



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
21 February 2014

Original: English

Special meeting on the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines

Summary record of the 53rd meeting

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 16 December 2013, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Osorio..... (Colombia)

Contents

Opening of the special meeting

Statement by the President of the Economic and Social Council

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

Keynote address by the Cabinet Secretary, Office of the President of the Philippines

Panel discussion

Interactive dialogue

Closure of the special meeting

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent as soon as possible to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org).

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org/>).

13-56181 (E)



Please recycle The text "Please recycle" followed by a universal recycling symbol.



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

Opening of the special meeting

Statement by the President of the Economic and Social Council

1. **The President** said that the destruction caused by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in November 2013 was a reminder that all countries, communities and individuals were vulnerable to natural disasters, which were becoming increasingly common and severe. The international community should demonstrate its solidarity with the people of the Philippines and help the affected communities to rebuild their lives. Although the number of deaths caused by natural disasters had fallen over the preceding forty years, the frequency and intensity of such disasters and the number of people affected by them had increased.

2. Typhoon Haiyan had affected 14 million people and displaced 4 million. While the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council of the Philippines was leading the Government's relief effort in conjunction with local authorities, the United Nations was mobilizing a complementary response at the international level. Under the Strategic Response Plan for Typhoon Haiyan, presented by humanitarian organizations, \$791 million in funding had been requested, of which only 30 per cent had been provided.

3. The purpose of the present meeting was to discuss the immediate needs of the Philippines and ways of ensuring that the relevant humanitarian assistance was integrated with national prevention and relief mechanisms. The meeting would also examine how the United Nations, international and regional organizations, civil society, the private sector and the scientific community could help the Government in its relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs

4. **Mr. Hanif** (Director of the Office for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination), speaking on behalf of the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said that effective relief was essential to saving lives in the immediate aftermath of disasters such as Typhoon Haiyan. Damage to property was only part of the cost of natural disasters, which also had an immense social and

economic impact. Although they were claiming fewer lives than in the past, they threatened more livelihoods through their effects on energy, agriculture, health and education. In the current global economy, a disaster in one country could reverberate in many others, as evidenced by the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, which had affected the rate of economic growth in China, India, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore.

5. As the international community went about helping the Philippines to recover from Typhoon Haiyan, it must focus on reducing the risk of natural hazards leading to disasters, by investing more in preparation and adaptation measures. Since death rates from disasters in developing countries were 20 times higher than those in developed countries, relief must be linked to development. The integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development would help countries to build their resilience to natural disasters.

Keynote address by the Cabinet Secretary, Office of the President of the Philippines

6. **Mr. Almendras** (Cabinet Secretary, Office of the President of the Philippines) said that Typhoon Haiyan, a category 5 typhoon packing winds of over 300 km/h, had been the most powerful typhoon in the recorded history of the Philippines and had been followed by a storm surge of similar magnitude. It had affected 9 of the 17 regions, 44 of the 80 provinces, 591 of the 1,494 municipalities, 57 of the 140 cities and 12,122 of the 42,000 *barangays* in the country. No previous storm had had such devastating effects on such a wide area of the country. Typhoon Haiyan had made landfall off the Leyte Gulf in the west of the country, with the city of Tacloban being hit by a 10-metre storm surge; even 2 km inland, the water was 2 m high. Although people in and around Tacloban had been prepared for storm winds, they had not expected the surge; as a result, 90 per cent of those who lost their lives in the disaster did so in that area.

7. Typhoon Haiyan had affected some 12.19 million people. Over 6,000 had been killed, but that number would rise as bodies were recovered from the debris; whereas 1,779 people had been reported missing, the number of bodies recovered was higher. The situation was similar to that following Typhoon Bopha in 2012, when entire families had died and no one had been left to report them missing. Of the 1.192 million houses

that had been damaged, 593,785 had been totally destroyed; in some cases, entire communities had been wiped out. Rural areas had been the worst affected, with 600,000 hectares of farmland damaged at a cost of \$1.8 billion, destroying livelihoods and commerce.

8. His Government had mobilized over 170,000 volunteers, who had prepared and delivered more than 175,000 food packs every day for three weeks, each food pack containing enough food to feed a family of five for four days. The Government's preparations for the storm had included a national television appearance by the President the night before the typhoon struck, warning of strong winds and 5 m storm surges. Many Filipinos, however, had little knowledge of what a storm surge was. In one municipality near the eastern town of Guiuan, the mayor had been able to save many lives by evacuating the entire community to higher ground and arresting those who refused to move, thereby illustrating the importance of local government preparedness.

