In 2007, the United Nations, through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), continued to mobilize and coordinate humanitarian assistance in response to international emergencies. During the year, consolidated and flash appeals were launched for Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, the Great Lakes Region, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Pakistan, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Peru, Somalia, the Sudan, Swaziland, Timor-Leste, Uganda, the West Africa subregion, Zambia and Zimbabwe. OCHA received contributions for natural disaster assistance totalling $821.3 million.

The Ad Hoc Advisory Groups on Guinea-Bissau and Haiti continued to develop long-term programmes of support for those countries. To promote progress, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau invited the Economic and Social Council to consider placing the country on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Efforts continued to implement the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, the 10-year plan for reducing disaster risks adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005. In line with the Framework, activities were undertaken to strengthen the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, established as the successor to the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction, held its first session in June, and in September the Secretary-General issued a report on the global survey of early warning systems. Further progress was also made in the development and implementation of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System.

During the year, the Economic and Social Council considered ways to strengthen UN humanitarian assistance coordination by implementing improved humanitarian response at all levels, with particular attention to recent humanitarian emergencies. Implementation of the humanitarian reform agenda advanced, with the Humanitarian Reform Support Unit providing support to humanitarian coordinators, field teams and agencies. An evaluation of the “cluster leadership approach” identified the achievements gained and challenges faced in its implementation. The Central Emergency Response Fund continued to allow for the rapid provision of assistance to populations affected by sudden-onset disasters and underfunded emergencies.

International efforts to address the consequences of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident and promote recovery of the disaster continued. In February, Russian tennis player Maria Sharapova, whose family had roots in Belarus, one of the Chernobyl-affected countries, was appointed as a United Nations Development Programme Goodwill Ambassador.

Humanitarian assistance

Coordination

Humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council

The humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council (16-17 July) [A/62/3/Rev.1] considered, in accordance with Council decision 2007/211 of 25 March, the strengthening of the coordination of UN humanitarian assistance through enhancing the effectiveness of needs-based humanitarian assistance. It also convened panels on the use of military assets in natural disaster relief and on needs-based humanitarian financing, including the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) (see p. 918). On 26 April, the Council decided to hold an informal event on 13 July to discuss relief to development (decision 2007/214).

The Council considered the Secretary-General’s May report [A/62/87-E/2007/70] on strengthening the coordination of UN emergency humanitarian assistance, submitted in response to General Assembly resolutions 46/182 [YUN 1991, p. 421] and 61/34 [YUN 2006, p. 1058], and Council resolution 2006/5 [ibid., p. 1055]. The report summarized humanitarian developments and challenges, particularly capacity gaps experienced in complex emergencies and disasters over the preceding year; reviewed initiatives to improve the humanitarian system; and addressed the themes of the Council’s humanitarian affairs segment (see above).

The reporting period was marked by positive developments in several long-standing emergencies, such as the successful elections in the Democratic Republic.
of the Congo in 2006 [YUN 2006, p. 134], peace talks between the Lord’s Resistance Army and the Government of Uganda (see p. 159) and the 2006 truce between the Government and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) [YUN 2006, p. 450], which encouraged hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons to return to their homes. The same period, however, witnessed the continuation and, in some cases, the further aggravation of existing emergencies. Attacks against civilians in Darfur, fighting between militias and Government forces in Somalia and renewed fighting in Sri Lanka led to the displacement of some 950,000 persons. Conflicts continued to affect populations throughout the Middle East, with the civilian death toll in Iraq averaging more than 100 per day and an estimated 8 million civilians in need of humanitarian assistance. Worldwide, some 4 million people were forced to flee their homes in 2006. Meanwhile, the incidence and severity of natural disasters continued to rise at a steady rate. Some 426 disasters affected 143 million people and resulted in $34.6 billion in economic damages during 2006, which was an increase over the 400 disasters recorded in 2005 and well above the five-year average of 386. Geological hazards such as earthquakes and tsunamis remained the deadliest natural disasters, while hydrometeorological hazards (typhoons, tropical storms, floods) inflicted more than $2.1 billion in economic losses.

