in need of social assistance from the Government. What was needed was a substantial programme of cooperation with the United Nations for broad assistance to the people of Montenegro, including the relief of residual humanitarian needs.

In conclusion, he said that Kosovo was not an island: its stability depended upon, and in turn influenced, conditions throughout south-eastern Europe.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan) said that the Council had learned a great deal from the members of the briefing panel. In Kosovo, the need to pay special attention to the most vulnerable groups, had rightly been stressed, as had the need to provide assistance to the neighbouring countries, particularly Albania. One point that needed to be emphasized was the necessity for the proper investigation and documentation of war crimes. As the Under-Secretary-General had pointed out, KFOR was discovering more mass graves every day. War crimes and crimes against humanity had obviously been committed in Kosovo and there must be an accounting, to ensure that such incidents were avoided in the future.

The task in Kosovo was not simply a humanitarian response but one of post-conflict reconstruction, without which the political stability required for peace in Kosovo and in the region would not be achieved. In the context of Kosovo itself, he noted that, in the initial phase, there had been some criticism of the lack of a United Nations response. He wondered whether the members of the panel had any views on the matter. Lastly, given the multiplicity of actors in Kosovo, he wondered whether some kind of organigram could be prepared which would allow the Council to appreciate precisely what was being done where, so that cooperation from countries, whether individual or collective, with the various parts of the organization in Kosovo could be improved or streamlined. Moreover, when considering the situation of the Kosovo refugees, whether leaving or returning, representatives should not forget that there were other Balkan refugees, especially in Bosnia. The new problems should not cause people to forget that there were still some old problems that needed to be solved.

Mr. PEREZ-HERNANDEZ y TORRA (Spain), having expressed his admiration for the selflessness and efficiency of the humanitarian workers in the South Balkans, an efficiency that was astonishing given the range of the tasks being undertaken, said that the speed of developments made it difficult to plan for the future. For example, the previous plans for winterization in Macedonia and Albania had to be directed to Kosovo itself. The direction of the flow of refugees was also changing. A surge of refugees from the Serbian and Roma communities demanded priority attention. As relief gave way to rehabilitation in Kosovo, the third phase, that of reconstruction, was fast approaching. The European Union would be playing an important role in that

phase and the need for coordination would intensify. In the study to be carried out by UNDP, special attention should be paid to programmes for genuine reconciliation.

The efforts of the neighbouring countries should be gratefully acknowledged and their efforts to show human solidarity should be rewarded first by help with rehabilitation and then with development assistance. His delegation fully agreed that a regional approach to an aid framework was needed.

At the same time, refugee problems in other parts of the world should not be forgotten. In Africa especially, there were conflict-resolution situations and refugee problems that also called for solidarity.

Mr. NEBENZYA (Russian Federation) said that the panel had provided a good deal of very useful information on Kosovo and the United Nations activities there. Although the attention that Kosovo was attracting from the international community was no doubt justified, his delegation was concerned that neighbouring countries were being left out. The subject of the current briefing was the situation in the South Balkans but, unfortunately, most of the information provided had centred on Kosovo.

His delegation would like to know what activities were being undertaken by the United Nations in the Republic of Serbia. He understood that a dollar figure would be given for Serbian requirements in the revised CAP. He would like to know whether the United Nations had garnered any information regarding the actual level of requirements in Serbia from the numerous studies being undertaken by NGOs. He would also like to know how the United Nations system proposed to tackle the problem of coordinating aid for refugees from other areas, such as Krajina. He asked whether the United Nations, and OCHA in particular, had plans to follow up the recommendations for Kosovo and Serbia in the report of the Inter-Agency Commission that had visited the area in May 1999.

Mr. HUHTANIEMI (Observer for Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the presentation had been highly informative. He had listened with particular interest because the Union was making a considerable contribution to the structure and activities of UNMIK, as well as to the broader regional efforts being undertaken within the framework of the Stability Pact. The members of the panel had faced an unprecedented task in

launching the reconstruction of a society literally torn apart at the humanitarian and civic level. In doing so, they had shown great leadership and strategic vision as well as personal and political courage. Formidable challenges still lay ahead, but they had already written a remarkable page in the history of the United Nations.

Mr. LEUS (World Health Organization (WHO)) said that WHO commended the Secretary-General's efforts on behalf of the reconstruction of Kosovo and in particular his willingness to invite the specialized agencies to participate. WHO had been present in Macedonia and Albania when the crisis started and it was currently working with the United Nations in Kosovo as one of the four pillars of UNMIK.

