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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ADOPTS TEXT ON STRENGTHENING HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE,

RECOGNIZES CLEAR LINK BETWEEN EMERGENCY RESPONSE, REHABILITATION, DEVELOPMENT

Expressing grave concern at the increasing number of people affected by humanitarian emergencies, including those associated with natural hazards, the Economic and Social Council today pressed the United Nations, on one hand, to strengthen humanitarian capacities by transferring technology and expertise to developing nations, and urged Member States to develop disaster preparedness and risk reduction measures, on the other.

The Council wrapped up its humanitarian affairs segment with the adoption of a consensus text on strengthening the Organization's coordination of emergency relief assistance, by which it encouraged efforts to enhance cooperation of United Nations humanitarian entities, among others, with a view to planning and delivering assistance in ways that supported early recovery, sustainable rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. In such work, the Organization was encouraged to strengthen its ability to recruit and deploy staff quickly and flexibly, and to procure emergency relief material in a cost-effective manner.

Further by the text, all actors engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance were urged to fully commit to — and respect — the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. States and parties in armed conflict and post-conflict situations were called upon to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel, allowing such personnel to assist affected civilians, including refugees and internally displaced persons. They were also called upon to comply fully with international humanitarian law, including all Geneva Conventions, to assist civilians in occupied territories.

By other terms, the Council urged States to continue to prevent, investigate and prosecute gender-based violence, including sexual violence, in humanitarian emergencies, while improving support services to victims. In other areas, the Council encouraged the private sector, civil society and others to consider increasing and diversifying contributions to humanitarian funding mechanisms, including the Central Emergency Response Fund.

A related panel discussion held during the Council's morning session focused on strengthening preparedness for humanitarian emergencies. It examined how to respond to a changing humanitarian landscape, with global events such as population growth, food crises and pandemic risk creating larger humanitarian caseloads in contexts that were often unfamiliar. "We need to be responding to needs wherever they are found", said John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, who moderated the discussion.

Panellist Saroj Kumar Jha, Manager and Head of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) at the World Bank, said poverty was the greatest multiplier of vulnerability. Studies had shown that 75 per cent of disaster hotspots in the world were populated by moderately and extreme

poor people, and one third of the world's poor lived in those hotspots. Natural hazards grew into "unnatural disasters" due to the vulnerabilities of societies.

To better respond to humanitarian crises, good data was needed, said panellist Jemilah Mahmood, Chief of the Humanitarian Response Branch at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Demographic patterns provided indications of what may loom ahead and, when applied appropriately, could give rise to triggers to alert Governments and development and humanitarian actors.

"If we are going to tackle the challenges of the future, we have got to find a way of evolving the humanitarian system," said Peter Walker, Irwin H. Rosenberg Professor of Nutrition and Human Security and Director of the Feinstein International Center at Tufts University. There were instances when crises "rolled along year after year", with some "emergency" programmes running for more than eight years. This was "humanitarian purgatory" and the situation had to be rethought and rebuilt. Evolution should be data driven, addressing the needs and hopes of affected populations, and required a heightened sense of professionalism.

In other business, the Council concluded its general debate on special economic, humanitarian and relief assistance, with delegates stressing that, in a disaster-prone world, countries needed had to prevent a disaster from ruining and damaging its development gains. With that in mind, it was critical to build and strengthen national and local preparedness, prevention, resilience, mitigation and response capacity. Human rights violations, especially sexual abuse and gender-based violence, forced labour and recruitment of child soldiers raised continued concern.

Speaking in the general debate today were representatives of Mexico, Ukraine, South Africa, Iraq, Colombia, Indonesia, Zambia, Bahamas, Morocco, United States, Argentina, Guatemala, Liechtenstein, Bangladesh and India.

Also addressing the Council were representatives of the Observer delegations of the Holy See, the Sovereign Military Order of Malta and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Representatives of the International Organization of Migration (IOM), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) also spoke, as did a representative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

Under-Secretary-General Holmes delivered closing remarks.

The Economic and Social Council will reconvene at 10:30 a.m. Friday, 16 July to begin its general segment.

Background

The Economic and Social Council was expected to continue and conclude its humanitarian segment affairs today. It held a panel discussion on "Strengthening preparedness for humanitarian emergencies and the coordinated provision of humanitarian assistance, in particular, addressing the humanitarian needs of the affected populations and the factors that increase susceptibility to humanitarian emergencies". In the afternoon, the Council was expected to wrap up its general debate on the subject.

Panel on Strengthening Preparedness for Humanitarian Emergencies

Moderated by John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, the panel featured presentations by Naomi Shaban, Minister of State for Special Programmes of Kenya; Saroj Kumar Jha, Manager and Head of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), World Bank; Jemilah Mahmood, Chief of the Humanitarian Response Branch, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); Peter Walker, Irwin H. Rosenberg Professor of Nutrition and Human Security and Director, Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition, Science and Policy at Tufts University; Laurent Thomas, Director, Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division at

the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); and Eric Laroche, Assistant Director-General, Health Action in Crises, World Health Organization (WHO).

Council Vice-President OCTAVIO ERRÁZURIZ (Chile), who chaired the panel, said Member States' choice of the topic today testified to the concern over how global challenges were exacerbating the vulnerability of communities around the world, and further, how humanitarian needs could be met in contexts not necessarily labelled as humanitarian crises.

Introducing the morning's speakers, Mr. HOLMES said the panel would examine how to respond to the changing humanitarian landscape, which was being shaped by profound and threatening global challenges: climate change, the ongoing crisis in food security, population growth, scarcity of resources, pandemic risk and, not least, the financial crisis. Such challenges were creating larger humanitarian caseloads in contexts that often were unfamiliar. They would likely drive chronic, acute vulnerability in new ways and create needs on a scale that could not easily be imagined. Humanitarian caseloads could widen to include unfamiliar populations, like the urban poor, who were harder to serve but in no less need of help.

"We need to be responding to needs wherever they are found", Mr. Holmes said, noting the possibility that combined multisectoral trends would lead to new humanitarian needs. In that context, he urged creating better system-wide multi-hazard indicators and better monitoring systems, to ensure an understanding of how global trends were coming together. Also, there was a need to work better with Governments, development partners and civil society to ensure the Organization had the ability to identify trends and understand risks on diverse populations.