While the humanitarian system was able to step up relief efforts to areas where access was previously restricted due to violence, aid workers continued to face problems reaching vulnerable populations and were increasingly becoming the targets of deliberate attacks. That, in turn, forced many organizations to cease operations or obliged them to withdraw. The report highlighted the need for Governments to take necessary steps to protect humanitarian personnel working within their borders, including by publicly acknowledging their impartiality and positive services to vulnerable groups and by prosecuting the perpetrators of criminal acts against them. Other challenges included the spread of humanitarian emergencies across international borders, further complicating the delivery of assistance, as well as the rising impact of natural disasters, which was due to a real increase in natural events and to increased population exposure and vulnerability to the destructive effects of disasters. Climate change, rapid and unplanned urbanization, rising population density, displacement and HIV prevalence contributed to that trend. The need for the international community to work towards a disaster management approach that tackled the interconnectedness of threats and vulnerabilities was emphasized, as was the need to contain natural hazards, reduce exposure to them and make preparedness and early warning priorities within national, international and regional disaster management schemes.

The report examined the working methods of the humanitarian system, such as the cluster approach [YUN 2006, p. 1054], which entailed humanitarian clusters or groups of humanitarian organizations and other stakeholders working together to address gaps in response and enhance the quality and coherence of humanitarian action. At the global level, the cluster approach was being implemented by 11 cluster working groups, each led by an appropriate organization, and at the field level the approach had been used in more than 10 countries. Efforts by the working groups to pool expertise, agree on common response standards and tools, and develop cluster-specific training programmes and emergency rosters led to greater sharing of best practices, enhanced contingency planning and concrete improvements in field response, as well as improved partnerships at the field level. Other benefits of the approach included enhanced interface with national and local authorities, greater predictability and accountability in the provision of humanitarian relief and clearer understanding of roles and responsibilities among international humanitarian organizations. In order to increase its effectiveness, the cluster approach would require strengthened accountability and expertise, improved working arrangements and streamlined tools to integrate gender, HIV/AIDS and the environment into the overall response. An external evaluation of the clusters was under way to determine cluster performance and the capacity to deliver more timely, predictable and effective humanitarian relief to populations in need. More work was also needed to inform local, national and regional authorities about the operations and potential benefits of the cluster approach. The report also discussed the strengthening of the humanitarian coordination system; the use of foreign military assets in natural disaster relief; the broadening of humanitarian partnerships; the effective use of humanitarian resources; and needs-based humanitarian financing, including consolidated and flash appeals, agency emergency funds and pooled funding mechanisms, such as CERF. Other challenges related to complementarity among humanitarian funding mechanisms; needs-driven assistance and the quality of data and analysis; streamlining management practices and administrative actions; participation of non-UN actors; and timeliness and additionality.

The Secretary-General observed that the incidence and severity of natural disasters might increase due to climate change and vulnerability linked to population growth, urbanization, desertification and environmental degradation. In addition, weak governance, armed conflict, political, religious and ethnic tensions, competition over scarce natural resources and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS would further compound the impact of such disasters. As the demands on the humanitarian system grew, UN humanitarian agencies, the International Red Cross and Red
Crescent Movement, the International Organization for Migration and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) might find it difficult to respond adequately. In order to address humanitarian vulnerability more effectively, it was critical to better define needs, establish partnerships, and create capacities within national and local governments, regional organizations and civil groups. In particular, Member States should: ensure that humanitarian agencies were given the space, access and security to provide life-saving assistance to those in need; engage with and build the capacity of regional organizations; support regional responses; prepare and update disaster preparedness plans; strengthen humanitarian standby arrangements; integrate guidelines on the use of military and civilian defence assets for natural disasters into preparedness plans; and increase multi-year contributions to CERF and other pooled funds and humanitarian funding mechanisms. UN humanitarian agencies should improve the accuracy of data on beneficiaries, needs and performance by agreeing on commonly accepted definitions, indicators and methodologies for data collection, needs assessments and standards for information management systems. Timely and accurate information on contributions and uses of humanitarian funds should be provided through the financial tracking service.

**Reports of Secretary-General.** The Council also had before it the reports of the Secretary-General on the Central Emergency Response Fund [A/62/72-E/2007/73] (see p. 918) and on strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster [A/62/83-E/2007/67] (see p. 952).

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION**

On 17 July [meeting 34], the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2007/3 [draft: E/2007/L.15, orally revised] without vote [agenda item 5].

**Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations**

The Economic and Social Council,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto, and recalling other relevant Assembly resolutions and relevant resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Council,

Welcoming the decision to consider the theme “Strengthening the coordination of United Nations humanitarian assistance through enhancing the effectiveness of needs-based humanitarian assistance” at the humanitarian affairs segment of its substantive session of 2007,

Welcoming also the decision to hold panels on the use of military assets in natural disaster relief and on needs-based humanitarian financing, including the Central Emergency Response Fund,

Expressing grave concern about the increase in the number of people affected and the growing economic losses caused by humanitarian emergencies, including natural disasters,

Recognizing the clear relationship between emergency relief, rehabilitation and development, and reaffirming that, in order to ensure a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and development, emergency assistance must be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development, and that emergency measures should be seen as a step towards long-term development,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General;

2. Also takes note of the reports of the Secretary-General on the Central Emergency Response Fund and on strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster;

3. Further takes note of the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, entitled “Towards a United Nations humanitarian assistance programme for disaster response and reduction: lessons learned from the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster”, and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination thereon;

4. Encourages national Governments to create an enabling environment for the capacity-building of local authorities and local and national non-governmental and community-based organizations, and also encourages the relevant entities of the United Nations system and other relevant institutions and organizations to support national authorities in their capacity-building programmes designed to enhance the participation and contribution of local authorities and local and national non-governmental and community-based organizations, including through technical cooperation and long-term partnerships based on the recognition of their important role in providing humanitarian assistance;

5. Stresses that the United Nations system should make efforts to enhance existing humanitarian capacities, knowledge and institutions, including, as appropriate, through the transfer of technology and expertise to developing countries;

6. Notes the efforts by the United Nations system to further enhance the coordination of its emergency humanitarian assistance;

7. Recognizes the importance of involving, as appropriate, relevant entities, including non-governmental and community-based organizations, that provide humanitarian assistance in national and local coordination efforts, and invites those entities to participate in the improvement of humanitarian assistance, as appropriate;

8. Requests the relevant United Nations organizations to continue to engage systematically with relevant authorities and organizations at the regional and national levels to prepare for and respond to humanitarian emergencies, and invites Member States to support, as appropriate, these efforts;

9. Urges Member States to prepare and update disaster preparedness plans at all levels and to conduct regular disaster preparedness exercises in accordance with priority 5 of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, as appropriate and taking into account their own circumstances and capacities, and encourages the international
community and relevant United Nations entities, within their respective mandates, to support, upon request, national efforts in this regard;

10. Notes the establishment of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, a partnership of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system to support the Hyogo Framework for Action;

11. Invites Member States to work with relevant United Nations organizations to strengthen humanitarian standby capacities, in particular in the area of disaster relief, including, where appropriate, by participating in humanitarian response networks, by contributing to and maintaining the standby directories of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities and by facilitating standby arrangements with the private sector;

12. Requests the Secretary-General to review and report on, in consultation with Member States, the use of military assets for disaster relief, with the aim of improving the predictability and use of these assets, based on humanitarian principles;

13. Also requests the Secretary-General to provide an update on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee review of its 1999 policy statement on the integration of a gender perspective into humanitarian assistance and to report on steps taken in this regard;

14. Stresses the importance of a coordinated process of assessing lessons learned in the international response to a given humanitarian emergency;

15. Requests relevant United Nations organizations, in consultation with Member States, to coordinate and strengthen needs assessments and improve data on beneficiaries by agreeing on common definitions, indicators, information management mechanisms and consistent methodologies for data collection;

16. Requests the Secretary-General to encourage the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to continue to identify and use, as appropriate and available, local resources and expertise from within the affected country and/or its neighbours in response to humanitarian needs;

17. Welcomes the continued efforts to strengthen the humanitarian response capacity and the progress made in strengthening support to resident/humanitarian coordinators, including by improving their identification, selection and training, to provide a timely, predictable and appropriate response to humanitarian needs and to strengthen United Nations coordination activities at the field level, and requests the Secretary-General to continue efforts in this regard, in consultation with Member States;

18. Encourages Member States, relevant humanitarian organizations and non-governmental organizations to provide timely and accurate information on contributions and the use of humanitarian funds through the financial tracking service, and requests the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to continue to improve the analysis and reporting of comprehensive financial information through the financial tracking service;