Health was fundamental to humanitarian assistance and to the reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts and WHO was currently leading the reconstruction of the health sector in Kosovo. While the situation there was in order for the time being, it remained unstable and there were a number of risk factors not under the control of the international community. Information systems were in place for monitoring events with regard to health but health concerns extended beyond the actual health sector.

It was important to give a human development orientation to the assessment efforts currently under way and the United Nations was to be commended for providing leadership in that regard. In WHO's proposal for a Balkan health and social reconstruction plan, the question posed was not only whether health was possible in the absence of peace and reconciliation, but also what role the health sector could and should play as an active facilitator of peace and social reconstruction.

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria) said, with reference to the admiration expressed by the representative of UNHCR for the courage and resilience of the people of Kosovo, that the spirit displayed augured well for the country's future reconstruction. In his delegation's view, that reconstruction would depend on three prime factors. The first was reconciliation, which would depend on the ability of the Kosovars to forgive, the ability of the international community to punish war crimes, and the ability of the Kosovar Serbs to condemn what had been perpetrated in their name by the Milošević regime.

The modern age had seen two Holocausts. Fifty years after the Jewish Holocaust, the international community was still feeling its repercussions in the form of reparations and compensation and justice for the victims. However, knowledge of that event had emerged only at the end of the Second World War. The Holocaust in Kosovo had been experienced directly by the outside world through the media, especially television.

The second important factor was the ability of UNMIK to ensure consistency in the Transitional Council. The representative nature of its composition as described was somewhat questionable. The Under-Secretary-General had referred to the Muslim members of the Council. The international community should not confuse ethnic group and religion: the Muslims in question were Islamized Serbs. That remark was not meant as a criticism and his delegation would be happy to see Mr. Rugova play a leading role in the Transitional Council on behalf of peace. Lastly, he would like to know what the prospects were for a rapid renewal of the civil service. If that could be brought about quickly, it would be a major contribution to reconstruction. The international community, which was already doing a great deal, in particular the European Union, must continue to mobilize all its forces.

Mr. HUSSAIN (Observer for Iraq) said that care should be taken not to be selective in humanitarian affairs. Human suffering knew no geographical boundaries. His country had been in immense difficulties since 1990, owing to the boycott and sanctions imposed on it. There had been 2 million deaths, including those of women and children, and the population was subjected to daily air raids by United Kingdom and United States forces. Crops had been burned and the same two countries had prevented the delivery of food and medicine, so that the population faced famine and children had been particularly affected. The most recent air raids had left 17 dead and thousands wounded. He asked when the United Nations would devote to Iraq the attention it rightly paid to the people of Kosovo. The Iraqi people surely deserved rather more consideration.

Mr. KUMAMARU (Japan) asked how the Under-Secretary-General, whose relative optimism he welcomed, saw the process of transition from humanitarian assistance to rehabilitation and reconstruction. Clearly the humanitarian aspect still took precedence, but that phase of assistance should not be

perpetuated and he wondered how a smooth transition to the next stage would be ensured. UNHCR and OCHA currently coordinated activities, but he would like to know what kind of transfer of leadership was contemplated.

Mr. MASUKU (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that FAO was currently involved in three key areas in Kosovo: emergency operations, the reconstruction process and support for UNMIK.

At the outbreak of the crisis, FAO had provided immediate emergency assistance, through its own resources, to the farmer families hosting refugees in Albania and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Additional funding had been provided following a Special Donor alert and FAO was supplying the poorest families with wheat seed, animal feed and fertilizer.

Following the return of refugees to Kosovo, FAO had established an emergency coordination unit in Priština to assist the returning farming families and advise the NGOs active in agricultural assistance. A further US\$ 22 million was required to assist refugees and those who had remained in Kosovo to re-engage in farming. The aim was to provide basic agricultural assistance, not only to help decrease emergency food aid requirements for the year 2000 but also to provide the basis for sustainable agricultural production. The assistance would be closely coordinated with other agencies in the field, particularly UNHCR, WFP and various NGOs.

FAO contributed to reconstruction through its investment in agriculture, jointly with the European Union and the World Bank. It had fielded a mission to undertake a rapid needs assessment survey for livestock, agricultural machinery, farm buildings, veterinary and machinery services, forestry and agro-processing. The eventual outcome would be an emergency farm reconstruction project and, in the long term, an agricultural recovery programme.