9. On the basis of its previous experience, the Government had placed relief goods in the potential path of the storm. That practice, however, had proved ineffective because many of the goods had been destroyed by the storm surge. A possible solution would have been to load some of the relief goods onto ships for delivery on the day after the storm. The lesson was important because the greatest challenge in the days immediately following Typhoon Haiyan had been logistical in nature. Relief flights into Tacloban airport had been delayed by six hours while the runway was being cleared, and even after the first aircraft had landed, progress outside the airport had been slow because of the debris deposited by the storm surge.

10. Local leadership had been critical in identifying areas where relief and rescue were needed. In Tacloban, only 3 members of the 400-strong police force had reported for work the day after the storm; local officials had been looking for their own families or attending to their own needs. Local information and leadership must be available if the national authorities were to intervene effectively. The relief phase of the response to Typhoon Haiyan would be completed by the end of 2013. The Government had set targets for immediate actions, to be undertaken by the end of January 2014, short-term actions, to be completed by the end of December 2014, and medium-term actions, to be completed by December 2017.

11. Housing kits and temporary shelters were needed immediately while new homes and communities were being built to meet short- and medium-term needs. To repair public infrastructure, huge amounts of debris must be cleared from roads, urban centres and farmland, both as an immediate action and in the medium term. Government buildings must be repaired and utilities brought back into service. Social, education and health services must be restored; schools and health centres must be reopened; and *barangay* health facilities must be rebuilt.

12. The Government was providing boats for the resumption of fishing activities, but the restoration of agricultural and rural production, an urgent priority because so many livelihoods and income-generating activities had been destroyed, was a greater challenge. The Government was hiring people to clear debris and was retraining others to reconstruct infrastructure, thus providing employment. The destruction of private property had been even more significant; financial liquidity and resources should be provided to allow the resumption of private-sector activity.

13. The people of the Philippines were known for their resilience and regularly faced between 15 and 20 typhoons each year. Typhoon Haiyan, however, had been particularly severe, and the country would require more international assistance to recover from it. While much help had already been received from the United Nations and the rest of the world, recovery would be slow for many Filipinos, which was why the Government had produced a response plan covering the period up to 2016.

14. Sustainable solutions taking into account the environment could not be separated from economic and social considerations. The storm surge which had destroyed Tacloban could have been prevented if the mangroves which had previously protected the shoreline had been intact. If replanted, they would dissipate up to half of the power of future surges; however, they would also affect the livelihoods of fishermen and have other social and economic consequences. Climate change resilience, mitigation and adaptation had critical social and economic components which his Government would address with the help of the United Nations.

Panel discussion

15. **Ms. Amos** (Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator), speaking via video link from Geneva, said that despite the early logistical problems in responding to Typhoon Haiyan, she had been able to confirm in her two visits to the affected areas that the people of the Philippines had made remarkable progress in the recovery effort. Nonetheless, four million people remained displaced following damage to or the destruction of their homes, and while 100,000 remained in evacuation centres, a further 3.8 million were staying with friends or relatives, a testimony to the generosity and solidarity of the Philippine people.

16. The international response had been hampered initially by debris blocking roads and ports, damage to airports and landing strips, congested ferries and difficulties in reaching remote areas. Communications had been wiped out by power outages and damage to infrastructure, and many victims had received no assistance for some time. Although United Nations teams had arrived the day after the typhoon, they had been unable to leave the airport because of debris, and the Philippine military had been making every effort to reach as many people as possible.

17. Nonetheless, the international response had been scaled up following the arrival of military aircraft and ships from 20 Member States to address many of the logistical constraints and bring relief to many communities. Those military assets had also been used for transportation within the country until the United Nations Humanitarian Air Services and more civilian aircraft had become operational. Humanitarian partners had sent over 6,000 tons of food, which had been delivered to more than 4.1 million people. Emergency shelter had been provided to more than 162,000 households, while emergency health aid had been provided by over 180 medical teams and nearly 260 mobile clinics. Seventy-five child-friendly spaces had been established, serving more than 37,000 children. A fleet of about 40 trucks had been contracted and was transporting supplies in the Eastern Visayas region.

