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SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE

Report of the Second Committee (Part II)*

Rapporteur: Mr. Ahmed Alawi AH-HADDAD (Democratic Yemen)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 83 (see A/39/793, para. 2). Action to be taken on sub-item (a) was considered at the 47th and 56th meetings, on 20 November and 6 December 1984. An account of the Committee's discussion is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/39/SR.47 and 56).

II. CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSALS SUBMITTED UNDER SUB-ITEM (a)

Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (sub-item (a))

1. Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.70

2. At the 47th meeting, on 20 November, the representative of Kenya, on behalf of Angola, Austria, Burundi, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Pakistan, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Venezuela and Zambia, introduced a draft resolution (A/C.2/39/L.70) entitled "Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator", which read as follows:

* The report of the Committee on this item has been issued in two parts: the Committee's consideration of proposals submitted under sub-item (b) and (c) of agenda item 83 appears in Part I (A/39/793).

"The General Assembly,

"Recalling its resolutions 2816 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971, by which the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator was established, 36/225 of 17 December 1981, by which it reaffirmed the mandate of the Office and strengthened its capacity, and 38/202 of 20 December 1983, in which it, inter alia, noted with interest the steps taken to strengthen the capacity of the Office, and of the United Nations system as a whole, to respond to disasters, and called for a further report on the matter to be submitted to the Assembly at its thirty-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1984,

"Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/60 of 26 July 1984,

"Noting with appreciation the effective response of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and of the international community to recent major and continuing disaster situations,

"Recognizing that shortage of resources continues to hamper the full achievement of the aim of rapid and effective response to the needs of countries affected by disasters and that, if this shortage is to be overcome, further efforts will be required by the international community to provide both funds and assistance in kind,

"Considering that all possible new and innovative approaches should be examined with a view to improving further the rapid delivery of emergency relief,

"Noting the wealth of expertise and training facilities that exists and that could be drawn upon by disaster-prone developing countries,

"Recalling the importance attached in the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries 1/ to the reduction of losses caused by disasters of all kinds and the creation of infrastructures which would be beneficial in this regard,

"Convinced of the absolute necessity of maintaining a sound financial basis, in accordance with repeated requests by the General Assembly, to ensure the continuation of the work of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator at its present level as a minimum,

"Appreciating the contributions made by donors in supporting international relief operations, including those made to the Trust Fund of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator,

1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 1-14 September 1981 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.1.8), part one, sect. A.

"1. Takes note with profound satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, 2/ the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to natural disasters and other disaster situations, 3/ called for in paragraph 12 of Assembly resolution 38/202, and the statement made by the Co-ordinator before the Second Committee on 5 November 1984; 4/

"2. Recognizes that information is one of the essential elements for the fulfilment of the mandate of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator as the focal point of the United Nations system for disaster relief co-ordination, and emphasizes the importance of improving the flow and quality of information during disaster relief operations so that a more complete picture of relief channels and activities, assistance received and unmet requirements may be available to all concerned;

"3. Stresses, in this regard, the primary importance of inter-agency assessment missions organized by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator with the participation of the appropriate organizations of the United Nations system and other relief bodies in order to ensure the effective co-ordination of disaster relief activities, assistance and requirements;

"4. Recognizes the value of united appeals, launched after the joint development with the agencies concerned of concerted relief programmes based upon the findings of inter-agency assessment missions, to be sent at the invitation of the Government concerned, as a most effective tool for co-ordination and urges Governments to continue to respond to such appeals accordingly;

"5. Requests the Secretary-General to adapt procedures for the procurement of supplies by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator in order to permit a timely response to the special and immediate requirements of countries exposed to disasters or facing an emergency situation;

"6. Calls upon those contributing assistance in kind to provide, when appropriate, special grants to cover the costs of transport and distribution of the assistance to and within the affected country;

"7. Requests the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to study, in co-operation with the parties concerned, the most

2/ A/39/267-E/1984/96 and Corr.1.

3/ A/39/267-E/1984/96/Add.1 and 2.

4/ See A/C.2/39/SR.34.

appropriate steps to ensure the ready availability of relief supplies and transport equipment;

"8. Urges Governments to increase their efforts to reduce delays in the provision of food assistance in response to natural disasters and other disaster situations;

"9. Recommends that, as the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator phases out his emergency co-ordination responsibility in a given country, he should contribute to ensuring the necessary transition to the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase by passing on relevant data to competent organs and agencies of the United Nations system;

"10. Calls upon Governments and international relief organizations to put at the disposal of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator the names and specializations of qualified disaster personnel available, in case of need, for inter-agency assessment missions, the execution of relief programmes or other disaster mitigation activities, and to inform him of existing disaster management training capabilities and opportunities for such training which could be offered to officials from developing countries;

"11. Encourages the Co-ordinator to review, if necessary with the assistance of specialists made available by appropriate international bodies, the internal evaluation system of the Office;

"12. Recognizes the importance of disaster prevention and preparedness at the regional and national levels in mitigating the effects of disasters, appreciates the work which the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator has performed in this area as far as the resources available in its Trust Fund have allowed, and encourages Governments to continue to draw upon the services available from the Office and other organizations concerned and to provide the necessary resources for this aspect of technical co-operation;

"13. Requests the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to increase its fund-raising efforts through the means available to it;

"14. Emphasizes the essential need for the work of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to be placed and kept on a sound financial basis and, to this end, requests the Secretary-General to assign a higher priority to strengthening, preferably within the means at his disposal, the financial and manpower resources of the Office;

"15. Reiterates, in particular, the appeals made to the international community, in Assembly resolutions 35/107 of 5 December 1980, 36/225 of 17 December 1981, 37/144 of 17 December 1982 and 38/202 of 20 December 1983, for urgent increased contributions to the Trust Fund established pursuant to its resolution 3243 (XXIX) of 29 November 1974 for the purposes set out in the reports of the Secretary-General concerning the activities of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator.

