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Chairman: Mr. Sotirov (Vice-President) (Bulgaria)

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In the absence of Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia), Mr. Sotirov (Bulgaria), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance (*continued*) (A/54/855-E/2000/44, A/55/82-E/2000/61, A/55/90-E/2000/81 and A/55/139-E/2000/93; E/2000/CRP.3, 4 and 5; E/2000/NGO/1)

1. **Mr. Widodo** (Indonesia) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The increasing number and scale of humanitarian emergencies and the complexity of emerging situations continued to challenge the United Nations system. Much more needed to be done to coordinate an international response, mobilize the necessary financial resources and sustain the international community's focus on the crisis until its final resolution.

2. The response to the 2000 consolidated appeals process had been disappointing. Indonesia therefore welcomed the Secretary-General's recommendations that Member States should commit adequate resources to humanitarian operations through multilateral channels and contribute to the 2000 consolidated appeals process, taking into account the importance of greater balance in geographic and sectoral coverage. While the increase in the number and range of organizations providing humanitarian assistance was a welcome development, that did not release Member States from their responsibilities. An integrated and strategic approach that employed all available resources with maximum efficiency and effectiveness was urgently needed. That could best be accomplished through multilateral channels. Regular briefings by both the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs and the Emergency Relief Coordinator on their activities would help achieve greater coherence.

3. In connection with humanitarian response to natural disasters, he emphasized the value of a multilateral response and welcomed the increased efforts to strengthen early warning systems. Disaster reduction should be included as part of overall development programmes. Appropriate technologies for early warning, prevention, preparedness, mitigation and response to natural disasters and for the reconstruction and development phases should be made available to disaster-prone developing countries on

preferential and concessional terms. Indonesia supported the expansion of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams and the appointment of regional natural disaster advisors.

4. Indonesia had recently been affected by earthquakes in Bengkulu, South Sumatra, and Central Sulawesi, and heavy rains and floods in West Timor. Indonesia had worked within its capacity and through its National Disaster Management Coordinating Board to alleviate the suffering and had benefited from international assistance provided by the United Nations and other humanitarian organizations. He expressed his country's deep appreciation for those efforts.

5. With regard to internally displaced persons, each Government had the primary responsibility to care for those within its national territory. However, in view of the limited capacity of some Governments to fulfil that obligation, the international community had the responsibility of supporting such efforts. Clear guidance for providing a humanitarian response to the problem of internally displaced persons should be established with the approval of all Member States and in full respect for State sovereignty. His delegation supported the call made by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for stronger commitment to the budget for internally displaced persons. National Governments had a central role to play, and it was only at their request that the international community entered the picture. Without their consent, any efforts to intervene would lack legitimacy, and the assistance programmes would ultimately fail.

6. A disproportionate share of limited assistance resources seemed to be distributed to those humanitarian situations that received a great deal of attention in the media. That was true both among and within regions. Once the cameras were gone, the urgency to respond diminished. The problem of selective responses to humanitarian assistance had to be resolved. His delegation could not support actions that ran counter to the letter and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.

7. **Mr. Krishnamurty** (International Labour Organization (ILO)) said that ILO coordinated its emergency response activities with other major actors. Although the first priority in humanitarian assistance was food, clothing and shelter, it was important that the affected population should be able to return to work as soon as possible in order to contribute to their own

recovery. Rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure was also a major priority, and greater use should be made of local labour and materials.

8. Unemployment, poverty and social exclusion were crucial dimensions of humanitarian emergencies. Both owners and workers of all kinds of enterprises were severely affected. Employment-friendly infrastructure development would also create increased demand for goods and services. Efforts should also be made to promote investment and revive local economies. The close links between ILO and employers' and workers' organizations enabled it to help create self-reliance among communities and, in post-conflict situations, a stake in peace. Reconciliation and peace-building could be promoted through the process of social dialogue.

9. At the national level, ILO could help with long-term policies to improve the functioning of the labour market and expand employment, which would help Governments to respond more effectively to future crises. In the context of natural disaster and other emergencies, child labour, including child prostitution, could become a serious problem. ILO was also concerned about the use of child soldiers in conflict situations and the need to reintegrate them into society.

10. ILO emphasized the strengthening of national capacities to deal with crises through such measures as emergency employment programmes, better social safety nets, employment diversification, an improved training system, a more significant role for local institutions in the flow of information and early warning, and early warning systems that included employment information.