FAO had been requested to prepare proposals for establishing and helping the organization of the civil administration of the agricultural sector in Kosovo. The FAO mission would be based in Priština and would coordinate the activities of the United Nations agencies and other international organizations operating in the agricultural sector. It would, in a sense, be

the interim Ministry of Agriculture. FAO looked forward to providing a coordinated framework for all emergency and recovery programmes in the food and agriculture sector.

Mr. KRISAFI (Observer for Albania), having expressed his delegation's gratitude to the United Nations, international organizations, individual countries and NGOs for their support both for the Kosovo Albanians and for his own country, said he wished to draw the Council's attention to the particularly difficult situation of Albanians in the towns of Kukës and Tropojë, in a mountainous region in the north of Albania very close to the Kosovo border, where the Serbs had destroyed many houses and sown 100 hectares with anti-personnel landmines. The problems of the inhabitants of the region would be exacerbated by the approaching winter and he urged the international community to adopt measures to alleviate their plight.

Ms. COMOGLU-ULGEN (Turkey) said that the situation in Kosovo provided a significant test case for the whole international community. Her Government had contributed to the alleviation of the humanitarian tragedy by providing assistance and establishing tent cities in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which had sheltered almost 8,750 refugees. It had also accepted the largest number of refugees - 20,000 - under the UNHCR evacuation programme and had dispatched a unit of 163 soldiers to protect the refugee camps. Subsequently, it had been involved in the return process. It had sent an advance team headed by a coordinator of ambassadorial rank, assisted by government representatives, to Kosovo to assess the situation and the need for further assistance and work programmes. The team had arrived in Kosovo in late June and was continuing its consultations with the local authorities, representatives of civil society, UNHCR and other organizations. His Government was determined to continue making its contribution to the peace process.

Mr. FERRER RODRIGUEZ (Cuba) said he was concerned that, although the briefing had been announced as relating to the South Balkans, the Council had been informed only of the situation in Kosovo, while the rest of the region had been passed over in silence. Nevertheless, official documents provided ample evidence of civilian casualties elsewhere and the damage to essential services such as water, electricity, heating, transport, communications, health and education. If the international community wished

to prevent further conflict and a mass exodus from the region, its deeds should match its words. Unless reconstruction and development were carried out throughout the region, without exception, there was a risk of fanning the flames of internecine conflict.

He queried whether the needs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia had been taken into account. It was time to put an end to the politicization of assistance, whereby some populations were helped and others were not. Lastly, he repeated his Government's offer to provide doctors who would care for all ethnic groups impartially, whether in Kosovo or in the rest of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

Mr. SFEIR-YOUNIS (World Bank) said he wished to stress the importance of taking two elements into account. First, there was a crucial need for a strategy on economic reconstruction to be established from the outset. Experience had shown that the process was not linear; priorities should be established to avoid institutional, resource, coordination or policy gaps. Secondly, recognizing the scope of the crisis, the World Bank had adopted a regional approach, since many of the neighbouring countries, although not actually involved in the conflict, had also been severely affected. In addition to the large number of refugees that they had had to support, disruptions in trade and transport had hurt - and would continue to hurt - the economies of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The crisis also adversely affected the confidence of foreign investors, particularly in areas bordering Kosovo. It could result in the postponement of structural reforms affecting those countries' longer-term development goals.

As examples of regional programmes set up by the Bank, he cited initiatives in Albania and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The former had come under great stress with the influx of some 545,000 refugees. The Bank had therefore established a post-conflict fund, totalling US\$ 2 million, and a public sector support programme, under which a fast-disbursement operation of \$30 million had been launched to finance extraordinary budgetary needs and to compensate for revenue shortfalls caused by the crisis. Other initiatives included the Structural Adjustment Credit and an emergency consultative group to support the Albanian Government.

The programmes for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia included emergency recovery credit; a fast-disbursement credit of \$50 million to assist the Government in maintaining macroeconomic stability and support economic growth; an emergency consultative group; a post-conflict fund, for which an application for \$1 million had been made; and an emergency social support project totalling \$10 million to palliate the situation.

The European Commission and the World Bank had been given a special mandate to coordinate economic assistance in the Balkans, mobilizing donor support, providing economic analysis, developing appropriate conditions and implementing projects. Agreement had been reached on a coordination structure involving the creation of a "High-Level Steering Group", which had held its first meeting on 13 July 1999 under the joint chairmanship of the European Commissioner for Economic, Monetary and Financial Affairs and the President of the World Bank. The Group had called on the international community to help Kosovars build a strong economy delivering economic security, jobs, rising incomes and a social safety net for the poor and other vulnerable groups. The Bank would continue its efforts in that direction.