19. Invites Member States to make contributions to humanitarian funding mechanisms, including consolidated and flash appeals, the Central Emergency Response Fund and other funds, recognizing the importance of providing humanitarian assistance in a manner that is flexible, predictable and, where possible, on a multi-year basis and with additional funding, taking note of chronically under-funded emergencies;

20. Requests the Secretary-General to reflect the progress made in the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution in his next report to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

**Humanitarian reform agenda**

During 2007, progress was made in implementing the humanitarian reform agenda initiated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (iasc) in 2005, following the review of the humanitarian response system commissioned by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator [YUN 2005, p. 991]. OCHA intensified its efforts to strengthen the international humanitarian architecture based on the four core principles of partnership, leadership, accountability and predictability. In that connection, activities focused on improving accountability, predictability and capacity of response; enhancing the leadership of humanitarian coordinators, resident coordinators and cluster leads; establishing equal partnerships; and ensuring needs-based, predictable and timely humanitarian financing partnerships. OCHA supported the Global Humanitarian Platform process to develop and endorse the “Principles of Partnership”, to create a more balanced relationship between the UN system, NGOs and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The Humanitarian Coordination Strengthening Project was established to support humanitarian and resident coordinators in disaster-prone countries, which included the development and adoption of a three-year work plan by the iasc Humanitarian Coordinator Group and the standardization of the induction process for newly appointed humanitarian coordinators. The Humanitarian Reform Support Unit, established in 2006 [YUN 2006, p. 1057], led an inter-agency task force to design and deliver a cluster/sector lead training programme and launched a humanitarian reform website. On strengthening accountability, iasc and OCHA launched a one-year trial pilot project involving real-time evaluations of the effectiveness of humanitarian response to emergencies. The tool was designed to enable humanitarian workers to adjust their response to ensure that the immediate needs of beneficiaries were met. OCHA facilitated an evaluation of the global cluster approach (see p. 915) and a review of cerf (see p. 918). In order to ensure a more predictable response, OCHA continued to support system-wide efforts to provide emergency response in a timely, comprehensive and adequate manner, regardless of the nature and severity of the crisis. The Office maintained support for global clusters by facilitating the development of a global appeal and a performance
management framework. In addition, the profiling and fine-tuning of emergency rosters allowed OCHA to boost system-wide capacity and expertise. OCHA also bolstered its efforts to secure adequate and predictable funding for humanitarian activities in advance of requirements.

**Global Cluster Approach Evaluation.** Following the 2005 Humanitarian Response Review [YUN 2005, p. 991], IASC designated humanitarian partners and groups of humanitarian organizations and other stakeholders as “global cluster leads” to address capacity and response gaps and established the “cluster leadership approach” as a mechanism to improve humanitarian response effectiveness and to strengthen partnerships between the private sector, NGOs, international organizations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and UN agencies [YUN 2006, p. 1057]. The Committee also requested an evaluation of the cluster approach after two years, which was scheduled to move forward in two phases. The first phase took place under the terms of reference issued in April 2007, while the second phase would be commissioned in 2008, based on separate terms of reference.

A November evaluation submitted by an independent joint research team concluded that the cluster approach had improved efforts to identify and address gaps within sectoral programming in humanitarian response in the field; fostered stronger and more predictable leadership over sectors; improved preparedness and surge capacity in the field; marginally improved partnerships with international NGOs; and improved prioritization of response and strategic planning at the level of consolidated appeals processes and common humanitarian action plans. However, challenges were identified, such as the lack of an observable increase in ultimate accountability and the lack of significant gains in partnerships with local NGOs. Individual cluster performance at the global and field levels was varied; engagement of host States was mixed and suffered from insufficient emphasis and strategic focus; and the global cluster approach system had yet to face the test of concurrent, large-scale emergencies. Overall, the evaluation suggested that the approach should be continued and expanded to other countries. A series of recommendations were made to be undertaken by cluster lead agencies, IASC principals, OCHA, cluster lead agencies at the field level, donors, international NGOs and UN system agencies. Leadership was emphasized as an area requiring critical attention.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 17 December [meeting 74], the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/94 [draft: A/62/L.37 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 71 (a)].

**Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations**

The General Assembly,

**Reaffirming** its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and the guiding principles contained in the annex thereto, other relevant General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and agreed conclusions of the Council,

**Taking note** of the reports of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations and on the Central Emergency Response Fund,

**Reaffirming** the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

**Noting with grave concern** the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact within recent years, and reaffirming the importance of implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, including by providing adequate resources for disaster risk reduction, including disaster preparedness,

**Recognizing** that building national and local preparedness and response capacity is critical to a more predictable and effective response,

**Emphasizing** the need to mobilize adequate, predictable, timely and flexible resources for humanitarian assistance based on and in proportion to assessed needs, with a view to ensuring fuller coverage of the needs in all sectors and across humanitarian emergencies,

**Noting with grave concern** that violence, including gender-based violence and violence against children, continues to be deliberately directed against civilian populations in many emergency situations,

**Reiterating** the need for Member States, relevant United Nations organizations and other relevant actors to mainstream a gender perspective into humanitarian assistance, including by addressing the specific needs of men, women, boys and girls in a comprehensive and consistent manner,

**Reaffirming** the need for all humanitarian personnel, United Nations and associated personnel and non-governmental organizations to maintain transparency and to act in a manner that is in accordance with the principles for the provision of humanitarian assistance and with their obligations under relevant provisions of international law and national laws, and to remain sensitive to local customs and traditions in the countries of their assignment,

**Noting with appreciation** the efforts made by the United Nations to improve humanitarian response, including by strengthening humanitarian response capacities, by improving humanitarian coordination and by enhancing predictable and adequate funding,

**Recognizing** that in the improvement of the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the field, United Nations organizations should work in close coordination with national Governments,

1. **Takes note with appreciation** of the outcome of the tenth humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2007;

2. **Requests** the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue his efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance, and calls upon relevant United Nations
and other relevant intergovernmental organizations, as well as other humanitarian and relevant development actors, to continue to work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to enhance the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance;

3. Recognizes the benefits of engagement of and coordination with relevant humanitarian actors to the effectiveness of humanitarian response, and encourages the United Nations to continue to pursue efforts to strengthen partnerships at the global level with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, relevant humanitarian non-governmental organizations and other participants of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee;

4. Calls upon the relevant organizations of the United Nations system and, as appropriate, other relevant humanitarian actors, to pursue efforts to improve the humanitarian response to natural and man-made disasters and complex emergencies by further strengthening the humanitarian response capacities at all levels, by continuing to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance at the field level, including with national authorities of the affected State, as appropriate, and by further enhancing transparency, performance and accountability;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to strengthen the support provided to United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators and to United Nations country teams, including through the provision of necessary training, the identification of resources and by improving the identification and selection of United Nations resident/humanitarian coordinators;

6. Emphasizes the fundamentally civilian character of humanitarian assistance, reaffirms the leading role of civilian organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance, particularly in areas affected by conflicts, and affirms the need, in situations where military capacity and assets are used to support the implementation of humanitarian assistance, for their use to be in conformity with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles;

7. Recalls the request made by the Economic and Social Council in paragraph 12 of its resolution 2007/3 of 17 July 2007 that the Secretary-General review and report on, in consultation with Member States, the use of military assets for disaster relief, with the aim of improving the predictability and use of these assets, based on humanitarian principles;

8. Encourages relevant United Nations organizations to strengthen the coordination and collaboration between development and humanitarian entities, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in integrating disaster risk reduction into their activities;

9. Reaffirms the importance of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, welcomes the first meeting, in June 2007, of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, and calls upon the international community to increase resources to reduce the risks of disasters associated with natural hazards, including by supporting early warning systems, as appropriate;

10. Encourages the international community to support efforts of Member States aimed at strengthening their capacity to prepare for and respond to disasters;

11. Encourages relevant United Nations organizations to support the efforts of Member States, as appropriate, to strengthen systems for identifying and monitoring disaster risk, including vulnerability and natural hazards;

12. Encourages States to create an enabling environment for the capacity-building of local authorities and national and local non-governmental and community-based organizations in providing humanitarian assistance;

13. Calls upon relevant United Nations organizations to support the improvements of the consolidated appeals process, inter alia, by engaging in the preparation of needs analysis and common action plans, in order to further the development of the process as an instrument for United Nations strategic planning and prioritization, and by involving other relevant humanitarian organizations in the process, while reiterating that consolidated appeals are prepared in consultation with affected States;