11. Longer-term development objectives should be kept in mind in the often complex transition from an emergency situation to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. ILO was committed to working with humanitarian and development agencies in tackling the employment and other social and economic impacts of crises in the short, medium and long term.

12. **Mr. Kristofferson** (Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)) said that the recent Security Council resolution on HIV/AIDS was the first Council resolution on a health or development issue. It was not surprising that AIDS was perceived as a security threat, when 18.8 million people around the world had already died of AIDS, and nearly twice as many were living with HIV/AIDS. In 1999 alone, an

estimated 5.4 million people had been infected. In about 15 African countries, more than one tenth of the adult population between the ages of 15 and 19 was infected and, in seven of those countries, at least one adult in five was living with HIV/AIDS. The social and economic gains of the past several decades hung in the balance.

13. AIDS had become a central issue for United Nations humanitarian work because HIV spread fastest where poverty, powerlessness and social instability abounded. Some of the underlying causes for the spread of HIV/AIDS in complex emergencies were: the disruption of families and communities that led to a breakdown of cultural mores at a time when health and social services were deteriorating; war and civil strife, in which women and children were at high risk of sexual violence; displaced and refugee populations, which were more vulnerable because of disrupted social structures; forced migration of rural populations to the periphery of towns; high-risk behaviour of soldiers from both national armies and international peacekeepers; and the spread of HIV through unsterilized needles and contaminated blood transfusions.

14. The comprehensive action plan endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in May 2000 fully integrated HIV/AIDS into humanitarian action. It addressed the role of the military and peacekeeping forces in the prevention and spread of HIV; the epidemic's potential to contribute to social instability and emergency situations; and the need to ensure minimum standards of prevention and care at all times. The plan would be implemented by the Humanitarian Coordination Unit established by the UNAIDS secretariat in June. Master plans for moving forward were being developed for a number of countries, in cooperation with key international and national partners. Two basic packages for HIV/AIDS prevention and care in complex emergencies would be developed: one for use during the acute phase of a crisis, and the other for use in pre- and post-conflict situations.

15. Intense discussions with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations were focusing on ways to promote responsible behaviour among staff providing humanitarian aid and among peacekeeping troops, and to ensure that they were fully aware of measures to protect themselves against HIV infection. Specific follow-up actions included training before and during deployment as well as the development of a United

Nations medical policy on HIV/AIDS for peacekeeping personnel associated with United Nations missions, including the provision of adequate supplies of condoms. The UNAIDS secretariat was working closely with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Civil-Military Alliance in those areas.

16. **Mr. Alfeld** (Observer for South Africa) commended the work of the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons and endorsed the calls to increase the financial resources and institutional support available to him. South Africa welcomed the growing concern about the plight of internally displaced persons, particularly in Africa, and commended the efforts of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in that area.

17. South Africa welcomed the attention being given to the issue of harnessing technology to mitigate the effects and maximize the effectiveness of response to natural disasters. He thanked the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction for their speedy response to requests by the African region for assistance in the development of an effective regional disaster-management framework. He looked forward to the United Nations needs assessment mission that was currently visiting the region of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In its capacity as Chair of the Development Community's Ad Hoc Working Group on Natural Disasters, South Africa pledged its full commitment to the speedy creation of an effective regional coordination mechanism.

18. The lessons learned from recent disasters should be utilized. The international response to the recent floods in Mozambique had demonstrated the importance of early intervention. His delegation would welcome the comments of the Emergency Relief Coordinator on the proposed convention on the deployment and utilization of urban search and rescue teams. Since prevention was better than cure, his delegation regretted the slow implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

19. South Africa fully supported the excellent work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, particularly its plan of action for improved emergency response and contingency planning and the

so-called "ladder of options" to address the security concerns of refugee camps and settlements. His delegation commended the untiring efforts of humanitarian personnel and fully supported the elaboration of institutional arrangements and normative frameworks to improve their safety and security.

20. **Mr. Woldegiorgis** (Observer for Eritrea) expressed his appreciation for the progress made by the Council in strengthening the coordinated response to the plight of victims of complex emergencies. The resolutions and comprehensive reports issued in 1999 and early 2000 were encouraging, since they showed that serious attention was being given to internally displaced persons.