Mr. KANANURA (Rwanda) said that it was clear from the presentations that concerted action was needed in Kosovo, whose problems could not be resolved overnight or even in a year: it would be a long process. The representative of Algeria had drawn a parallel with earlier holocausts. He had, however, omitted to mention the recent events in Rwanda. Barely four years ago, 1,200,000 people had been slaughtered before the eyes of the international community; but when 2,500,000 refugees had returned they seemed to have been forgotten. He urged the international community not to lose sight, in the midst of its concern for Kosovo, of the sufferings of the people of Rwanda.

Mr. VIEIRA de MELLO (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs/Emergency Relief Coordinator) said that he and his colleagues had been most touched by the commendations that had been expressed by every speaker. With regard to the point raised by the representative of Pakistan, he said that the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, with full support from KFOR and UNMIK, was doing its utmost to investigate the scenes of crime discovered in Kosovo. Those investigations had been largely made possible by the dispatch of forensic teams, for which he expressed gratitude

to the countries concerned. He was in constant contact with the Court, trying to determine the extent to which war criminals remaining in Kosovo could be tried under the new judicial system being put in place. He hoped that the Kosovo Albanians would be reassured that justice was being done in accordance with the rule of law and that people would be dissuaded from taking the law into their own hands. That was essential if reconciliation was to be achieved in the future. In that context, he reminded the representative of Rwanda that the United Nations had adopted the same approach in his country also.

With regard to the remarks by the representatives of the Russian Federation and Cuba, he said that his team would continue to pay equal attention to the needs of all the inhabitants of the region, including Serbia and Montenegro and the neighbouring countries. The report of the Inter-Agency Needs Assessment Mission submitted to the Security Council in May 1999 (S/1999/662) showed that, as a group of international civil servants, his team had done its best to be objective and impartial, with full respect for the fundamental principles involved. It did not apply double standards and would continue to help refugees and internally displaced persons in Serbia and Montenegro as well as elsewhere.

The revised consolidated appeal, which was to appear in the following week, would include humanitarian assistance in Serbia and Montenegro, based on assessments already made; more were under way and might lead to further requests for assistance.

A two-pronged approach would be adopted. First, a number of United Nations agencies - including UNHCR, WFP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WHO, UNDP (currently only with local staff but soon to be reinforced), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) - were all represented in Belgrade and some in Podgorica. OCHA had an office in Belgrade, within the United Nations liaison office, where it helped coordinate the assessment and programming. It was headed by a senior officer, supported by two professional staff members.

On the basis of the report of the Inter-Agency Mission, the United Nations would monitor developments, assessing the likelihood of any further deterioration in the humanitarian situation. Donors would be alerted to further needs as they became apparent. Vulnerability assessment and

mapping programmes would evaluate more precisely the needs for food security, availability of drugs, essential equipment, the number and situation of internally displaced persons and refugees and other vulnerable groups, and the health and ecological effects of the air campaign.

Rapid assessments, identifying the effect of war damage and sanctions on electric supplies, central-heating systems, distribution networks, the fuel available for agriculture and the health services, were being made and would continue to be made. OCHA would play the advocacy role, alerting donors and the media to the humanitarian consequences of not investing in the rehabilitation of basic services and emergency projects to fight poverty and the approaching winter cold among all communities impartially.

He fully agreed with the remarks made by the representative of Algeria. He pointed out, however, that the terms "Muslims", "Bosnians" or "Bosnian Muslims" were all in current use within the communities themselves and it might be difficult to find an alternative. In principle, however, a religious community should not be confused with a cultural or linguistic one. He found that representative's suggestion of "Muslim Slavs" acceptable and would pass it on to the Head of UNMIK.

With regard to the statement by the observer for Iraq, he pointed out that the oil-for-food programme had been established some time previously and was functioning at maximum capacity to provide assistance for Iraqis in need. Furthermore, the Security Council had set up four panels in January 1999, he himself being a member of the panel on humanitarian issues, which devoted its attention to ways in which capacities to assist Iraq could be improved.