18. The excellent relationship between the United Nations and the Philippines Government had been essential to the success of the operation. International humanitarian relief workers had been able to work with their local counterparts in the affected areas, and the simplification of the visa regime had allowed experts

and advisors to enter the country quickly. Meanwhile, in New York and Geneva, the global humanitarian system had been able to act as one. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals had declared a system-wide emergency on 12 November 2013, allowing priorities in the provision of staff, funds and resources to be set. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other agencies had sent 240 staff to the Philippines to coordinate and support programme delivery. On 11 November 2013, she had approved an allocation of \$25 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund to seven United Nations agencies and the International Organization for Migration.

19. Despite those achievements, the international community should continue to support the Government's efforts in the medium and long term. The Humanitarian Country Team was working with the Government to improve the geographical reach of aid; a clear picture of needs in remote areas and smaller outlying islands should be established; and food, shelter, water, sanitation, education, health, nutrition and welfare services should be provided immediately to the worst-affected populations.

20. Her Office would help people to resume their normal lives by supporting agricultural production programmes that provide employment to local people and strengthen local markets; the clearing of debris and rehabilitation of infrastructure; and the restoration of water, sanitation, education and health services. However, the speed of recovery would vary depending on how badly communities had been affected. Areas hit by both the typhoon and the storm surge would take the longest to recover.

21. Swift contributions to multilateral assistance efforts had helped improve the speed and scale of humanitarian action, which was now based on the Strategic Response Plan, bringing together the plans of 54 humanitarian partners, including 41 non-governmental organizations. Donor Governments and the international public had so far provided 30 per cent of the \$791 million requested under the Response Plan, which would provide assistance until December 2014 and would complement the Philippines Government's four-year Reconstruction Assistance on Yolanda Plan. Her Office would continue to coordinate its support with the Government in order to avoid duplication.

22. **Ms. Wahlström** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction), speaking via video link from Geneva, said that the international community had established the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 to improve countries' ability to withstand shocks such as the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. She hoped that the lessons learned from Typhoon Haiyan would help to prevent the destruction of lives and livelihoods and the undermining of economies by natural disasters. The international community should take advantage of the negotiations on the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction to generate economic and social efforts that would help countries to protect themselves from climate change.

23. The Philippine Government had always been committed to building the country's disaster resilience, adopting some of the most advanced legislation in the world on disaster risk reduction and climate change. However, the geography of the Philippines was complicated and the country was exposed to frequent typhoons. Nonetheless, active local government involvement had shown that lives could be saved and the country's assets protected. The earthquake that had struck Cebu province in October 2013 had raised local awareness of disaster risks, helping to save lives during Typhoon Haiyan.

24. The social destruction caused by Typhoon Haiyan so soon after Typhoon Bopha and the October 2013 earthquake would take a toll on any country. Although the Philippines was a middle-income country, people in many areas had few resources. While it had an excellent early warning system for disasters, many people had not understood the implications of the storm surge. Because of the scientific language used with such systems, citizens often could not understand the messages sent out.

25. Nonetheless, the aftermath of disasters often provided opportunities for shifts in policy. Those responsible for public education should therefore intensify their efforts to ensure that people understood disaster warnings, particularly when their lives and not merely their property were at risk. A national strategy identifying sectors requiring more attention, such as transport infrastructure and housing quality and location, should therefore be adopted. Fortunately for the Philippines, it had the institutional framework, an active civil society and the political will needed to seize such opportunities.

26. The response to Typhoon Haiyan had revealed the importance of private sector investment in risk-resilient development. The private sector in the Philippines had always been critical to reconstruction and recovery, and should now act to reduce the risks and impact of future disasters through land-use planning, the quality of construction and the location of buildings. Economic reconstruction was the hardest part of disaster recovery, requiring adequate consultation with the people, communities and local officials to achieve a consensus. To that end, the staff of the United Nations system and international organizations in the Philippines could share their experience of previous reconstruction operations and also learn from those of the Philippine people and Government.

27. At the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in March 2015, in Sendai, Japan, the lessons learned from Typhoon Haiyan and other disasters worldwide would be discussed with a view to improving resilience to and mitigating the effects of disasters. The Conference would also provide an opportunity for States, the United Nations and the international system to honour those who had lost their lives in the Philippines and other disaster-hit countries.