Acknowledging the existence of humanitarian need might not always be welcomed by Governments, which often were concerned about their ability to attract investment or the possibility of negative perceptions emerging about their decisions. Those sensitivities must be understood, he said, as must the fact that humanitarian needs "simply must be met".

Speaking first, Ms. SHABAN said today's theme had three main components: preparedness before emergency; provision of humanitarian assistance during emergency; and reconstruction post-emergency. Those issues must be examined together to understand how best to help people resume their lives. It was very important for all stakeholders to be involved from the start, with the Government taking the lead to coordinate efforts.

Over the years, Kenya had seen its fair share of disasters, some with economic repercussions — such as the 2007 post-election violence and 1998 bombing of the United States Embassy — some in the form of natural disasters, including severe drought, crop failure and flood. In addition, millions of people had sought refuge in Kenya, especially from Somalia and Sudan. Half a million people were living in two main camps. Last year, Kenya had received up to 30,000 Somalis a day, many of whom had come with their livestock.

To strengthen preparedness, she said, the ability to predict disasters must be strengthened, notably through use of early warning mechanisms. As a country that relied on rain-fed agriculture — only 20 per cent of its land was arable; 80 per cent was arid or semi-arid — Kenya had, among other things, increased its national grain reserves and sensitized populations about keeping grain in reserve for use in dry periods. For flood-prone areas, the Government had asked inhabitants to move to higher ground and upgraded its infrastructure. "The goal should be to build peoples' resilience," she stressed.

Turning to the provision of humanitarian assistance, she said Kenya had improved its situation in the years since 1998. The Ministry of State for Special Programmes, which she headed, coordinated stakeholders in providing assistance. At the grass-roots level, district steering groups mobilized local populations. Today, those groups were being converted into disaster management committees.

In the reconstructive phase, the United Nations had been at the forefront of leading a coordinated response, while her Ministry carried out seminars to inform people about preparing for a disaster. At the same time, Kenya faced challenges. Though disaster management plans were in place, management capacity was not very effective. Access to resources was also a great obstacle, and while she thanked the Central Emergency Response Fund for its assistance, the need for better access must be reiterated.

In addressing the humanitarian needs of affected populations, Kenya had prioritized food, water and shelter, she said, noting that the Government in recent years had persuaded pastoralists to sell their animals to the Government, to prevent them from dying from drought. To raise living standards, Kenya had set up funds for women and youth to encourage entrepreneurship. The Government also had strengthened research institutes and enhanced extension services. In addition, legal initiatives had been taken, notably a national accord signed between the two main political parties after the 2007 election violence.

Next, Mr. JHA said that, in his work at the World Bank with development and humanitarian actors, it had become clear that poverty was the greatest multiplier of vulnerability. Studies showed that 75 per cent of disaster hotspots in the world were populated by moderately and extreme poor people, and one third of the world's poor lived in those hotspots. Natural hazards became "unnatural disasters" due to the vulnerabilities of societies.

For example, the 2009 tsunami in Samoa had triggered devastating loss of gross domestic product (GDP), and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti had had a similar effect. The average loss of employment worldwide due to natural disasters was about 4 to 5 per cent each year, he said. That meant that, if those vulnerabilities were not managed, the consequences of disasters would continue to have a huge impact on vulnerable communities.

Many people fell into poverty each year due to such events, he continued. Those vulnerabilities should be managed as part of development planning. More and more countries were starting to talk about those issues in their long-term planning. However, more needed to be done, and with events such as those that had occurred in Haiti and Samoa, there were opportunities to bring those elements into recovery planning.

Continuing, he noted that the World Bank's approach had changed, especially as the demand for recovery and reconstruction assistance continued to increase, and now comprised some 20 per cent of its portfolio. The philosophy of "build back better" should instead follow the notion to "build better first". Risk reduction should be an element of reconstruction efforts. The Bank could have bilateral relationships to move that agenda forward into the development process. More and more Governments coming to the Bank were requesting assistance with prevention and preparedness, which was good news.

More needed to be done on the risk reduction agenda. At a 2006 meeting with donors, the World Bank had set up a multi-donor programme to provide funds for disaster reduction and recovery, he said. The goal was to demonstrate change in 20 countries over the coming three to four years. Efforts included getting those issues into policy discussions, conducting post-disaster needs assessments and looking at the cost-benefit element of disaster risk reduction. He added that even if only a small amount of funding was available for a particular project, it should be invested in an early-warning system.

He said that, as a global facility, the idea was to influence the World Bank's investment, with a view to "disaster proofing" investments. More and more countries were indeed including risk reduction in their national strategies.

Ms. MAHMOOD focused on two areas to examine how to more effectively predict, identify and respond to acute humanitarian needs. Data needs and demography was one area. With 60 countries participating in the 2010 census process, good data was a component of good governance, transparency and accountability. It was also needed to effectively respond to humanitarian crises. Demographic patterns provided indications of what may loom ahead and, when applied appropriately, could give rise to triggers to alert Governments and development and humanitarian actors.

For example, she said, high rural-urban migration could lead to increased levels of crime, and unequal spatial population distribution in marginal areas could indicate a greater likelihood of frequent landslides and mudflows. Moreover, countries where most of the rural population was dependent on rain-fed agriculture and animal breeding could be vulnerable during prolonged periods of drought, unleashing waves of "out-migration" to other parts of the country, she said.

"To be counted is to become visible, a factor especially important for women, young people and the elderly," she said. Sex and age disaggregated data was even more critical after a disaster or

protracted crisis when targeted assistance was needed. The Haiti crisis was no exception, given that the elderly population was seen to be the most vulnerable, yet not much had been heard about that group or its special needs. A key impediment to effective crisis response to internal displacement was the dearth and unreliability of data.

To humanitarian actors, that meant there was a need to engage with developmental agencies, such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), which had expertise in data and demography, and work closely with national authorities. In Haiti, when national databases had been destroyed, UNFPA had the only remaining database and worked with volunteer data collectors. That experience should be replicated given that UNFPA had recently produced *Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations*, she said.

Post-disaster communication was the second area that required attention, she said. Without access to information, disaster survivors could not begin to make the right choices for themselves and their families. Better communication was also needed to reach out to marginalized communities, especially since survivors often did not know their rights. In such contexts, radio, the Internet and mobile telephones were important vehicles. It was interesting how it was sometimes easier to get a 3G signal on the west coast of Sumatra than in New York City, she added.