Mr. McNAMARA (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said, in answer to the question by the representative of Pakistan about what might have been done to improve the initial response to the crisis, that there had been deficiencies in three areas. First of all, there ought to have been better advance information and intelligence on population movements in the region. Secondly, if the international community wanted rapid response humanitarian action, it would have to invest in stand-by capacity. The non-humanitarian arm of the United Nations had such capacity and its achievements had been impressive. Careful thought should be given to a similar, humanitarian, force. Thirdly, the United Nations needed to streamline its human and material response. It was also worth pointing out

that, when UNHCR had put out a contingency appeal for an estimated exodus of refugees from Kosovo, it had met with virtually no response. That was a factor that should be taken into account.

Replying to the representative of the Russian Federation, he said that UNHCR had spent some US\$ 300 million on refugees in Serbia since 1992, was continuing to help half a million refugees from Bosnia and Croatia in Serbia, and was giving humanitarian assistance to over 100,000 newly displaced Kosovars in Serbia. As far as he knew, the only increase in the revised CAP would go to Serbia, given the humanitarian concerns of shelter and food for the new arrivals. UNHCR had increased its presence in Serbia and would continue to do so. It would, therefore, appreciate greater facility by the Belgrade authorities for its humanitarian access, an easing of the continued visa restrictions on their visits to Belgrade, and access for Serbs from Kosovo attempting to enter Serbia, especially in the case of the Krajina Serbs.

Regarding the key questions from the representative of Japan on the methods and time-frames for the transition from relief, and avoidance of the well-known gaps, it had been decided the previous week in Priština that the post-relief and pre-reconstruction rehabilitation action being worked out with the European Union would fall within the broad humanitarian pillar for which he was responsible. It was crucial that the transition should proceed seamlessly, especially since reconstruction would not be evident before the spring of 2000. In the face of that challenge, he appealed to the Governments represented at the Council's session to ensure support for the crucial transition phase in order to avoid a lack of focus on the rehabilitation link.

Mr. GRIFFITHS (United Nations Regional Coordinator for Assistance to the Balkans) expressed surprise at the suggestion that the United Nations was interested only in Kosovo. In reply to the representative of the Russian Federation, he repeated that the initial quantification of humanitarian assistance would appear in the CAP that was about to be launched, and would be supplemented thereafter.

The conclusion of the UNDP-led assessment in early August should give a clearer picture of the assistance programmes which, in Montenegro, were more typical than humanitarian action as such. He welcomed the World Bank representative's outline of the assistance it provided to neighbouring

countries. He agreed with the representative of Pakistan on the need for an organigram and trusted that the new Regional Coordinator would pursue the idea in New York. Options for the continuation of his own regional office were, in fact, being reviewed by the Secretary-General.

Adoption of the draft agreed conclusions for the humanitarian affairs segment (E/1999/L.25)

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to the draft agreed conclusions (E/1999/L.25) and invited comments.

Mr. MARCH (Observer for Australia), citing the reference in paragraph 4 of the draft agreed conclusions to international humanitarian law and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, reminded the Council that three Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere (CARE) workers of Australian nationality were imprisoned in Yugoslavia and faced long prison sentences, although they were innocent of the charges brought against them. While grateful for the international support received so far, his delegation would welcome additional representations to ensure their early release, as a token of the ongoing international commitment to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel.

Mr. TAPIA (Chile) said that, in the antepenultimate line of paragraph 10 of the Spanish version of the document, the word acciones should be sanciones.

Mr. NEBENZYA (Russian Federation) said that the Russian version of the text, especially paragraph 4, contained a number of errors, to such an extent that they altered the meaning. He asked the Secretariat to rectify those errors and reissue the Russian version of the text.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that the Council wished to adopt the draft agreed conclusions for the humanitarian affairs segment, as contained in document E/1999/L.25.

It was so decided.

Ms. MUNOZ PRIETO (Cuba) said that her delegation was concerned at the approach that some countries were trying to give to the humanitarian question in the United Nations context. Throughout the negotiation process, Cuba had demonstrated its respect for resolution 46/182, and its annexed principles, which guided humanitarian assistance in a spirit of neutrality and impartiality. The first principle clearly stated that such assistance was primarily designed for victims of natural disasters and other emergencies but

attempts were being made by some countries to shift the emphasis and to use the resources to palliate the effects of wars and conflicts, relegating the victims of natural disasters and climatic phenomena to second place.

A further concern was the attempt to give other United Nations organs inappropriate functions even where their functions were clearly spelled out in the Charter. For example, various delegations, including her own, had repeatedly pointed out during the negotiations that the Security Council's competence was confined to conflicts it had before it. The activities of OCHA and UNHCR were different from those of the Security Council.