21. Ethiopia's invasion and the concurrent drought had caused unprecedented social and economic disruption in the lives of Eritreans. Over 1.5 million people had been affected by the armed conflict and natural disaster. In response to the crisis, the Government of Eritrea had assumed the responsibility of providing relief from its meagre resources, and had depleted reserve food stocks. It had established coordination mechanisms and geared most of its institutions to servicing and managing the humanitarian crisis. While Government action had been an important factor for maintaining social cohesion and ethics, the traditional mutual assistance bond among Eritreans had been reactivated and had played a major role in coping with the difficult circumstances. Eritrean social and civic groups, as well as grassroots organizations, had provided financial and material support to victims in cooperation with the Eritrean Relief and Refugee Commission and other humanitarian agencies.

22. United Nations bodies, bilateral agencies and local non-governmental organizations had played a crucial role in monitoring and assessing humanitarian developments and delivering emergency supplies. Emergency response activities had been conducted in a coordinated manner, and every effort made to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication, omissions, or uneven distribution of supplies to the needy. The Government had based its delivery of assistance on the principle of ensuring that assistance reached people in their home villages in order to prevent unnecessary concentrations of people near or around distribution sites. Unless compelled by security considerations, the Government did not encourage organized camp life,

which was regarded as degrading and served as a disincentive to self-help activities.

23. In spite of the coordination mechanisms currently in place, lack of resources had made it difficult to respond effectively to the emergency. The Government's efforts had not been matched by timely and adequate relief supplies by the international community. There was an acute shortage of emergency supplies, especially food and shelter, and the international community's failure to deliver such supplies on time would result in a human catastrophe. His delegation therefore urged the international community to respond generously to the United Nations appeal on behalf of Eritrea.

24. **Mr. Bwakira** (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)) said that the security of humanitarian personnel and refugees, the use of information technology, training, and the consolidated appeals process were issues that fundamentally affected the provision of international protection and assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons. The organizational changes that were being implemented within UNHCR included a thorough internal review of its emergency management system with a view to enhancing emergency preparedness and response capacity. A number of measures had been taken to improve security in refugee-populated areas, camps and settlements for the benefit of humanitarian workers in United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. In addition to those measures, UNHCR had agreed to reinforce the capacity of the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator.

25. UNHCR had held discussions with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations on threats to the humanitarian and civilian character of camps. Of particular concern were situations in which refugee-populated areas had become militarized and those in which bona fide refugee populations were at risk of falling under the control of elements suspected of genocide, crimes against humanity or serious violations of human rights or humanitarian law.

26. Apart from the useful role of information technology in ensuring staff security and increasing operational capacity, it was necessary to continue to develop partnerships with the private sector in order to maximize the benefits of new and innovative technologies. Training had been a key feature of recent

coordination endeavours, and there was a need for active participation and commitment from agencies and other partners.

27. In conclusion, he expressed concern at the low funding of multilateral humanitarian operations. UNHCR would continue its active involvement in the consolidated appeals process and it encouraged Governments to fund the needs-based requirements presented in the appeals.

28. **Mr. De Boice** (United Nations Development Programme) said that coordination must be considered from a number of perspectives: policy as well as operations; headquarters and in-country mechanisms; and, most importantly, national and international community roles and responsibilities. A comprehensive approach was a prerequisite for adequately addressing complex humanitarian issues. Such an approach must provide for efficient and effective relief action and draw on the assessment, planning and operational activities of the development community.

29. While the importance of concurrent relief and development action was well recognized, there was still a need to adapt and harmonize approaches and instruments, determine better ways and means to mobilize the resources necessary to implement assistance and cooperation, and further develop widely accepted mechanisms, including trust funds, to improve the management of such resources. UNDP was continuing to seek additional ways to strengthen country team coordination, using the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and Executive Committee framework established by the Secretary-General. Those efforts would be successful where United Nations agencies and organizations actively participated in the resident coordinator system and contributed to the shared mechanisms and responsibilities foreseen by that system. UNDP relied on member States to maintain their support of the resident coordinator system and to note achievements through the harmonization of responsibilities in the joint assignment of a humanitarian/resident coordinator. The joint assignment was the most appropriate means of ensuring synergy between relief and development actors; maintaining a long-term perspective in undertaking short-term action; and ensuring a smooth recovery from a crisis. That was particularly important since relief and development action in crisis situations required mutually supportive analysis and action. In the absence of a formally designated humanitarian

coordinator, the joint approach was best ensured where the resident coordinator provided in-country support for emergencies under the guidance of the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

