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Agenda item 74 (b)SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE: SPECIAL PROGRAMMES
OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCEAssistance for the reconstruction and development of LebanonReport of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 36/205 of 17 December 1981 which, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to provide in a manner he deemed appropriate, all possible assistance to the Resident Co-ordinator of Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon, so that he might engage in co-ordinating the continuing United Nations activities in Lebanon, with a view to ensuring their harmony and success. The resolution also requested the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh session.
2. In 1978, the Lebanese Government Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) prepared a plan for reconstruction and development of the country which, it was estimated, would cost LL22 billion (\$7 billion at the then prevailing exchange rate). It included a number of major projects for the reconstruction - including improvements and extensions - of the infrastructure and equipment destroyed or damaged during the four years of civil strife and war which the country had already endured. Among those projects were the rebuilding of the city centre of Beirut, the commercial heart of the capital; repair and rehabilitation of the highway network; expansion and improvement of the Beirut international airport and sea port, as well as the harbours of Tripoli and Sidon. Progress was made towards implementing some of the projects, including the construction of warehouses in the port area of Beirut, additional runways and improvements to the terminal building and other facilities at the Beirut airport, construction of portions of the projected coastal highway connecting Beirut with Sidon and Tripoli, and the joint programme of CDR and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the reconstruction and restoration of the water supply system, schools and hospitals in the South.

3. As a result of the Israeli invasion of the country in June 1982, and the subsequent hostilities, all reconstruction and development work came to a halt. Moreover, normal activities, at the governmental level and in the fields of commerce, banking, construction and investment were interrupted or seriously hampered. The airport was closed on 6 June when fighting broke out on its outskirts and remained closed for several months. While Beirut harbour is open, it is being used principally to bring in supplies, goods and commodities for the relief of people affected by warfare in Lebanon.

4. In the aftermath of the military operations of the last three months, the reconstruction and development programme will need to be reviewed and substantially revised. Exact estimates of the damage cannot be obtained until systematic surveys can be made. It is evident, however, that the extent of damage to physical capital, productive facilities and infrastructure, as well as the disruption of commerce, industry, Government services and social facilities, is very extensive. Some of the work that had been completed must be done all over again, for example, at the Beirut airport. New works will have to be undertaken to rehabilitate and rebuild the large areas of West Beirut, Sidon and Tyre devastated or severely damaged. After the lapse of four years, it is necessary also to take account of the effect of inflation on the original estimates of cost. It is premature to estimate what the total cost of the new programme will be and how long it will take to carry it out. It is obvious, however, that the figure will be very much larger than the \$7 billion estimated for the 1978 programme.

5. A start was made towards the implementation of that programme in 1980, but it could not be carried out on schedule because of the prevailing insecurity and political uncertainty. The situation also discouraged the flow of investment and aid funds into the country, so that even the modest annual programmes approved for the years 1980 and 1981 could not be fully executed. Now, given the vast magnitude of the effort required to repair the damage caused by the years of war and neglect, political stability and security are more than ever the sine qua non for launching and carrying out a plan for the reconstruction and development of the country. It is vital that the State should recover the substance of the legal authority which has been eroded over the years. The Government must acquire effective control over every part of the country's territory and generate national resources by collecting revenues and promoting savings and by encouraging foreign investment. There is reason to hope that these conditions can be fulfilled in the near future, for the country's institutions have shown a resilience that is truly remarkable. Though the amounts required for reconstruction and development will be very large, they are not out of proportion to the country's economic potential and there is every hope that investment and credit from abroad will begin to flow in once stability is restored. In view of the scale of effort that will be required, however, Lebanon's own resources and private investment flows will need to be supplemented by external concessional assistance on an adequate scale and over a number of years. It is hoped that the international community will respond to these needs as generously as it has in the past.

6. The response of the international community to the emergency situation created by the Israeli invasion was timely, spontaneous and generous. In a statement

issued on 10 June 1982, the Secretary-General drew attention to the plight of the civilian population in Lebanon and the need for urgent humanitarian assistance. On 14 June 1982, the Secretary-General appealed to Member States for assistance and announced that he had taken steps to mobilize urgent humanitarian aid. In order to co-ordinate relief work and mobilize assistance, an Inter-Agency Group was set up at United Nations Headquarters, chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and General Assembly Affairs. Action in the field is co-ordinated by the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee at Beirut under the chairmanship of the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator.

7. On 11 June 1982, the Minister for Social Affairs and Labour and President of the High Relief Committee, which is responsible for receiving and distributing relief supplies, requested in the name of the Government of Lebanon that an appeal be launched by the General Assembly to assist Lebanon and that a special mission of the Secretary-General composed of the United Nations agencies concerned be "sent as soon as possible to assess the damage and the need and to draw up a plan for immediate action".

8. The response to the Secretary-General's appeal was prompt and effective, particularly by the United Nations system and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). In the South, personnel of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) succeeded, in the face of difficulties and obstacles, in bringing help to the large number of people who had been wounded and rendered homeless and were in immediate need of medical attention, food and water. UNIFIL personnel assisted the population of its area of operation by conveying water to the villages, providing medical help and transporting food commodities supplied by UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

9. On 25 June 1982, in response to a request from the Government of Lebanon, the Secretary-General appointed an Inter-Agency Survey Mission under the chairmanship of the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations, Mr. Anders Thunborg. The Mission included representatives of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), UNHCR, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

10. The Inter-Agency Mission visited Lebanon from 5 to 12 July where it held meetings with the authorities concerned and visited all the areas affected by the hostilities. The Chairman's report to the Secretary-General made the following specific recommendations:

(a) That WFP ensure food supplies initially for a period of three months (July-September) and that sufficient food reserves be maintained by WFP for shipment to Lebanon, in case, after an assessment in late September, there is need for additional food aid;

(b) That immediate attention be given to urgent repair and rehabilitation of basic infrastructures and services needed by the population;

(c) That, to this effect, a programme of action be agreed upon among the competent United Nations agencies with the following priorities:

- (i) Hospitals, dispensaries, medical stores and hospital transport equipment;
- (ii) Water and sanitation facilities, including sewerage and waste disposal, as well as restoration of power lines needed for the functioning of essential services;
- (iii) The provision of shelter for the homeless before the cold season sets in, which is usually by mid-October (a small team of housing experts, recruited by the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development of the Secretariat was subsequently sent to Lebanon);
- (iv) School buildings and basic school equipment to enable the schools to open for the autumn semester.

11. An interim report on the humanitarian efforts of the United Nations system to assist Lebanon was submitted by the Secretary-General to the Security Council on 30 June (S/15267 and Corr.1). Since that time, the agencies and programmes of the United Nations system, in co-operation with ICRC and other non-governmental organizations, have continued to provide a wide range of emergency assistance, the details of which are contained in annex I to the present report (A/37/508/Add.1).

12. Although the emergency relief assistance programme arose as a result of events unrelated to the original reconstruction and development effort envisaged in resolution 36/205, the prompt response to emergency needs was made possible in no small part because programmes and agencies had experienced staff already in the field and had an established co-ordination mechanism. Moreover, it is obvious that the meeting of basic emergency needs is a pre-condition for an effective and successful reconstruction and development programme.

13. The reconstruction and development activities which have taken place since the last report and up to the June 1982 Israeli invasion are described in annex II to the present report (A/37/508/Add.1).