Likewise, humanitarian agencies needed beneficiaries to channel information about what they knew and what they needed. The response to the earthquake in Haiti had provided a glimpse of the future of disaster response and of communications environments, where even the poorest and most isolated people could connect to millions through the phone in their pocket. Similar communication channels could revolutionize the way humanitarian agencies do business, she said. However, instead of allowing new and emerging technologies to shore up existing communications systems, it was time to rethink a real two-way flow of information.

The Communication with Disaster-Affected Communities Working Group was a first small step in the right direction emphasizing this two-way communications. However, she said, much more was needed, including engagement, debate, the establishment of a modus operandi and creating some form of regulation around how the aid community used technology. A response-based humanitarian system needed to be focused on national and regional authorities as the first line of preparedness, which should emphasize prevention and risk reduction at least as much as response.

The tech community was out there, willing to work with aid agencies, including Ushahidi, Crisis Commons and a host of others. "As we saw in Haiti, if we don't work with them they will find other actors to work with," she said, adding: "This interaction needs to be visionary on our part, reliable, predictable, principled and cognizant of humanitarian principles on theirs, and jointly focused on achieving some real change to the way that we do business." She said the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) needed to take a lead on that and, given the tough financial times, needed to be provided with the resources to do so. "It's time for a rethink," she concluded, "otherwise we are going to be left behind."

Mr. WALKER said the humanitarian system needed to evolve to avoid becoming extinct. To do so, the following areas needed attention: data; losses, needs and hope; professionalism; community; and purpose.

While one of the humanitarian architecture's strong points was data collection on funding, there was a shortage of aggregated data. For instance, it had been estimated that half a million aid workers operated worldwide, but that was a guess. With scant data, it was difficult to assess needs of both beneficiaries and aid workers, he said. Data must also capture the losses, needs and hopes of affected populations, areas that currently lacked solid information.

Turning to humanitarian workers, he said more professionalism was needed in the aid community. A survey of 2,000 respondents had shown a strong desire for more professionalism in the system. He said that in addition to experts, including nutritionists and accountants, there was a strong need for professional relief workers that had the relevant knowledge, experience, values and sharpened skills, including multitasking, accounting and team-building.

The humanitarian community was much broader than the donor-country based system, and it included local groups, church and Islamic groups and many others, he said. That broad community must be recognized and strengthened to reap the full benefits for those in need. Turning to the purpose of the system, he said there were instances when crises “rolled along year after year”, with some “emergency” programmes running for more than eight years. That was “humanitarian purgatory” and the situation needed to be rethought and rebuilt.

“If we are going to tackle the challenges of the future, we have got to find a way of evolving the humanitarian system,” he said. That evolution should be data driven; address losses, needs and hopes; use a heightened sense of professionalism; and should work with a true global community that was fit for purpose. A system structured around those priorities would allow people to recover from a crisis so there was a better chance of moving on towards sustainable livelihoods and economic development.

Next, Mr. THOMAS noted that more than 200 million people were affected by natural disasters every year. The world was currently facing disasters and challenges of an unprecedented scale, most of which were long term. Yet, nearly 70 per cent of humanitarian work was still related to the consequences of conflict — the most common cause of acute food insecurity. However, food insecurity could also pose a threat to peace and security, he said.

Increasing demands for humanitarian relief were driven by such “profound and threatening global trends”, which went well beyond any State or institution’s ability to respond. Given that, he stressed the need for humanitarian assistance to be built on longer-term sustainable support to vulnerable communities. “We need to build back better so that future shocks have less impact.” Moreover, traditional humanitarian and development paradigms were not suitable for guiding effective responses when emergencies extended over long periods of time.

Rather than remaining simply ad hoc, interventions should follow longer-term strategies and build on local institutions, he stressed. Humanitarian actors must make the most of existing expertise, skills, systems and tools, but also develop new approaches that stressed coordination, partnership, prevention and preparedness. Highlighting several global trends — particularly those adversely affecting the Horn of Africa — he cited an old adage which also rang true for today’s world: “Give a man a fish, you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish, and you have fed him for a lifetime.”

In that regard, humanitarian efforts must aim to assess and invest in the future of communities beyond the first days of an emergency. FAO’s programmes in the Horn of Africa linked short-term relief with longer-term strategies to address underlying structural causes of food insecurity. In addition, he said, the agency focused on strengthening the resilience of the Horn’s pastoral people — who had suffered heavy livestock losses — through improving water-harvesting techniques, access to better veterinary community services and access to small-scale credit schemes.

Continuing, he said that FAO personnel on the ground in 63 countries were supporting the frontline responders, local communities and authorities in responding to emergencies, as well as developing capacities. They also worked to strengthen resilience so communities would be better equipped to respond, cope and recover in the event of future crises. The strategy of building regional, national and local partnerships should be based on medium- and long-term assessments of future critical needs. Such assessments might be difficult to support financially, he said, underscoring the need for resources for better preparedness and prevention.

“It is clear that without a long-term commitment we will not be able to work better with local partners. Nor can we improve response.” Addressing the reasons why prevention and preparedness were essential, he said the humanitarian community’s event-driven approach was no longer enough. New ways of working closely with humanitarian and development actors and other stakeholders to tackle chronic vulnerability were needed. In terms of funding, he noted that questions about where money would come from could not be avoided.

Rounding out the discussion, Mr. LAROCHE described various emergency situations around the world, saying that during floods in Myanmar a few years ago, WHO had been asked to analyse response efforts. The results showed that 95 per cent of the response had been undertaken by local communities. “First responders are always your neighbours, your cousins, brothers and sisters,” he said. They needed to

be helped. Another study had found that 85 per cent of the disease burden in low- and middle-income countries was comprised of non-communicable diseases. Yet, the health response often emphasized treatment for communicable disease.

Next, addressing the need to craft a health response on the basis of data, he pointed out that the “health and nutrition tracking system”, which worked with non-governmental organizations, among others, had found that only 30 per cent of all nutrition surveys conducted in recent years had been done correctly. Only 1 per cent of maternal mortality studies could be considered valid, because it had proven extremely difficult to collect good data on that issue. Moreover, in Afghanistan in 2002, a maternal mortality study had found that attention should be given to certain areas; however, three years after it had been conducted, no programme funding had been received. Thus, it was important to respond to needs by providing funding.