30. Coordination was not an end in itself, and no single agency could meet the various and critical needs evident in complex humanitarian crisis and disaster situations. More time and attention should be devoted to strengthening individual and collective response capacities. On the basis of those strengths, it was necessary to ensure integrated action among the respective divisions of labour to guarantee the expectation of Member States that the United Nations system would bring together all the partners in a rational manner to provide timely and effective support, and to ensure collaborative action. In that regard, UNDP also sought to promote wider links with civil society, non-governmental organizations and other groups as a means of supporting national efforts.

31. In addition to coordination, UNDP fully recognized the need for development analysis and action in responding to situations of displacement, and was addressing that requirement through its operational programmes in close collaboration with UNHCR, the World Bank and national authorities. UNDP continued to support initiatives undertaken by the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to improve the collective response to internally displaced persons through advocacy, coordination, assistance, prevention and the implementation of durable solutions.

32. UNDP wished to lend its full support to initiatives to promote the appropriate and effective use of technology to mitigate the effects of disasters and other humanitarian emergencies. The Programme would be at the forefront of development cooperation to manage risk and vulnerability reduction and mitigate the impact of crises and disasters. Experience had shown that, regardless of the type or cause of disaster or emergency situation, poverty was not merely a contributing factor. The poor were forced to bear a disproportionate share of the negative impact, and that problem could only be addressed by focusing directly on the issue of poverty itself.

33. The answer to increasing demands for humanitarian assistance was not to be found in the

prioritizing of relief needs. Rather, it was the recognition that risk and vulnerability reduction must be a central, mainstream feature of public and private sector management. By building accountable and transparent systems of governance and providing basic social services and opportunities for productive endeavour and participation in society, the international community could help to avert violent conflict, overcome crises and facilitate the reintegration of uprooted populations.

34. **Ms. Tohtohodjaeva** (Observer for Kyrgyzstan) said that her delegation wished to thank the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for its assistance to Kyrgyzstan following the earthquake in 1997, floods in 1998 and the collapse of a dam in 1998, as well as through many other important disaster-prevention measures. She welcomed the ideas and suggestions contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/55/82-E/2000/61). While each Government was primarily responsible for meeting the needs of its citizens who were affected by a disaster, if the scale and duration of the crisis was beyond the resources of the country concerned, international cooperation was imperative.

35. Kyrgyzstan was a mountainous country that was prone to earthquakes, landslides and other natural disasters, which caused significant harm to the population and the environment. In that context, a major cause for concern was the increasing risk associated with uranium waste contained in tailings ponds and uranium ore in mining dumps, which did not meet the requisite safety standards and endangered not only the population of Kyrgyzstan but also neighbouring countries. The tectonic processes active in Kyrgyzstan could damage disposal sites and mining dumps. The Kyrgyz Government had taken a number of measures, including the establishment of a centre for monitoring dangerous natural and industrial processes, and rehabilitation of the tailings ponds and dumps; the enactment of legislation on the radiation safety of the population, the protection of the population in emergency situations and civil defence; and the drafting of a law on tailings ponds.

36. Since 1991, the Government had been allocating large sums from the national budget to urgent maintenance and restoration work. Some of that work was being carried out jointly with foreign companies and as part of various projects. Environmental monitoring systems and the resumption of Government

inspection and monitoring of tailings ponds and dumps was needed, as well as funding for rehabilitation projects and the clean-up of the radioactively contaminated areas.

37. Since Kyrgyzstan did not have sufficient resources to solve those problems, assistance from the international community would be very useful. Ensuring the safe disposal of uranium waste should be an important part of the early warning system for natural disasters, both in Kyrgyzstan and other countries with similar problems.

38. **Mr. Dhanapala** (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), speaking on behalf of the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, said that it was important to bear in mind that internal displacement took place not only in complex emergencies but that there were also protracted situations of displacement requiring attention long after the emergency had passed. Other situations of internal displacement were not recognized as problems or addressed by the international community, sometimes because access was barred. Whatever the circumstances of internal displacement, protection concerns were paramount.