Subsequently, Bolivia, Canada, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Malaysia joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

2. Draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.103

3. At its 56th meeting, on 6 December, the Committee had before it a draft resolution (A/C.2/39/L.103) submitted by Mr. Enrique de la Torre, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, as a result of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.70.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.103 (see para. 7).

5. After the adoption of the draft resolution, the representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (also on behalf of Bulgaria, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Czechoslovakia, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) made a statement.

6. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.103, draft resolution A/C.2/39/L.70 was withdrawn by the sponsors.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE SECOND COMMITTEE

7. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 2816 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971, by which the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator was established, 36/225 of 17 December 1981, by which it reaffirmed the mandate of the Office and strengthened its capacity, and 38/202 of 20 December 1983, in which it, inter alia, noted with interest the steps taken to strengthen the capacity of the Office and of the United Nations system as a whole to respond to disasters, and called for a further report on the matter to be submitted to the General Assembly at its thirty-ninth session, through the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1984,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 1984/60 of 26 July 1984,

Noting with appreciation the effective response of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and of the international community to recent major and continuing disaster situations,

Recognizing that shortage of resources continues to hamper the full achievement of the aim of rapid and effective response to the needs of countries affected by disasters and that, if this shortage is to be overcome, further efforts will be required by the international community to provide both funds and assistance in kind,

Considering that all possible new and innovative approaches should be examined with a view to improving further the rapid delivery of emergency relief,

Noting the wealth of expertise and training facilities that exists and that could be drawn upon by disaster-prone developing countries,

Recalling the importance attached in the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries 5/ to the reduction of losses caused by disasters of all kinds and the creation of infrastructures which would be beneficial in this regard,

Convinced of the absolute necessity of maintaining a sound financial basis, in accordance with repeated requests by the General Assembly, to ensure the continuation of the work of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator at its present level as a minimum,

Appreciating the contributions made by donors in supporting international relief operations, including those made to the Trust Fund of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator,

1. Takes note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, 6/ as well as his report on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to natural disasters and other disaster situations, 7/ called for in paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 38/202, and of the statement made by the Co-ordinator before the Second Committee on 5 November 1984; 8/

2. Recognizes that information is one of the essential elements for the fulfilment of the mandate of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief

5/ Report of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 1-14 September 1981 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.1.8), part one, sect. A.

6/ A/39/267-E/1984/96 and Corr.1.

7/ A/39/267-E/1984/96/Add.1 and 2.

8/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Second Committee, 34th meeting, paras. 1-8.

Co-ordinator as the focal point of the United Nations system for disaster relief co-ordination, and emphasizes the importance of improving the flow and quality of information during disaster relief operations so that a more complete picture of relief channels and activities, assistance received and unmet requirements may be available to all concerned;

3. Stresses in this regard the primary importance of inter-agency assessment missions organized by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator with the participation of the appropriate organizations of the United Nations system and other relief bodies in order to ensure the effective co-ordination of disaster relief activities, assistance and requirements;

4. Recognizes the value of united appeals, launched after the joint development with the agencies concerned of concerted relief programmes based upon the findings of inter-agency assessment missions, to be sent at the invitation of the Government concerned, as a most effective tool for co-ordination and urges Governments to continue to respond to such appeals accordingly;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to modify existing United Nations procurement procedures, as necessary, to permit, on the part of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, a timely and more effective response to the special and immediate requirements of countries exposed to disasters or facing an emergency situation;

6. Calls upon those contributing assistance in kind to provide, when appropriate, special grants to cover the costs of transport and distribution of the assistance to and within the affected country;

7. Requests the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to study, in co-operation with the parties concerned, the most appropriate steps to ensure the ready availability of relief supplies and transport equipment;

8. Urges Governments to increase their efforts to reduce delays in the provision of food assistance in response to natural disasters and other disaster situations;

9. Recommends that as the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator phases out his emergency co-ordination responsibility in a given country he should contribute to ensuring the necessary transition to the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase by passing on relevant data to competent organs and agencies of the United Nations system;

10. Calls upon Governments and international relief organizations to put at the disposal of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator the names and specializations of qualified disaster personnel available, in case of need, for inter-agency assessment missions, the execution of relief programmes or other disaster mitigation activities, and to inform him of existing

disaster management training capabilities and opportunities for such training which could be offered to officials from developing countries;

11. Requests the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to review and improve, if necessary with the assistance of specialists made available by appropriate international bodies, the internal evaluation system of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator in order to ensure that experience obtained from disaster relief operations is fully taken into account in the future work of the Office;

12. Recognizes the importance of disaster prevention and preparedness at the regional and national levels in mitigating the effects of disasters, appreciates the work which the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator has performed in this area as far as the resources available in its Trust Fund of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator have allowed, and encourages Governments to continue to draw upon the services available from the Office and other organizations concerned and to provide the necessary resources for this aspect of technical co-operation;

13. Requests the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to increase its fund-raising efforts through the means available to it;

14. Emphasizes the essential need for the work of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator to be placed and kept on a sound financial basis and requests the Secretary-General to assign a higher priority to this;

15. Reiterates in particular, its appeals to the international community in resolutions 35/107 of 5 December 1980, 36/225 of 17 December 1981, 37/144 of 17 December 1982 and 38/202 of 20 December 1983 for urgent increased contributions to the Trust Fund established pursuant to its resolution 3243 (XXIX) of 29 November 1974 for the purposes set out in the reports of the Secretary-General concerning the activities of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator.