In that context, he said a WHO assessment had shown that less than half of the world’s countries had a budget for health and preparedness; yet, most had experienced at least one major disaster in the last five years. It was important to be structured in preparedness. As a good example, he cited Bangladesh’s response to flooding, which had improved substantially since 1971, when a major flood had devastated parts of the country. Stemming from such experiences, the Government had set up one of the best hospitals in the world to treat cholera. “We must stop looking at people as sick people and start looking at them as the solutions to their own problems,” he said.

He had also been extremely impressed by China’s health response to the 2008 earthquake, he said, and had been told that systems to combat communicable diseases had been adapted to respond to hazards. Mexico had developed a vulnerability matrix that allowed budgetary priority for hospitals, so they would have the capacity to deal with diseases and thereby save lives. He concluded by discussing the challenges ahead, underscoring the need to ensure that Governments and local communities alike worked together, which today, did not. WHO was developing the public health risk analysis framework, which would predict the type of technical response to be undertaken.

In the discussion that followed, speakers asked about the degree to which good data analysis was being systematically shared, not just within the United Nations, but with other humanitarian actors and host Governments. One question centred on how partnerships could better include development organizations. Others captured the fact that future humanitarian crises would be increasingly linked to cyclical causes. Speakers wondered what the international response should be.

The European Union’s delegate asked whether there were other ways, means or principles to take into account in humanitarian action and how the international community’s response to emerging trends would impact the current humanitarian architecture. Was the structure optimal for dealing with tomorrow’s challenges? Also, he asked for more information on progress in the United Nations global vulnerability alert system, wondering if that mechanism delivered information that could be of operational help to decision-makers in tracking vulnerability.

Responding to a question about data collection, Mr. THOMAS said examples of good practices existed, but sub-systems should communicate better with each other. The collective inter-agency effort surrounding an integrated food classification system had been rolled out in a number of regions and provided assessments of vulnerable populations and real-time solid data. The system was built from a food security and assessment programme in Somalia. Systems certainly did exist, but they must be rolled out and must communicate better among themselves, he added.

Mr. JHA, commenting on data issues, said that in the future, traditional means of collection. Satellite and space-based technologies should be used alongside other open-source data systems. Regarding partnerships between developing countries and humanitarian actors, he said the case for risk reduction becoming part of the development agenda was steered by humanitarian actors. The international community was getting increasingly engaged in that agenda, yet it had not yet hit the mainstream. He emphasized the importance of country planning processes and, at the international level, the United Nations Development Group could provide a platform to articulate those issues clearly.

On the humanitarian architecture, Mr. Walker said ways should be found to nudge the system in

the right direction. The first thing was to be willing to see the system as an open, rather than closed one. Second, there should be a continued dialogue about purpose. Third, a system should be in place to get a sense about the quality of the assistance being provided. Fourth, concerning communication via cell phones, he said it was time to keep up with the new ways of connecting the response system with those who needed help. That would break down the barriers between those providing assistance and those needing help.

Ms. SHABAN pointed out that, in the event of an emergency, precious time was wasted because there was often a tug of war between actors that did not trust each other. She advised that in situations where a Government was in place, it was important for authorities to take the lead to avoid wasting resources. It was important to share common goals, work together and produce results. Continuing, she said communication was very important and, apart from cell phones, in times of crisis, people were able to send money through a local Kenyan system. Radio stations had helped broadcast relevant information and the Government worked with meteorologists to predict flooding. As a result, quite a number of lives had been saved, she said. In addition, policies that were put in place dealt with related legal and social issues.

Mr. LAROCHE, answering a question on financing, said that what was happening in Haiti showed that there was a lack of information, which included data on beneficiaries and budget projections for the future. A response could not be made without a long-term view. Often, time constraints prevented response plans from looking ahead to the future. Some technical humanitarian responses could sometimes compound problems. The cluster system addressed that in other areas. But what was important was mutual trust. Resources were needed to support those efforts. He added that a recovery process was impossible without hope.

When delegations took the floor again, Sweden's representative asked about how agencies would approach relationships between humanitarian actors.

The representative of Bangladesh said that in the presentations, he had noted that the role of local Government institutions remained unrecognized, and that the potential of South-South cooperation had been largely ignored. He agreed with the notion that disaggregated data was important to paint a clearer picture of vulnerabilities, as would be the case in his country.

Ms. MAHMOOD said that, as a development actor, UNFPA was mainstreaming a development response into its crisis programming. It was examining ways to integrate the aims of the Hyogo Framework for Action in several areas, including gender and capacity-building.

Commenting on the role of local Governments, Ms. SHABAN said that, in Kenya, district steering groups worked closely with the implementers of national decisions. The groups were comprised of a district commissioner, drought managers, local representatives, a chair of the councils and agricultural officers, among others. "We really value the local government and local-level committees," she said, as they were the first responders who provided data to the national Government.

Further, it was true that best practices, particularly from Bangladesh, had to be incorporated into solutions to some problems, she said. In the area of disaster risk reduction, there was a trend of underfunding, as Governments depended on development agencies for such responsibilities. However, it was important for Governments to provide funding.

Mr. JHA said the Global Facility, this year, had gone through governance reform. Six developing countries were now members of the Consultative Group, including Bangladesh. On South-South cooperation, he said the Global Facility had initiated a strong programme allowing Governments to seek funding from a network of actors in areas like new tool development. Ecuador, Senegal, Philippines and Nepal were already benefiting from it, he added.

Mr. THOMAS said FAO was mainstreaming disaster risk management into its work, with a strategic objective that would emphasize helping not only itself but its partners prepare for and respond to emergencies. "We will be accountable to our members regarding progress, not only in terms of better delivering ourselves, but in strengthening our partners to prepare for and address threats," he said.

Representatives of Canada and the Republic of Korea also participated in the discussion.

General Debate

CLAUDE HELLER (Mexico) said the Secretary-General's report underlined the importance of a multidimensional system in making progress in humanitarian issues. A great deal of work remained to be done, and he hoped the debate would renew States' commitment to humanitarian activities. The development of humanitarian needs was a complex issue which required a detailed analysis of the root causes and solutions consistent with people's needs. Conflicts alone did not exacerbate humanitarian needs, but rather the combined impact of several global crises and natural disasters, he said. Mexico noted with concern how high-risk environments revealed the challenges the international community faced. Indeed, its ability to provide assistance was limited or often nullified because of the repercussions of global crises on populations in need and on humanitarian workers.