39. Country missions, some of which had been undertaken in cooperation with other agencies, provided an opportunity to study situations, to assess the effectiveness of response mechanisms and, most importantly, engage in dialogue with local authorities and other relevant actors in order to find solutions. The Representative of the Secretary-General always respected the principle of sovereignty in his dialogue with Governments, and he had often appealed to national authorities to give positive meaning to the concept of sovereignty as responsibility. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which were a restatement of existing norms of human rights and international humanitarian law as well as analogous refugee law, had been particularly useful in dealing with Governments. The Principles had been widely accepted by the United Nations system, Governments and non-governmental organizations.

40. With respect to institutional arrangements at the international level, he said that there were several institutional possibilities for responding to situations of internal displacement, and he welcomed increased attention being given to internally displaced persons by the inter-agency process, notably through its efforts to

enhance coordination on the ground. The plight of internally displaced persons was a serious humanitarian and political problem, and the entire international community must work together to ensure that the pressing needs of such persons were adequately addressed, that the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement were observed and that institutional divisions of labour were effective in delivering protection and assistance.

41. **Mr. Pal** (India) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. While the international community responded to some humanitarian emergencies with largesse, as in the case of Kosovo, overall assistance was declining in absolute terms. The response to the consolidated appeals had been extremely disappointing and the increasing trend to give humanitarian assistance bilaterally and through international non-governmental organizations complicated the task of the Emergency Relief Coordinator. Priority needed to be given to ensuring that all emergencies were treated fairly and with the attention they deserved.

42. Assistance was often based more on media coverage and the interests of the donors than on the real needs of the victims. While the Guiding Principles on humanitarian assistance contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182 had been carefully negotiated among Member States and represented an international consensus, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, which did not have intergovernmental approval, seemed to be favoured by of the United Nations system. It should be a source of concern to the Council that the United Nations system was not giving precedence to intergovernmental priorities. Another matter of concern was that the reports and discussions did not address the serious problems caused by uncoordinated humanitarian assistance.

43. In areas of conflict where a United Nations peacekeeping operation was deployed, the use of peacekeeping personnel to deliver assistance frequently conveyed the impression that the United Nations was taking sides. Some current peacekeeping operations were providing humanitarian assistance under Chapter VII of the Charter, which was illogical; humanitarian assistance could not be provided, and certainly not sustained, under fire. In some recent emergencies, the armed forces had been used to provide humanitarian

assistance. Where the forces concerned were impartial and professional, they could be very useful. However, in at least two recent instances, armed forces recently engaged in military operations in a country had decided to take a high profile in the provision of humanitarian assistance in order to redeem their local image. The United Nations association with such efforts tarnished its image as an impartial humanitarian actor.

44. While growing numbers of major transnational corporations were contributing to humanitarian operations as a result of globalization, such efforts were not motivated by altruism but rather were public relations campaigns to raise their profile in potential markets. Since such assistance was selective and based on commercial interests, it needed to be monitored because, if uncontrolled, it could compound problems.

45. According to paragraph 12 of the Secretary-General's report (A/55/82-E/2000/61), several United Nations bodies were working to develop improved mechanisms for early warning and preparedness in complex humanitarian emergencies. There was no mandate for such efforts, and the funds and programmes and specialized agencies should concentrate on the main task of promoting development. While non-governmental organizations certainly had a role to play in humanitarian assistance, strategies should be formulated under the leadership of the Government of the affected country. Clear distinctions must be maintained between the political, humanitarian and human rights components of the United Nations response to emergencies. The Security Council had no role in developing or applying international humanitarian law and its resolutions on the protection of civilians and children in armed conflict had had no real effect. International action to protect internally displaced persons must be at the request of the Governments concerned, and his delegation did not agree that some Governments might not have the capacity or be willing to discharge their responsibilities. The careless drafting of the Secretary-General's report ignored political realities or sensitivities; for example, paragraphs 34 and 35 gave the impression that Chechnya and Kosovo were independent countries, and paragraph 22 referred to "integrated peace operations", a concept on which no international consensus existed.

46. **Mr. Enkhsaikhan** (Observer for Mongolia) endorsed the recommendations contained in the

Secretary-General's report (A/55/82-E/2000/61). Like many other natural disasters, the harsh and cold winter in Mongolia, known as the *dzud*, was closely related to the climatic changes occurring throughout the world. The current *dzud* was recognized as a multiple disaster, the cumulative result of the drought of the summer of 1999 and the extremely cold winter that had followed soon thereafter. It was highly probable that there would be another drought in the summer of 2000, which might be followed by another harsh winter. That could have catastrophic consequences for the country's economy and its efforts to reduce widespread poverty.