28. **Ms. Carvalho** (United Nations Resident Coordinator for the Philippines), speaking via video link from Manila, said that the Government of the Philippines had shown outstanding leadership in responding to disasters in the previous decades, and its actions following Typhoon Haiyan were no exception. It had worked in cooperation with United Nations agencies, international non-governmental organizations and civil society on the basis of the cluster system it had adopted in 2007. Each cluster comprised relevant Government departments and entities in a specific sector, such as shelter, water, sanitation or health, allowing the authorities and international actors to exchange information, share resources, identify areas on which to focus and prevent duplication.

29. Following the disaster, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners had helped the Government to prepare its Reconstruction Assistance on Yolanda Plan, which they had taken into account in designing the humanitarian community's Strategic Response Plan, to ensure that international and Government priorities were aligned and that support to the Government was properly targeted. The Yolanda Plan covered the period up to 2016, while the Strategic Response Plan would focus on humanitarian needs until June 2014 and on

the transition from relief to early recovery until December 2014.

30. The thematic focus of the Yolanda Plan was on resettlement, infrastructure, livelihoods and social development, while the Strategic Response Plan would provide continuous emergency assistance and support early recovery efforts, focusing on 171 municipalities identified by the Government as having been most affected by Typhoon Haiyan. Under the Strategic Response Plan, the 3 million worst-affected people out of the total of 14 million would receive food, shelter, water and sanitation services. Health and protection services would be provided to 7 million people, in collaboration with the Government and local authorities.

31. The Government would begin conducting a post-disaster needs assessment in January 2014, with the support of the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank. The United Nations would focus on implementing the Strategic Response Plan, working closely with the Government to promote innovative approaches such as cash-based intervention which would be used by many organizations in the food, shelter and early recovery sectors to stimulate local markets. Cash transfers were estimated to represent 10 per cent of the funds allocated under the Strategic Response Plan, a proportion which might rise if market conditions allowed.

32. Private individuals and organizations were the largest donors to the Strategic Response Plan, having provided 20 per cent of contributions as well as valuable technical expertise and skills, for example in the design and delivery of direct cash transfer mechanisms. The United Nations would continue to support the Government's recovery and reconstruction efforts beyond the period covered under the Strategic Response Plan, taking into account best practices from other countries. It would also ensure that its recovery assistance reached the most vulnerable and underscored the importance of social inclusion and equity in recovery programmes.

33. Emergency preparedness, long-term disaster risk reduction and resilience should be strengthened by building communities' capacity to cope with more frequent disasters through the "build back better" approach, which involved constructing shelters capable of withstanding strong winds and earthquakes; ensuring that they were located in areas not prone to

flooding or landslides; raising awareness of disasters; and introducing early warning and initial response procedures. The United Nations system in the Philippines had helped the Government to develop an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, which had been applied at the subnational and provincial levels and would be scaled up as much as possible. It had also helped the Government to analyse the scientific information regarding hazard risks and to strengthen its early warning systems and risk assessments.

34. The United Nations was also involved in the response to the October 2013 earthquake in Bohol province, which had been overshadowed by Typhoon Haiyan but had affected some 3.2 million people and left about 364,000 displaced. Under the Bohol Earthquake Action Plan, \$47 million had been requested to provide support until April 2014, of which only 21 per cent had been provided. Similarly, following the September 2013 Zamboanga city siege, some 66,000 people remained displaced and in need of shelter and food. Under the Zamboanga City and Basilan Action Plan, \$24 million had been requested, of which 15 per cent had been provided. She encouraged donors to step up their contributions to help meet those targets.

35. **Mr. Rosellini** (Deputy Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Development Programme) said that early recovery was an important part of the Government's "build back better" approach and was essential to the humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan. The Regional Bureau would help the Government and people of the Philippines to build resilience, particularly at community level, and promote sustainable development through early recovery. It had prepared programme briefs covering not only the period ending in December 2014, as part of the United Nations Strategic Response Plan, but also the period until 2016, within the parameters of the Philippine Government's Reconstruction Assistance on Yolanda Plan.

36. In the short term, the Regional Bureau was supporting debris clearance efforts, cash-for-work initiatives and disease prevention through proper disposal of waste. In the longer term, it would help to restore the capacities of local institutions and communities, the livelihoods of those affected by the floods and the development of national and local disaster risk reduction systems. In that connection, the

Regional Bureau had already facilitated the exchange of lessons learned and experiences between the Governments of Indonesia and the Philippines so that the Philippines could benefit from Indonesia's experience with large-scale recovery programmes.