Humanitarian work involved a series of efforts approved by the international community, including legal norms and fundamental principles which must be respected under all circumstances, he continued. The principles enshrined in Assembly resolution 46/182 provided a framework for all humanitarian assistance, even in cases of natural disasters. Those principles were not to be viewed in isolation, operationally or dogmatically. He reaffirmed his country's commitment to strengthening mechanisms and capacities at all levels to prevent or avoid suffering, underscoring the link between humanitarian emergencies and development.

YURIY SERGEYEV (Ukraine), aligning with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the European Union, emphasized the need for further strengthening of humanitarian assistance coordination, particularly between the United Nations agencies and its operational activities system. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, he said, was a significant global framework for activities aimed at ensuring the international community's resistance to the effects of natural and environmental disasters.

His country believed that due attention should be given to risk management through the inclusion of disaster risk mitigation measures in sustainable development strategies. It was absolutely essential to ensure effective and efficient transition from humanitarian relief to development activities, as well as to adequately support that process, by implementing long-term development projects. Ahead of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe, he noted, the successful implementation of the United Nations Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions — 2006-2016 was vital.

BASO SANGQU (South Africa) said that, given that millions of people had been affected by natural disasters this year, in Haiti, Chile and China, among others, building and strengthening national and local preparedness, prevention, resilience, mitigation and response capacity remained critical to ensure more predictable and effective responses. South Africa had contributed to United Nations entities, but as the Secretary-General mentioned in his report, the financial pressure on relevant programmes was increasing and some agencies were voicing concerns over cuts in planned aid deliveries. South Africa hoped donor countries would continue — and even increase — their generous support to affected countries by providing multi-year, non-earmarked and additional resources. Contributions for humanitarian assistance should be provided without negatively impacting resources made available for international cooperation for development.

The move away from a "shock-driven" approach to a more needs-based and vulnerability-led response should also include a stronger focus on the so-called forgotten emergencies, he said, adding that further debate was required on what would be regarded as "vulnerabilities", as well as what would be the triggers for responding to appeals for assistance. National and international humanitarian agencies should continue to deliver their support to Member States in line with the core principles of impartiality, neutrality and humanity. He urged all relevant international humanitarian entities to continue to work with OCHA to enhance coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of assistance efforts to strengthen response capacity and provide a timely, predictable, coordinated and accountable response to needs.

He said providing such assistance was critical to people living under foreign occupation, and South

Africa called on all humanitarian actors to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other organizations to ensure the safe and unhindered access of personnel and supplies. The nature of emergencies was becoming increasingly complex. “No single country can deal with this challenge alone, hence global partnership is crucial in this regard. Our discussions here today are proof of that recognition,” he said.

HAMID AL BAYATI (Iraq) citing his own country’s experience in the area of humanitarian affairs, said the Government had worked hard to ensure and facilitate the voluntary return of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons, with a view to closing the file on displaced persons permanently before the end of 2010 by proclaiming the return of all families to their areas of origin.

Continuing, he said that, among other efforts, the Government had drawn up security plans to ensure the safe return of refugees, granted monthly funds and a one-time disbursement to help to ease the financial burden of returning to their original homes, and it had provided a host of other services, including travelling costs and food and non-food aid. Iraq would continue to cooperate with United Nations bodies to ensure human rights in general and the rights of all Iraqi internally displaced persons and refugees in particular.

CARLOS SUÁREZ (Colombia), aligning with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the “Group of 77” developing countries and China, said support for national efforts of States was needed. The strengthening of national capacities to respond to humanitarian needs was extremely necessary. Affected States had a vital role to play within their territories, and it was essential to consolidate the capacities of national and local institutions. Such institutions, he stressed, must have increasingly qualified personnel to develop and implement relief activities. And in turn, the international community must support such efforts in order to ensure the effective and efficient use of humanitarian resources.

It was also important to strengthen internal coordination of United Nations-provided assistance. While implementing different coordination mechanisms, the Organization and its agencies must also ensure cooperation with national Governments. Citing the necessity of implementing a needs-based approach, he urged the United Nations to work with Governments or institutions which had information databases on the needs of affected populations. Turning to the Secretary-General’s report, he noted that the statistics presented on Colombia regarding displaced persons were not current, and did not give insight into the number of returns or the amount of progress made in the last four years.

ADE PETRANTO (Indonesia), aligning with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said the ultimate objective was to enable all countries to become more self-sufficient and resilient. In a disaster-prone world, countries needed to be able to prevent the negative impacts of a disaster from ruining and damaging development gains, he said. Effective monitoring mechanisms and systems needed to be put into place; however, not all countries were equipped to develop and establish those on their own.

To fill that gap, all development and humanitarian actors must be proactive in developing and strengthening capacity on prevention and preparedness at all levels. With regard to the challenges of vulnerability and working in high-risk environments, he stressed the need for balance between responding to events and reducing risks. Close engagement between United Nations operations and local communities was a key factor for a successful and safe mission. Partnerships between humanitarian and development actors were also needed to effectively address vulnerabilities faced by communities. Lastly, sufficient resources, particularly funding, remained essential.

CHRISTINE KALAMWINA, Director of Social, Legal and Governance, Gender in Development Division of Zambia, aligning with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said continuous emergency assistance was needed to save innocent lives. Her country supported humanitarian assistance which promoted a greater respect for and adherence to key principles. She reiterated the need to mainstream the gender perspective into humanitarian assistance in a comprehensive manner.

Zambia, like other developing countries, had been adversely impacted by natural disasters such as floods and droughts. Such disasters had led to high levels of poverty and vulnerability, she said. In partnerships with non-governmental organizations and others, Zambia had implemented several social-

protection programmes aimed at key vulnerable groups. Highlighting some of those programmes, she stressed the need for capacity-building. Developing countries still needed support for such efforts in order to effectively respond to natural disasters, thus capacity-building should also be extended to regional institutions that partnered with Member States.

PAULETTE BETHEL (Bahamas) said her country faced both man-made and natural hazards, and risk management and vulnerability reduction continued to be a high priority for the Government. A move from a shock-driven to a more needs-based response was a necessary evolution in the international humanitarian system, as it would allow for increased effectiveness “in an area so critically important to the lives of many around the world”.

Turning to the situation in Haiti, she said the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group, presented two days ago, could serve as a useful guide for the Council as well as for the entire international community. That report stressed the central and pivotal role the United Nations played and must continue to play in mobilizing international assistance for Haiti, including the earthquake-devastated country's recovery and reconstruction activities. She said it was important that the Haitian Government and people had ownership of the recovery and reconstruction process, and numerous non-governmental organizations seeking to help must craft their efforts accordingly.