47. In a country where animal husbandry accounted for more than 30 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), and on which every third person depended directly for food, clothing, transportation, heating material and purchasing power, the *dzud* had had a severe impact. It had reduced domestic production and export earnings. While the Government was taking all possible measures to overcome the difficulties, preparedness and disaster response needed to be further improved.

48. Some lessons could be learned from the past relief operation in Mongolia. There was a need for quicker response to appeals, faster assessment of disaster damage and needs, and faster implementation. No time should be lost between pledges of assistance and actual delivery. A culture of disaster prevention was needed to minimize the time required for immediate relief activities. Since Mongolia was a disaster-prone country, his delegation wished to stress the importance of strengthening early warning systems and conducting comprehensive vulnerability analyses.

49. **Mr. Mungra** (Suriname), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that the 1999 review of progress in the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted at the United Nations Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had revealed that the commitments of the global partnership had been unfulfilled and implementation of the Plan of Action had been largely undertaken at the national level by the small island developing States themselves. Moreover, flows of official development assistance (ODA) to those countries continued to decline, and the critical situation of small island developing States had worsened since 1994. Natural disasters had intensified, causing increasing fatalities and considerable damage to infrastructure and the economies, with high per

capita reconstruction costs. It was estimated that the Caribbean alone could be forced to spend \$1.1 billion on new construction for protection against higher sea levels as a result of the rise in the Earth's mean surface temperature. From 1977 to 1996, 44 small island developing States had been struck by 153 cyclones and hurricanes.

50. A vulnerability index needed to be concluded and used in assessing small island developing States for concessional and preferential treatment, and a disaster fund must be established to assist those States not only in relieving immediate suffering but also for reconstruction and rehabilitation in the context of sustainable development. Technology played an important role in addressing natural disasters, and early warning, prevention, preparedness and mitigation technologies should be transferred to small island developing States on preferential and concessional terms. His delegation appealed to the international community to honour the global partnership commitments of 1994, address in specific and effective ways the environmental and economic vulnerability of small island developing States and help them to achieve sustainable development.

51. **Mr. Abdallah** (Observer for the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that people were a nation's most precious resource. The main benefits that development should confer were health and longevity, access to knowledge and the resources necessary to lead a decent life. Displacement of population was one evil that resulted from failure to guarantee those three things.

52. Internal displacement was caused by natural disasters such as drought, particularly in Africa, and civil wars. The migration of displaced persons to large urban centres was rife with negative economic, social and psychological consequences for the persons themselves, especially women, children and the elderly. In addition, the sudden appearance of large numbers of unexpected immigrants in cities put undue pressure on social and medical services, food and water supplies, cultural and economic institutions and agricultural and environmental resources. Humanitarian aid was rarely adequate to address those problems and frequently ended up instilling in the displaced persons a sense of dependency, an aversion to work even when it was available and a proclivity to accept marginal, low-paying jobs. Such trends often led to violence and crime.

53. African States had tried to integrate displaced persons into society by providing them with new job training, giving their children access to local schools, including them in residential planning, facilitating their employment in both the public and private sectors and moving them to agricultural and industrial areas that lacked manpower.

54. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees had observed that the method of treatment of displaced persons differed from country to country and had cited the Sudan's approach to the problem as an exemplary success, despite that country's difficult economic circumstances. That success was the result of the combined efforts of governmental and national and international volunteer organizations. In view of the efforts of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, in conjunction with Egypt, to bring peace to the Sudan, his delegation could only commend such cooperation between governments and civil society.

55. Africa had its share of refugees because of the armed struggles and natural disasters afflicting that continent. Despite international cooperation under the auspices of UNHCR, international aid had amounted to only a quarter of the total costs of repatriation. Despite the removal of some of the circumstances that had produced refugees, the agreements reached by refugees with their mother countries and the efforts of the High Commissioner for Refugees, voluntary return had not achieved any notable success.

56. Refugees needed to return to their homelands, and the States concerned needed to strive to put an end to the refugee phenomenon by granting political amnesty and creating conditions that facilitated either the return of refugees to their original countries or their absorption into the countries in which they had sought refuge. The international community needed to increase its financial and technical contributions to those ends and ensure the refugees a decent standard of living on their return. He called upon all relevant United Nations organizations and agencies to help to enforce the recommendations of the Organization of African Unity Ministerial Conference on Refugees, Returnees and Displaced Persons in Africa, held in Khartoum in 1998 and to help individual African countries to implement their own national programmes for treatment of the refugee problem.