Financing was crucial to the implementation of humanitarian assistance programmes but those in a position to supply it often linked their contributions to totally unrelated issues.

Most of the so-called rich and developed countries had built their wealth on colonial exploitation and unequal terms of trade. As the Central American and Caribbean experience had shown, humanitarian assistance should also contribute to development. Cuba, an island State prone to atmospheric phenomena, climate change and natural disasters, would continue to strive to make development the rule rather than the exception in humanitarian action.

Mr. AHN Ho-young (Republic of Korea) said that the Agreed Conclusions, while not fully satisfying all members of the Council, were a realistic compromise for guiding United Nations humanitarian activities in the coming year. With respect to strengthening the safety and security of humanitarian personnel (paras. 4 and 5), the escalation of complex emergencies in Kosovo and elsewhere and the increased vulnerability of humanitarian workers meant that the issue called for the special attention of the international community. For that reason, during his country's presidency of the Security Council in 1997, his delegation had initiated a debate on the subject, followed by pertinent actions on the part of the various United Nations organs.

He hoped the Council would include in its agreed conclusions for the 2000 session more concrete language for strengthening the security of humanitarian personnel in conflict situations.

Mr. KUMAMARU (Japan) said the Agreed Conclusions would serve as a valuable guide for the response to transition from relief to rehabilitation,

reconstruction and development, which was the challenge the international community faced in complex emergencies and natural disasters. Japan would willingly join in any initiatives to translate international awareness into practical action and praised the usefulness of the joint UNHCR-World Bank-Brookings Institute initiative for identifying specific coherent, coordinated and timely ways of responding to post-conflict situations.

Regarding the deaths of WFP staff members in the course of their duty, his delegation endorsed the WFP Director-General's suggestion that the Council should request the Secretary-General to issue a report listing all such incidents, their background, and official and United Nations action. It wished, in cooperation with other partners, to increase awareness of the issue so as to protect humanitarian personnel more effectively.

Mr. COLLINS (Observer for Guyana), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed their commitment to implementing the Agreed Conclusions for the humanitarian affairs segment, which provided valuable guidance to the actors in that field.

Mr. NEBENZYA (Russian Federation), having expressed his gratitude to all concerned and commended the Agreed Conclusions, which would guide the United Nations coordination of emergency relief assistance, particularly the transition from relief to reconstruction, said it was particularly important that the Agreed Conclusions should have confirmed the principles enshrined in resolution 46/182. Efforts at transition should conform to the United Nations Charter and international law, recognizing the negative effects of sanctions.

Attempts to mitigate the consequences of hurricanes Mitch and Georges had also been noted. The transition from relief to reconstruction in the Balkans reflected the United Nations potential, in cooperation with its partners, to settle the situation in the Balkans, one of the most complex emergencies in the contemporary world.

Ms. MUSTONEN (Observer for Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that her delegation had been particularly interested in the discussions on the transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. While the conclusions had set general guidelines for action, they were realistic and reflected the challenges facing humanitarian actors in modern crises.

Mr. MOUNTAIN (Director, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)) said that the Agreed Conclusions would be a valuable source of guidance to the humanitarian community. The discussions had reflected a huge advance on the substantive conclusions reached during the 1998 special segment. He was particularly pleased at the reaffirmation of the principles on which they operated, the importance assigned to respect for humanitarian and human rights law, and the delegations' concern for the safety of humanitarian workers. Also, many statements reflected in the conclusions concerning various vulnerable groups suggested improvements that could be made to the CAP.

In the light of the mid-term review of the CAP conducted with the delegations, OCHA had noted the increased support across the board for the consolidated appeals already launched and appreciated the hope expressed that more support would be forthcoming.

The PRESIDENT reviewed the discussion of the Council's humanitarian segment and highlighted the main issues addressed in the Agreed Conclusions: the Council had expressed deep concern at the declining respect for international humanitarian law, and had called upon the conflicting parties to observe the standards, and on Governments, United Nations agencies and NGOs to promote them. The Council had welcomed progress in strengthening the CAP and increasing OCHA's financial base. It had also noted proposals for enhancing the functioning of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF).

Note had been taken of the specific needs of internally displaced persons, women, children and the elderly in humanitarian emergencies and in the transition from conflict to peace. The Agreed Conclusions contained several recommendations concerning the transition from relief to recovery, rehabilitation and development, following natural disasters or conflict resolution. Serving as a guide to the international humanitarian community, they called for extensive follow-up in the forthcoming year.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.