37. **Mr. Brooks** (Senior Vice-President of International Operations, American Red Cross) said that storms such as Typhoon Haiyan and Hurricane Sandy, which had struck the north-east of the United States of America in October 2012, represented overwhelming challenges, which could nevertheless be overcome with sufficient preparedness. The Philippine Red Cross, supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, had delivered food packages to some 785,000 people and clean water to about 600,000. It was working to reunite families separated by the typhoon and had established welfare desks in affected communities to find missing family members and provide emotional support; it was currently attempting to trace about 32,000 people.

38. The International Federation had launched an emergency appeal for \$78.5 million in relief funds, of which 78 per cent had been provided. Its field assessment coordination team had determined that all of the various types of emergency response units would be needed in the Philippines. Accordingly, 13 units had been sent to the Philippines, and a base camp had been established south of Tacloban. The delivery of water, food and hygiene kits had initially been given a high priority, but the focus had now shifted to shelter, unconditional cash grants and health care. The most pressing needs were the provision of shelter and the restoration of livelihoods.

39. The International Federation would provide families with shelter kits containing construction tools and materials. In coastal areas, it focused on debris removal to make space for shelters, while inland, the priority was on repairing damaged structures. It had convened the shelter cluster of the relief effort with human, technical, material and financial assistance from national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, international non-governmental organizations, Member States and the United Nations. The cluster had delivered emergency materials to some 130,000 families and self-recovery materials, including tools, building supplies, cash and training to about 37,000 families. A system of cash transfers had been established to help families rebuild their homes; the target was to provide 50,000 families on Panay and

Leyte islands with \$50 each. The registration of beneficiaries had begun, and 20,000 families would be receiving transfers by the end of 2013.

40. Red Cross and Red Crescent societies in the International Federation's Asia-Pacific zone had provided a legal specialist to advise the shelter cluster on problematic issues related to housing, land and property rights. The International Federation and the Philippine Red Cross were working to apply the lessons learned from the shelter programmes established in response to Hurricane Frank, which had affected Mexico in 2010. They were also working with the Philippine Department of Health on water testing and hygiene education to improve the prevention of water-borne diseases.

41. **Ms. García** (President of SM Supermalls), speaking via video link from Manila, said that her company had dispatched 50,000 packs of relief goods to affected families within a few days of the typhoon and had allocated 100 million pesos in emergency funds to the Reconstruction Assistance on Yolanda Plan. It had donated a further 100 million pesos to build 1,000 disaster-resilient houses for survivors, in coordination with the Government of the Philippines. It was currently finalizing the design of those houses and was checking the proposed sites for the first batch.

42. SM shopping malls were designed to be disaster resilient. The SM City Marikina mall, for example, was located 20 metres further from a nearby river than the recommended minimum safe distance, thereby reducing the risks of flooding. Because the main road leading to the mall was at ground level, the company had built no walls around the lower parking level, so that water could pass through. At another mall, comprising suspended two-way slabs and ductile shear walls to resist earthquakes, it had performed a geotechnical evaluation to ensure that the foundations were secure. At the SM City Masinag mall, a 17,000 m³ rainwater tank had been installed to avoid flooding in the mall and surrounding area. The company would continue not only to ensure the longevity of its malls, condominiums and houses, but also to protect the communities in which it operated.

43. The private sector had an important role to play alongside the Government and international organizations in the recovery effort. The Government could help it in that regard by encouraging construction projects and business start-ups, streamlining the

processing of permits for the re-establishment of businesses, and adopting special procedures to expedite the recovery process. The Government should also provide tax credits and insurance packages as an incentive for private companies to build structures exceeding the minimum requirements of the National Building Code of the Philippines.

44. To educate its customers regarding disaster preparedness, SM Supermalls had held many workshops and forums at its malls, which had become disaster-resilient evacuation sites and refuges following Typhoon Haiyan. It helped small and medium-sized enterprises through its corporate social responsibility programmes, which enabled entrepreneurs to promote their products in its malls. The company and other supermarket chains were supporting the Government in its job-creation and relief operations. The private sector would also continue to promote the objectives of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Private Sector Advisory Group, of which SM Supermalls was a member.