She went on to say that stability and security were of crucial importance, and without that, social and economic progress would be stymied. A new hope in Haiti was not only possible, but was absolutely imperative at this juncture. All concerned stakeholders would have to coordinate their respective inputs, roles and resources so as to ensure that the opportunity was not squandered.

MOHAMMED LOULICHKI (Morocco), aligning with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the Group of 77 developing countries and China, said lessons learned in Haiti would help improve the international community's operational response system for natural disasters. He denounced and condemned acts of aggression against humanitarian works, as well as obstacles set up to impede them, while noting at the same time that all workers on the ground must disassociate themselves from political objectives. Global humanitarian needs had increased significantly in conflict situations, particularly in Africa. In that regard, Morocco agreed that the international response system must continue to manage specific events while considering vulnerabilities such as drought or the food crisis.

There was a need to ensure prevention, preparation, the analysis of vulnerabilities, and strengthened cooperation. The Central Emergency Response Fund and shared national financing funds had done well in responding to rising demands for humanitarian assistance, in spite of limited resources. Lauding the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' efforts to strengthen Government capacities, he said cooperation among key humanitarian actors had begun. National and local actors needed to be at the heart of such cooperation, he said, to ensure that responses were based on a needs-based model that was adaptable to local needs.

DOUGLAS E. MERCADO (United States) said that perhaps the greatest humanitarian challenge the world had faced this year had been the earthquake in Haiti. Progress had been made in providing assistance, but much more remained to be done. In the aftermath of the disaster, the international community must realize that in helping that country cope with and recover from the devastation, it would not be so much a question of resources, but of rethinking the way assistance was delivered. Innovative programmes must be designed to assist and then transform the country to strengthen Haiti's capacities to provide for itself, he said.

Moreover, similar efforts should be made to improve the broader humanitarian assistance system, he said, adding that such assistance “is only as strong as its leadership”. In disaster-prone countries, the United Nations should select experienced coordinators. Further, too many instances showed that the United Nations was slow to change gears from development efforts to emergency response. The inclusion of non-governmental organizations in a United Nations country team would also be helpful, and among moves that would strengthen response efforts. Creative and innovative solutions must be found to keep delivering emergency goods to those who needed them. Finally, he encouraged all agencies to be self-critical and to actively look for ways to improve their operations to reach those in need.

EDUARDO PORRETTI (Argentina), aligning with the statement made yesterday on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said the changing global situation required a new diagnosis of vulnerability before and in the immediate aftermath of natural disasters. It also required creativity to address needs, both in the first days after a crisis and beyond. The international community should promote debate on different modalities for financing, including the Central Emergency Response Fund, he said.

Continuing, he urged the international community to work to develop strategies to reduce vulnerability. To that end, working with civil society, non-governmental organizations and other institutions was vital, as was ensuring early preparedness and prevention on the local level. To effectively provide humanitarian assistance, personnel should not be subjected to obstacles which impeded them, he said, noting Argentina's full support of resolutions which call for their security on the ground.

MARÍA JOSÉ DEL ÁGUILA-CASTILLO (Guatemala), focusing on national experience, said her country had benefited from support during natural disasters in the last five years. Despite that, however, Guatemala had now become a contributor to the global effort to provide assistance to Haiti. The move from being a recipient to a donor was actually the basis of the humanitarian assistance system, she said.

SWEN DORNIG (Liechtenstein) said the growing number of deliberate attacks on humanitarian workers and the changing nature of warfare were making aid deliveries risky business. To address that, assistance in high-risk areas must be disassociated from political and military goals, and should be complemented by security management with sufficient resources.

With an estimated 27 million persons worldwide internally displaced due to armed conflicts, humanitarian operations in high-risk areas had often failed to address the unique vulnerabilities of women, children and men. Assistance to displaced populations should address links between gender-based violence and livelihoods in displacement settings. His country had hosted a panel discussion on the subject in cooperation with the Women's Refugee Commission. Another issue needing attention was the collection and use of firewood in humanitarian settings. He welcomed the endorsement of a set of multisectoral guidance tools by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, which would address the issues of safe access to appropriate cooking fuel at the onset of emergencies.

ABULKALAM ABDUL MOMEN (Bangladesh), said the world's population continued to face challenges in the form of armed conflicts and natural disasters. Acute and chronic vulnerabilities had been further augmented by climate change, which had adversely impacted specific developing countries. Given that, coordinated humanitarian responses were critical. Bangladesh had learned many best practices in responding to its own crises, and would be happy to share them through South-South or even North-South cooperation.

In terms of support, he hoped the international community would dedicate more resources to countries in the aftermath of disasters. Developing countries, particularly least developed countries, did not have adequate capacity or resources to address humanitarian needs alone. The increased incidence of natural disasters over the years had further limited capacities, and disasters such as cyclones had left many people internally displaced.

Continuing, he said that many countries were still working to rehabilitate certain areas that had been hit by disasters, while at the same time some of those areas were still inaccessible to humanitarian workers. In that regard, local governments played a primary role in first response during all crises, he said, stressing the importance of coordination. All actors concerned must have a good understanding of the socio-economic environment of each country. Assistance should be needs based rather than supply driven, and all humanitarian actors should strive to procure supplies locally, if available.

RANDHIR KUMAR JAISWAL (India) said the United Nations had a key role in emergency humanitarian assistance, while Member States had a primary responsibility for providing assistance in all emergencies. The Organization could assist in complementing and supplementing States' efforts. There was a need for more bilateral, regional and international cooperation to deal with disasters and to make effective use of capabilities. Greater cooperation was required not only in the emergency phase of reacting to disasters, but also in relief and rehabilitation, preparedness and in setting up and maintaining early warning systems.

He said OCHA should be strengthened, and the Central Emergency Response Fund should continue to represent the collective and shared interests that all Member States had in the humanitarian agenda. Disaster management had to be a holistic process. Prevention was better than a cure, he said, emphasizing that greater attention and resources to disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness.

India's management strategy was based on community-based disaster management, capacity development, consolidation of past initiatives and cooperation with agencies at national, regional and international levels, he said. The Indian Government put great emphasis on developing contemporary forecasting and early warning systems, as well as working with the media, non-governmental organizations and the private sector to generate awareness and capacity development.