57. As armed conflict continued to produce refugees, the situation called for a fundamental re-evaluation of

development policies directed at those groups, with a view to enlisting their own energies for productive purposes and integration into society. That needed to be done in a way that eliminated all forms of discrimination, especially against women. It would require a restructuring of governmental and social institutions and the adjustment of legislative frameworks in ways that guaranteed the rights of those groups and their social integration. Those States needed the support and aid of the international community, not stopgap legal measures of the sort discussed earlier. He expressed his support for India's statements in that regard.

58. **Mr. Tessema** (Observer for Ethiopia) said that millions of people in Ethiopia had been affected by the recent drought and war. In the area of disaster mitigation, his Government worked closely with donors, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations on the basis of a clear national policy. Recently, a two-pronged approach had been adopted in that regard: making a preliminary assessment of the following year's relief needs three months before the end of the year and issuing a bridging appeal; and conducting the regular appeal based on more reliable information gathered by joint assessment teams from all over the country.

59. In January 2000, all the partners concerned had agreed that about 8.1 million people were affected by both the drought and war and that 898,940 metric tons of food would be required. However, it was only towards the end of April that a considerable amount of relief resources had been made available to contain the impending famine. Despite the delays, however, there had been encouraging responses from the international community. Total confirmed pledges stood at about 595,412 metric tons and unconfirmed pledges at about 188,790 metric tons. Appropriate and rapid action should be taken with regard to the unconfirmed pledges. The situation with respect to non-food relief items was even more critical, with only about 17 per cent of requirements having been met so far. Assisting the needy in their villages was much more cost effective than assisting them in camps. However, that would require readily available relief resources, easy access and relief food outlets.

60. One of Ethiopia's preparedness modalities was the Emergency Food Security Reserve, which had a capacity of about 350,000 metric tons. However, the functioning of the Reserve had been undermined owing

to outstanding loans that had left it below the minimum stock level at the time when the current emergency occurred. There was an urgent need to resettle and rehabilitate the population that had been displaced as a result of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. If those victims were to support themselves in the coming years, adequate action should be taken immediately.

61. While he welcomed the excellent relationships among the United Nations, other international bodies and States at the national and field levels, he was concerned at the lack of transparency on the part of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, particularly with regard to its reporting process. Finally, he hoped that the current threat of famine would be averted through the coordinated efforts of all the humanitarian organizations.

62. **Mr. Andaba** (Observer for Namibia) said that while technology could play a very valuable role in disaster relief, most parts of Africa had no access to modern means of communication other than the radio. Governments, donor countries, financial institutions and humanitarian agencies should therefore recognize and support communication initiatives in the fields of development, conflict and humanitarian aid. In that regard, he welcomed the ongoing cooperation among several United Nations agencies and other organizations to enhance disaster management using outer space technologies.

63. Since women and children accounted for 80 per cent of the internally displaced population, his delegation welcomed the intention of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to convene a reference group on children in armed conflict. It also welcomed efforts to mainstream gender into humanitarian actions. The number of internally displaced persons was estimated at about 20 to 25 million worldwide. While Governments were primarily responsible for the protection of such persons, needs were sometimes so great that individual Governments could not satisfy them. The international community must continue to support and complement national efforts by enhancing the level of coordination of relief activities. Moreover, the donor community should channel more resources to multilateral programmes. However, history had shown that the root causes of crises would be effectively eliminated only by dealing with issues such as poverty eradication, food security and delivery of basic social services.

64. **Ms. Frey-Wouters** (International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies) welcomed the creation of the International Working Group on Trauma. Millions of people around the world, including peacekeeping forces and humanitarian personnel, suffered from depression, anxiety disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder after having been exposed to conflicts and natural and man-made disasters. The challenge for the international community was to combine concern for mental health and trauma with humanitarian assistance and protection, especially in post-conflict reconstruction. Recent international conferences had confirmed the need for the highest possible standards of mental as well as physical health and many international instruments recognized the right to specialized psychological care.