Interactive dialogue

45. **The representative of Japan** said that his Government had sent \$56 million in relief goods and funds, medical and transport teams as well as expert rehabilitation and oil-spill response teams to the Philippines. In order to build more resilient communities, Governments should take disaster risk reduction into account in their recovery, reconstruction and rehabilitation planning. It was therefore encouraging to hear that the Philippine Government had already drawn lessons on disaster risk reduction from Typhoon Haiyan. His Government had joined forces with its Philippine counterpart to help that country build earthquake-proof infrastructure and strengthen its disaster planning capacities.

46. His Government aimed to provide seamless assistance from recovery to development. He asked how the multi-cluster/sector initial rapid assessments developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee could help to provide consistency between emergency efforts and long-term reconstruction initiatives for the building of resilient communities, and how technology could be used in recovery and reconstruction efforts.

47. **Mr. Almendras** (Cabinet Secretary, Office of the President of the Philippines) said that the preparations for Typhoon Haiyan had been hindered by the fact that

many people in the affected areas had not understood the meaning of the expression “storm surge”. The Japanese word tsunami, however, was more widely understood and would have been a better term to use in typhoon warning broadcasts. The Government was currently conducting discussions to find an equivalent Filipino word for tsunami, since it was critical for citizens to understand disaster warnings.

48. Although the Government’s “build back better” approach involved constructing stronger infrastructure and homes, such measures had a high cost. After the storms of 2011 and 2012, for example, the National Building Code of the Philippines had been amended to stipulate that structures must resist wind speeds up to 250 km/h rather than the previous 150 km/h. Following Typhoon Haiyan, the Code would be amended again to require public buildings to resist 300 km/h winds. That change, however, would have a significant economic impact. His Government’s scientific advisers had recommended that no houses should be built on vulnerable sites, for example within 40 metres of the shoreline. Such a measure could have significant economic and social implications, since it would affect the livelihoods of fishermen, who needed to live as close as possible to the sea. It could also have legal and constitutional implications related to private property.

49. **The representative of Pakistan** said that his Government had provided \$1 million in financial assistance to the Philippines. The forthcoming visit of the Secretary-General to the Philippines was timely, since the hardest part of the humanitarian cycle, the transition from recovery to the rehabilitation of affected communities and the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure, was now starting and would require long-term assistance from the international community. International coordination in humanitarian relief assistance must be strengthened and advance preparations must be made. The international community must respond collectively and with greater precision; more research on climate change should be conducted and new technologies developed to minimize the impact of such disasters.

50. The people of Pakistan, who had experience with large-scale natural disasters such as the 2005 earthquake and the floods of 2010 and 2011, which could not have been overcome without the assistance of the United Nations and the international community, expressed their solidarity with the Government and people of the Philippines. Pledges of assistance to the

Typhoon Haiyan recovery efforts should be honoured as soon as possible.

51. **The representative of Spain** said that the response to Typhoon Haiyan had shown that the international community had learned some but not all of the lessons of the past. Local government and the authorities in the Philippines had played a vital role in coordinating the efforts of the armed forces but, above all, the people of the Philippines had given refuge to those displaced by the storm. Without such action, no humanitarian assistance operation could succeed. Nonetheless, the typhoon had revealed some weaknesses in coordination between the United Nations, the Government and local authorities. It had also shown that international humanitarian assistance was ineffective unless the population and local authorities were prepared. More attention should be paid to such preparation, which was essential in countries such as the Philippines.

52. His Government had managed all of its bilateral assistance through its technical cooperation office in the Philippines and was developing a strategy for the coming months in line with the United Nations Strategic Response Plan and the Philippine Government's Reconstruction Assistance on Yolanda Plan. It offered to help organize an event in early 2014 to analyse the lessons learned from Typhoon Haiyan.

53. **The representative of Canada** said that his Government had delivered a rapid and multifaceted response to Typhoon Haiyan, in close cooperation with the Government of the Philippines and other humanitarian actors. It had helped to strengthen emergency capacities, including through the Transformative Agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Principals, and to enable a more robust United Nations response. Citizens, the private sector and civil society in Canada had all offered help. His Government had contributed \$20 million to the United Nations, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and non-governmental organizations, and had launched a matching fund for Canadian public sector contributions; it had also provided in-kind relief supplies and support to the Red Cross field hospital, and deployed many civilian experts. On Panay island, its Disaster Assistance Response Team had provided medical teams and engineering services, cleared debris, purified water supply and transferred relief goods and personnel to remote areas.

