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SHORT-TERM, MEDIUM-TERM AND LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS TO THE
PROBLEMS OF NATURAL DISASTERS IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh: draft resolution

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 40/231 of 17 December following the disastrous cyclone that struck Bangladesh in 1985,

Recalling also its resolution 42/169 of 11 December 1987 on the international decade for natural disaster reduction,

Noting with concern the devastating consequences of the recent floods in Bangladesh, the worst in living memory, that have caused significant loss of life, unprecedented human suffering to tens of millions of stranded and homeless people subjected to hunger and water-borne disease and incalculable damage to crops, livestock, communications and infrastructure,

Noting the statement of the representative of Bangladesh, in which he elaborated the details of these concerns,

Deeply conscious of the macro-economic impact of such calamities, which constitutes an insurmountable burden on the economy and development plans of a least developed country like Bangladesh, causing irrecoverable set-back in growth and necessitating impossible adjustment, and that the cost of damage inflicted by such catastrophes often exceeds the net inflow of development assistance,

Recognizing the sustained efforts of the Government of Bangladesh through the implementation of its Comprehensive National Programme, to alleviate the suffering of the disaster victims not one of whom died of starvation, to initiate urgent recovery measures and to anticipate remedial actions for the future with specific concentration on three main aspects of such disasters, namely immediate relief, medium-term measures for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the economy and

infrastructure and long-term measures with special emphasis on disaster preparedness and preventive schemes,

Recognizing that the magnitude of the damage and devastation is beyond the individual ability of Bangladesh to rectify or to meet, requiring national efforts to be supplemented by sustained international financial and technical assistance over the long term,

Aware that Bangladesh is particularly vulnerable to recurrent disasters that have the potential of becoming annual visitations of destruction far beyond its capacity either to control or to effectively mitigate,

Aware also that, situated in the delta of a vast flood plain, barely above sea level, and criss-crossed by numerous rivers originating outside its territory, Bangladesh is in the receiving end of calamities caused as much by nature as by the nature of poverty and the environmental depredations of man,

Conscious of the fact that many of these catastrophes cannot be prevented now, or in the immediate future, in the absence of in-depth study of the many cumulative factors that cause them and of international assistance and investment over time to remedy them, and that they need a global reach and outlook supplemented by regional, co-operative efforts,

Noting with appreciation the support and solidarity displayed by the countries of South Asia in assisting Bangladesh in the immediate aftermath of the floods,

Also noting that members of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation are already signatories to an Agreement establishing a food security reserve and are also seized of the proposal to study regional approaches in tackling the problems of natural disasters,

Welcoming the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh, initiated at the highest level, to strengthen bilateral co-operation with concerned countries of the region through the establishment of task forces of experts to study and make recommendations for flood management and control and to find durable solutions to the problems of natural disasters,

Expressing the hope that these multiple bilateral approaches will strengthen co-operation, co-ordination and convergence of mutual interests leading to practical regional arrangements to promote solutions for the assessment, prediction, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and to joint approaches for a permanent solution,

Recognizing the responsibility of the United Nations system to stimulate international studies including those of natural disasters of a geophysical origin, to improve capacities of countries to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, to foster scientific and engineering endeavours to close critical gaps in knowledge, to disseminate existing and new information and to develop measures for prediction, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters through programmes of technical assistance and technology transfer,

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Aware that considerable expertise and technical capabilities are available within the organizations of the United Nations system to strengthen preparedness and prevention capabilities of disaster-prone countries through promotion of a long-term and effective solution of the problems caused by natural disasters,

1. Expresses its gratitude to Member States, international organizations within and outside the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and individuals and groups that have so generously assisted the Government of Bangladesh in its immediate relief and rehabilitation efforts;
2. Expresses its deep appreciation to the Secretary-General for the urgent steps he has taken to mobilize humanitarian assistance and through the appointment of the Executive Director of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator as his Special Representative to co-ordinate activities of the United Nations agencies in the field for purposeful and unified intervention by the international community;
3. Appeals to all Member States, specialized agencies in the field and other organs and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as international economic and financial institutions, to respond urgently and generously in sustaining development assistance to Bangladesh, particularly in its plans and programmes for longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction;
4. Requests relevant organizations and bodies in the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations to take appropriate measures to provide assistance to Bangladesh to strengthen its capacity to assess, predict, prevent and mitigate natural disasters, particularly for disaster preparedness and prevention programmes and for securing an effective and permanent solution to the problem of floods and drought in Bangladesh;
5. Requests the Secretary-General through the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, and in co-operation with other relevant agencies in the United Nations system, to assist the Government of Bangladesh in preparing its own feasibility plan to meet such exigencies and to procure international commitment and support for its implementation;
6. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution.