65. The training programme for United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian staff should be expanded, with special emphasis on providing adequate services to traumatised persons. Cooperation among all United Nations actors should be improved, and cooperation between United Nations and non-governmental organizations specialized in trauma care must be strengthened both at headquarters and in the field in order to make maximum use of available resources. Emergency preparedness at all levels must be reinforced and due attention should be given to trauma in post-conflict reconstruction.

66. Despite progress, insufficient attention was still being given to the provision of services to traumatized humanitarian personnel including peacekeepers. Emergencies such as armed conflicts and natural disasters monopolized the attention of the international community while poverty, famine and homelessness and HIV/AIDS, which claimed more victims were largely forgotten. Failure to help the traumatized victims of emergency situations would lead to serious social, economic, political and mental health consequences in the future.

67. **Mr. Tessema** (Ethiopia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, regretted the remarks made by the representative of Eritrea. The Council was not the appropriate forum for such a statement. The recent agreement on the cessation of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea enjoined both parties to refrain from any hostile activities, including dissemination of propaganda, which would have an adverse affect on the peace process. He nevertheless felt obliged to stress that it was the Government of Eritrea that had decided

to invade the territory of Ethiopia and, until recently, had rejected efforts to resolve that crisis peacefully. His Government had been forced to respond militarily and repulse the Eritrean forces. Ethiopia would withdraw from the security zone once international peacekeepers were available to secure the area. He appealed for the release of Ethiopian citizens interned in Eritrea and deplored efforts by Eritrea to hinder the provision of humanitarian assistance.

68. **Mr. Seyoum** (Eritrea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, deplored the widespread destruction that the Ethiopian forces had left in their wake. He referred to a report by the British Broadcasting Corporation, dated 21 June 2000, describing the looting and burning of the Eritrean villages of Tesseney and Aligidir. Virtually nothing had been left standing, although there had been no fighting in the areas and most of the local population had been forced to flee.

69. **Mr. Tessema** (Ethiopia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, deplored the efforts of the representative of Eritrea to misinform the Council. He drew attention to a report by the British Broadcasting Corporation, dated 7 July 2000, in which Ethiopians, mostly women and children, who had been released from detention in Eritrea had reported atrocities, abuse and starvation at the hands of their captors. Eritrea itself had recognized that it had interned Ethiopian citizens. The fact that, after two years during which Eritrea had occupied Ethiopian territory, it had been forced into full retreat, showed that aggression did not pay and the law of the jungle was not acceptable.

70. **Mr. Seyoum** (Eritrea), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that Ethiopian citizens in Eritrean territory had been interned in a camp for their own safety, and the International Committee of the Red Cross had had full access to that camp and had supervised the repatriation of detainees. In fact, the Ethiopian Government had refused to accept the repatriation of 1,100 of its own nationals.

71. **Ms. McAskie** (Emergency Relief Coordinator) stressed that tens of millions of people required humanitarian assistance. Efforts by affected Governments, donors, the United Nations system and international and non-governmental organizations to relieve their suffering were a noble partnership. However, such assistance was woefully insufficient and the international community must redouble its efforts. There must not be any more forgotten

emergencies; it was the collective responsibility of the international community to provide assistance to all those affected by conflict. To that end, universal criteria must be applied to ensure that available resources were allocated where they were most needed.

72. The capacity of national Governments to predict natural disasters with accuracy and cope with their human consequences must be strengthened. New technologies could be of immense help, and work in that area must be reinforced. Countries that were prone to natural disasters must be able to employ such technologies according to their needs. The problem of internally displaced persons must be seen within the broader context that had created that situation and, although primary responsibility for the protection and welfare of the internally displaced lay with their own Governments, the key to effective assistance was close coordination with the local humanitarian coordinator. With respect to natural disasters and conflict situations, priority must be given to prevention and to finding durable solutions with a view to mitigating the effects on the population, based on the international community's shared expertise.

73. Humanitarian operations must be better managed and coordination must lead to better delivery of better services. Issues such as access to those in need and the security of humanitarian personnel were of great concern. While efforts to improve security systems would continue, it was essential that adequate funding should be provided.

Organization of work

74. **The President** informed the Council that the Council's senior Vice-President, Mr. Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon, would be unable to preside over the general segment beginning that afternoon. The Bureau therefore recommended that rule 22 should be suspended and, if there was no objection, would request Mr. Mbayu, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Cameroon, to act in his stead.

75. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.