54. **The representative of Guyana** said that his Government had pledged \$50,000 through the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to the Philippines. His delegation commended the resilience of the people of the Philippines and trusted that the international community would be at their side during the transition from relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction.

55. **The representative of the Netherlands** said that his country was highly vulnerable to flooding, since one third of it lay below sea level. In 1953, some 1,700 people had been killed by a storm surge and the Netherlands had been able to recover only through large-scale international assistance. Since that time, his Government had made great progress in water management and disaster risk reduction.

56. It had therefore provided €6 million in support of emergency assistance to the Philippines, with its citizens donating a further €34 million. Netherlands companies and knowledge institutes were ready to share their expertise with other countries, as they had done in the past, including in New York after Hurricane Sandy. His Government also believed that the position of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as the central body for logistics and transport access in emergency situations should be strengthened.

57. **The representative of Italy** said that the international community should adhere more closely to the plans of the Government of the Philippines in order to foster transparency in the management of aid and eliminate duplication. The local population had greatly appreciated the multilateral and bilateral emergency aid they had received in cash and in kind, in particular the deployment of personnel and equipment. His Government had provided a field hospital, goods and equipment using three military aircraft. The effects of the funds raised by the international community, however, would not be felt for several months. Until that time, most reconstruction work would be done by the local population.

58. The international community should therefore focus on building large infrastructure such as hospitals, police stations, power stations, reception centres and schools, which would be more likely to withstand future disasters. More should be done to help local authorities build resilience and improve disaster risk

management. The lessons learned could thus be used to improve the response to future disasters.

59. **The representative of Turkey** said that her Government had distributed 65 tons of food, shelter and cooking equipment to the affected communities and was planning to do more. Climate change was believed to account for the recent worldwide rise in the number of natural disasters, which caused serious damage and disrupted economic and social life despite the growing global capacity to respond to them. The international community's emphasis on risk management and disaster preparedness was a positive development, but to be sustainable, recovery must be linked to a longer-term development agenda. It was essential for national authorities to determine country-specific disaster risk management policies. The discussions at upcoming international gatherings related to the topic would help to provide strategic direction for those policies.

60. **The representative of Australia** said that her Government had committed 40 million Australian dollars to the humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan, through the participation of six federal agencies and contributions from non-governmental organizations and citizens. Her Government was conducting its own lessons-learned exercise to ensure that its future assistance would be as effective as possible. She asked about lessons learned in civilian-military coordination, given that military assets had been crucial to the response, and whether any gaps in international civilian capacity could have been filled to support the Government of the Philippines.

61. **The representative of the Russian Federation** said that his Government had offered help bilaterally and through international organizations in the immediate aftermath of Typhoon Haiyan, sending two aircraft carrying humanitarian assistance for the affected population. It had recently allocated \$4.5 million to help with recovery efforts, of which \$1 million would go to the United Nations Children Fund for the improvement of water supply and sanitation; \$1 million to the World Health Organization for the provision of medical assistance; \$1 million to the World Food Programme for the provision of food; \$1 million to the United Nations Development Programme for housing; and \$500,000 to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the coordination of international efforts to overcome the effects of the disaster.

62. **The representative of China** said that the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs should continue to lead the transition from relief to reconstruction and to enhance the coordination and effectiveness of assistance to the Philippines. Since Typhoon Haiyan had struck China and Viet Nam after the Philippines, the Chinese people were also victims of the disaster. Her Government had provided tents, blankets and medical supplies worth 15 million yuans as well as \$200,000 in cash to the Philippines. Medical personnel and the hospital ship *Ark of Peace* had been sent to the affected areas and more than 6,000 people had been treated for injuries. Her Government would continue to participate in the reconstruction efforts, thus demonstrating its responsible attitude to and friendship with the Philippine people.

63. **The representative of Brazil** said that the response to Typhoon Haiyan had demonstrated that inclusive growth and sustainable development were essential to disaster preparedness. Her delegation therefore welcomed the provision by the Government of the Philippines, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations of emergency assistance, including through cash transfers, social safety nets and cash-for-work programmes, to support such development.

64. Because her Government believed that emergency assistance should always be accompanied by structural cooperation to address underlying vulnerabilities, it had provided financial support to the United Nations Children's Fund for the preservation of food security among children, and to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for the distribution of hygiene and first aid kits. At the request of the Philippine Government, it had sent specialists to participate in local procurement programmes to support smallholder farmers and long-term food security. It was committed to humanitarian cooperation policies designed not only to provide immediate assistance but also to reduce inequality and risk and to promote resilience.