KURIAKOSE BHARANIKULANGARA, Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See, while supporting national ownership in humanitarian activities, underlined that responsible sovereignty obliged public officials to ensure that assistance was delivered, irrespective of victims' social status, creed or ideology. Of concern were efforts to exploit humanitarian catastrophes for institutional or personal gain.

Responsible sovereignty involved facilitating the easy access of relief workers to affected regions, in line with international humanitarian law. Noting the magnitude of cash and "in kind" contributions flowing into Haiti, he said responsibly managing resources and preserving the credibility of the response would encourage donors and victims alike.

Underscoring the role of faith-based organizations, regional non-governmental organizations and civil society in humanitarian emergencies, he emphasized the importance of the social and spiritual strengthening of victims, with education meriting special attention. Refugees and internally displaced persons, among others, must be guaranteed security and protection, and locally based organizations needed support from humanitarian actors. Human rights violations, especially sexual abuse and gender-based violence, forced labour and recruitment of child soldiers, raised continued concern. Equally important was victim rehabilitation and their reintegration into education systems, families and labour markets. In closing, he underlined the urgency of strengthening the coordination of the United Nations emergency humanitarian assistance.

ELYSE MOSQUINI, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), said the crucial importance of effective and coordinated humanitarian action increased with the complexity of humanitarian needs, including those exacerbated by the global food, energy, financial and economic crises. To enhance coordination and strengthen response capacity, IFRC had developed a portfolio of tools from which the most applicable were chosen so that it could adapt to each particular humanitarian setting. Through engagement with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, IFRC continued to work with the United Nations and other humanitarian partners advancing common aims and building on individual and joint efforts.

Some of the best examples of coordination were those where a number of actors joined together to undertake complementary activities to address comprehensive needs, she said. For instance, a recent measles outbreak in a refugee camp in Cameroon had been tackled through an immunization campaign involving the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), WHO and the Chadian Red Cross. In three days, 13,000 children had been immunized and the outbreak was stopped.

That type of achievement should be matched by equal advances in disaster preparedness and risk reduction. The price of human suffering should be offset by investments in prevention, for a fraction of the cost. IFRC was also addressing legal preparedness, including integrating the Federation's own legal experts in United Nations disaster assessment and coordination preparedness missions to Peru, the Comoros and El Salvador. She reaffirmed the importance of a needs-based and vulnerability-led response to meet needs in an equitable manner, and welcomed the increased attention given to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

BERTRAND DE LOOZ KARAGEORGIADES, Office of the Permanent Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, said the Order would continue to help the ill, poor and disenfranchised. Several of its members were experienced in various fields, which made the Order a network of humanitarian assistance which was always ready for action. The Secretary-General's report would be a starting point for all the Order's activities, he said. Moreover, the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence would be at the heart of those activities.

The Sovereign Order was also focused on improving existing national and local capacities for emergency humanitarian response. Its international arm had been very involved in educating people with disabilities, and a partner non-governmental organization had worked to reintegrate over 3,000 sexually abused street children. The Order, having played a key role in Haiti for several years, paid particular attention to ensuring that funds were allocated for access programmes for vulnerable groups. To that end, the Grand Master had 40 national branches to consider gender equality as a priority, he said.

AMY MUEDIN, Office of the Permanent Observer for the International Organization of Migration (IOM), said collaboration and coordination were most relevant for her organization's work in situations of population displacement and sudden population movements. The issue of internal displacement required many organizations working on different levels, collaborating to meet the protection, assistance and recovery needs of internally displaced persons. She went on to note that the magnitude of challenges in Haiti had revealed the necessary adjustments and improvements needed to best respond to emergency and recovery needs — particularly the need to better incorporate multidimensional and cross-cutting issues into the humanitarian response.

Inter-cluster coordination and strong humanitarian leadership were key areas for improvement to ensure that the cluster system achieved its full potential, she stressed. In addition, standard procedures for rapid recruitment of staff and administrative procedures for procurement and logistical support could be further improved to the effectiveness and timeliness of humanitarian responses. Highlighting some of her organization's global responsibilities, she noted that climate change had emphasized the need for needs-based and vulnerability-led responses. Developing countries were extremely vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, therefore relevant national and regional policies and strategies should take environmental migration into consideration.

UFUK GOKCEN, Permanent Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), said that in emergency response activities, special attention should be paid to refugees and internally displaced persons. IOC had entered the humanitarian assistance domain in 2005 and its mandate to that end emphasized the importance of economic development in its planning.

OIC-led initiatives had already begun in Iraq, Afghanistan, Gaza and other areas. Resources had helped to establish a development bank in Darfur, and assistance to Gaza was a coordinated effort involving several actors. Gaza needed continued assistance, he said. A \$100 million programme in Gaza focused on rapid recovery in daily life. OIC was now interested in establishing an emergency response fund to assist those in need.

IVANA MILOVANOVIC, the World Health Organization (WHO), said that, from a health perspective, trends in humanitarian assistance included an increasingly ageing population and the "silent emergency" of non-communicable diseases, including cancers, strokes and diabetes. Strengthening coordination of humanitarian assistance was of critical importance to all players working in the emergencies field.

Continuing, she said that, time and again, it was notable how the generosity and willingness of multiple humanitarian actors contributing to emergency responses could, in fact, hinder or complicate health relief activities. Haiti was a case in point, where up to 600 entities at any one time were working under the health cluster banner following the earthquake last January. That underscored the critical need for coordination in the health sector in order to save lives, she said.

Better coordination and preparedness could improve the use of resources and efforts towards disaster risk reduction. WHO was, among other things, building inter-agency rosters of coordinators, information and communication officers, and investing in and contributing to building the capacity of its partners. "We are determined to keep reaching out to the development areas to build bridges, find synergies and build long-term solutions into our response and recovery work," she said.

AKHIL IYER, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), said that, amid the suffering and deprivation of women and children caused by natural disasters worldwide, the recent earthquake in Haiti had taught humanitarian agencies many valuable lessons, among them the resourcefulness of people affected by crisis. The challenges of humanitarian action during times of crisis were distinct from those

witnessed in development contexts.

To attain the goal of reaching those in need, wherever they were, agencies must conduct careful analysis of risks and diversify strategies to reduce them, including, among other things, by engaging with communities to obtain acceptance and strengthening national institutions that could uphold rights. He said that efforts must be redoubled to ensure that children and women had access to humanitarian aid during emergencies. Empowering women to be full actors in their own development was critical to realizing equitable sustainable development, the Millennium Development Goals and quality humanitarian response.

Both in humanitarian action and development, preparedness and risk reduction should be at the core of efforts, he continued. Organizations must get much better at identifying, assessing and reducing disaster risk, which aimed to break the vicious cycle of chronic vulnerability. National capacity development was a fundamental strategy for ensuring wide coverage in basic services, but agencies must improve on capitalizing on national expertise and strengthening existing national structures rather than initiating new ones to sustain humanitarian efforts.

While none of those issues was new to the discussions, they were all vividly illustrated during the ongoing response to Haiti's earthquake. Examples abounded of things that could have been done better. Mobilization had been insufficient and efforts had not translated into real change. So many Haitians and their international partners knew about the country's extreme vulnerabilities, but it seemed there was never enough time to plant trees to reduce erosion, move houses away from fault lines and develop building codes. Six months after the earthquake, lessons from that horrible event should be used to improve prevention and response efforts to humanitarian crises so words could be put into action.

UDO JANZ, Director of the New York Office of UNHCR, said that, given the increasingly dangerous conditions facing humanitarian workers, four main areas for action had been identified. Operations management could be improved through increased support for national and local capacities, including partners familiar with, among other things, geography and socio-political context. Staffing of high-risk operations could be improved by putting greater emphasis on political analysis, communications and the negotiation and language skills of staff.

Further, security of staff and beneficiaries could be improved in its "soft" aspects, for example information gathering and processing. Communications strategies could also be developed through building a closer relationship with host populations. He said that to meet humanitarian challenges in urban areas, UNHCR's new policy called on States, municipal authorities, civil society and humanitarian partners to join forces to protect and assist such populations. The policy had been subject of a thematic session during the agency's annual non-governmental organization consultations two weeks ago. UNHCR continued to support the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee task force on meeting humanitarian challenges in urban areas.

Promoting gender equality at all levels was essential in addressing humanitarian challenges, he said. UNHCR had invested in building awareness and capacity of its own staff and tried to achieve gender equality in decision-making processes. He said partnerships were important in addressing any humanitarian emergency and remained the fundamental element of UNHCR's modus operandi. Discussions in the annual consultations with civil society confirmed the key role played by local partners in leading responses to emergencies.

BORIS FALATAR, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), said that, last week, the General Assembly had adopted a landmark resolution on the right to education in emergency situations. The resolution illustrated that conflicts and natural disasters were one of the biggest roadblocks to reaching the internationally agreed education targets.

He said that while UNESCO's role remained clearly distinct from major humanitarian procurement agencies of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Member States had been increasingly turning to it for specialized interventions to address critical gaps during the humanitarian phase of post-conflict and post-natural disaster responses. As seen in recent emergencies, the humanitarian assistance "hardware" needed to be accompanied by appropriate "software", only then would the humanitarian response produce an effective and lasting positive impact.

Working through extrabudgetary support in some 25 post-crisis settings, UNESCO was also active in the area of communication, supporting development of community and public broadcast media and independent and pluralistic media. In addition, projects included fresh-water resource management, conflict resolution and capacity-building for early-warning systems, he said.

All UNESCO interventions were designed to be complementary to the vital work of the major humanitarian response agencies, and aligned to longer-term national development strategies. For organizations like UNESCO, the continued strengthening of humanitarian coordination mechanisms was absolutely essential. He fully supported the main humanitarian actors, donors and Member States advancing a holistic approach to humanitarian response that addressed education and other relevant and essential gaps.

Action on Draft

The Economic and Social Council then adopted by consensus a draft resolution on the Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (document E/2010/L.15).

Closing Remarks

Mr. HOLMES, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, said the earlier panel discussion on operating in high-risk environments had looked at lessons learned, discussed threats posed to humanitarian operations and highlighted measures humanitarians could take to mitigate challenges. However, it was clear that all humanitarian efforts required the support of Member States and host Governments. “Member States can support humanitarian operations by adhering to and promoting the adherence to the humanitarian principles [...] and, of course, by providing security themselves, as is their primary responsibility,” he said.

States could also support humanitarians by recognizing the importance of dialogue with all relevant stakeholders and helping as donors by providing predictable and long-term resources for the safety and security of humanitarian operations. Humanitarian assistance did not pose a significant challenge to national sovereignty and territorial integrity, he said, noting that humanitarians must not and could not challenge those “fundamental building blocks of the international community”.

Discussions during the Council's humanitarian affairs segment clearly highlighted that humanitarian crises and needs were constantly evolving. Governments and development actors must, with the same urgency, address root causes and structural issues, as challenges currently faced went far beyond the capacities, capabilities and mandates of humanitarian organizations. Growth and poverty alleviation were not sustainable without integrating vulnerability and risk management into longer-term national development programmes, he said. Further, many agreed that focus must be given to capacity-building for prevention, preparedness and response at the local, national and regional levels.

With regard to the general debate and side events that had taken place during the segment, he was encouraged that Member States had acknowledged the importance of efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance. They had also recognized the need to strengthen the cluster approach and humanitarian leadership on the ground, and to improve humanitarian needs assessment by taking into account gender and age disaggregated data. He also welcomed Member States' emphasis on the need for international humanitarian assistance coordination, noting that those specific issues had been discussed in detail within the various side events.

Turning to the issue of funding, he said adequate resources were “absolutely fundamental” in order to provide adequate responses. Humanitarian funding requirements had increased by \$1.5 billion since the beginning of the year, bringing the total 2010 target to \$9.5 billion. Donors' response to appeals for funding in 2009 was the best ever, at \$4.6 billion, constituting 49 per cent of requirements. Despite that positive response, unmet humanitarian requirements were also at their highest levels — around \$4.8 billion.

In that regard, he urged States to maintain their generosity and asked donors to consider appeals in an integrated way to ensure more funding between the clusters. The Central Emergency Response

Fund, while not itself a “donor”, but a pooled fund of contributions, aimed to practice optimal donor behaviour by examining funding levels among crises and sectors within them.

Lastly, he commended Member States for achieving consensus on the draft resolution. The text, he said, reaffirmed the importance of access and humanitarian principles, and acknowledged the importance of effective emergency rules and procedures. Noting that the draft text did not put in action any of this year’s Council themes, he called for efforts to help provide more normative guidance to United Nations humanitarian organizations and staff working in dangerous environments. “If we send our colleagues and staff to such places, they deserve full support from Member States,” he stressed.

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