65. **The representative of the United States of America** said that while the disaster response of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee had shown signs of improvement, much remained to be done. Because the response to the storm had been the first major test of the Transformative Agenda in a natural disaster, that Agenda must be thoroughly evaluated, particularly

given the extensive use made of military assets in the relief efforts.

66. **The representative of Mexico** said that his Government had donated \$1 million to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to be administered through the Philippine Red Cross and the United Nations. Typhoon Haiyan had shown that preparation, risk reduction and the building of national, regional and international capacities were essential for an effective humanitarian system able to quickly help victims following disasters. The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit would provide a unique opportunity to discuss ways of improving the humanitarian relief system, reducing vulnerabilities, building resilience and ensuring adequate funding.

67. **The representative of Malaysia** said that his Government had dispatched a military medical team and a search and rescue team to the Philippines; had contributed \$1 million to the relief effort; and had donated food and water purification equipment, medicine and humanitarian aid through non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The resilience of the Philippine people was beyond question, but given the scale of the destruction, the international community must do its utmost to respond.

68. **The representative of the Philippines** said that the Government and people of the Philippines thanked the Secretary-General for his quick response to the crisis and the international community for its unprecedented solidarity and support.

69. **Mr. Almendras** (Cabinet Secretary, Office of the President of the Philippines) said that Typhoon Haiyan had shown that in an archipelago such as the Philippines, aircraft were essential in addressing disasters immediately. Civilian-military coordination had been critical because in the immediate aftermath of the storm, only military assets had been capable of responding. The transport aircraft sent by Australia, Japan, Malaysia and Taiwan had for five days been the only means of delivering food, water and medical supplies to the most affected areas. Tacloban and Ormoc airports had been under military control during that period because concerns regarding insurance and safety had prevented civilian aircraft from landing there. The transfer of control from the military to the civilian authorities had thus been critical.

70. He commended the Australian pilots who had flown four flights in a single day; and thanked the

Russian Federation for sending some of the largest aircraft in the world, which had brought huge amounts of supplies into the Philippines although they had been unable to land at smaller airfields.

71. **A representative of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs** said that the Office was working with all its partners to improve the humanitarian system and to help countries enhance their resilience and preparedness. In 2012, it had produced a film entitled "*Act Now, Save Later*", stressing that every dollar invested in disaster preparedness saved on average \$7 in humanitarian response costs. While progress had been made in disaster response, in particular with regard to the implementation of the Transformative Agenda, the lessons of Typhoon Haiyan needed to be learned and applied. The United Nations Development Programme and the Asian Development Bank had been among the 45 organizations which had participated in the Typhoon Haiyan multi-cluster/sector initial rapid assessment, which had contributed to the Reconstruction Assistance on Yolanda Plan, the first part of which had been based on the Strategic Response Plan.

72. With regard to technology, the Office had activated the Digital Humanitarian Network and was working with the Global System for Mobile Communications Association to deploy private sector staff to facilitate communications with the affected populations. Many countries had provided assistance in civilian-military coordination at each affected location. The Office was following the Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief (Oslo Guidelines). Military personnel had been able to fill the gaps identified through the cluster structure.

73. **Mr. Rosellini** (Deputy Director of the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Development Programme) said that the many references by representatives to disaster risk reduction and climate change were a reminder that Asia and the Pacific were the regions most vulnerable to disasters. Development agencies must support countries such as the Philippines in the short and in the long term to help them build resilience and incorporate disaster risk reduction and climate change planning into their national and local development plans.

74. **Mr. Brooks** (Senior Vice-President of International Operations, American Red Cross) said

that technology had helped communications with and among aid beneficiaries. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies had registered the beneficiaries of its initiatives using cloud computing technology, which provided a clear picture of needs to be maintained through the use of barcodes. It had also used social media to restore family links and maintain communications between individuals.

Closure of the special meeting

75. **The President** said that the meeting had illustrated the ways in which international solidarity, national resilience and the determination of the Government and people of the Philippines had shaped the response to Typhoon Haiyan. An economic and social approach to the different dimensions of natural disasters was needed to ensure that people were prepared for them in future. Typhoon Haiyan provided an opportunity to evaluate responses to disasters and offered valuable lessons for the international community.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.