14. Calls upon United Nations humanitarian organizations, in consultation with Member States, as appropriate, to strengthen the evidence base for humanitarian assistance by further developing common mechanisms to improve the quality, transparency and reliability of humanitarian needs assessments, to assess their performance in assistance and to ensure the most effective use of humanitarian resources by these organizations;

15. Calls upon donors to provide adequate, timely, predictable and flexible resources based on and in proportion to assessed needs, including for under-funded emergencies, and encourages efforts to adhere to the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship;

16. Welcomes the progress made by the Secretary-General in setting up appropriate monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms for the Central Emergency Response Fund, stresses the importance of continuing to ensure that the resources are allocated and used in the most efficient, effective and transparent manner possible, and looks forward to the independent review of the Fund in 2008;

17. Reaffirms the target of 500 million United States dollars by 2008, urges all Member States and invites the private sector and all concerned individuals and institutions to consider making voluntary contributions to the Central Emergency Response Fund, and emphasizes that contributions should be additional to current commitments to humanitarian programming and to resources made available for international development cooperation;

18. Reiterates that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs should benefit from adequate and more predictable funding;

19. Reaffirms the obligation of all States and parties to an armed conflict to protect civilians in armed conflicts in accordance with international humanitarian law, and invites States to promote a culture of protection, taking into account the particular needs of women, children, older persons and persons with disabilities;

20. Calls upon States to adopt preventive measures and effective responses to acts of violence committed against civilian populations in armed conflicts as well as to ensure that those responsible are promptly brought to justice, as provided for by national law and obligations under international law;

21. Urges all Member States to take effective measures to address gender-based violence in humanitarian emergen-
cies, and to make all possible efforts to ensure that their laws and institutions are adequate to prevent, promptly investigate and prosecute acts of gender-based violence;

22. Calls upon all Member States, and encourages the relevant organizations of the United Nations to strengthen support services, including psychosocial support, to victims of gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies;

23. Recognizes the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement as an important international framework for the protection of internally displaced persons, encourages Member States and humanitarian agencies to continue to work together in endeavours to provide a more predictable response to the needs of internally displaced persons, and in this regard calls for international support, upon request, to capacity-building efforts of States;

24. Calls upon all States and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies, in particular in armed conflict and in post-conflict situations, in countries in which humanitarian personnel are operating, in conformity with the relevant provisions of international law and national laws, to cooperate fully with the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies and organizations and to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel as well as delivery of supplies and equipment in order to allow them to perform efficiently their task of assisting the affected civilian population, including refugees and internally displaced persons;

25. Re-emphasizes the importance of the discussion of humanitarian policies and activities in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and that these discussions should be continuously revitalized by Member States with a view to enhancing their relevance, efficiency and impact;

26. Encourages Member States to continue to strengthen cooperation and coordination between the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on humanitarian issues, based on their respective mandates and taking into account comparative advantages and existing complementarities of the two bodies;

27. Requests the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2008, on progress made in strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations and to submit a report to the Assembly on the independent review of the Central Emergency Response Fund in 2008.

High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence

The Secretary-General, in an April report [A/61/836] on the recommendations contained in the report of the High-level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment, entitled “Delivering as one” [YUN 2006, p. 1584], signalled his broad support for the Panel’s recommendations and said that the report merited the inclusion of other policymakers and actors in the discussion to build deeper understanding and ownership of the proposals, and said that the report should be considered within the context of ongoing reform processes.

The Secretary-General cited progress achieved with regard to the Panel’s recommendations, including the initiation by the United Nations Development Group of eight pilot programmes in which the principles of the ‘One United Nations’ approach, as advocated by the Panel, would be applied and tested in different countries. An analysis of the results and experiences would be presented to the relevant governing bodies at the end of the year. In developing the approach, he urged that consideration be given to, among other issues, the concept of national ownership, the authority and accountability of the UN resident coordinator, and the role of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as manager of the resident coordinator system on the one hand and its programmatic role on the other. Progress was also made with regard to humanitarian assistance. On food security, advanced discussions among the Rome-based UN agencies had taken place, with a view to developing proposals for consideration by the relevant intergovernmental bodies. More needed to be done, however, to strengthen the Organization’s role as a coordinator in terms of enhancing partnerships and its capacities to deal with the transition phase from relief to development. In addition, more investment was required in risk reduction and early warning, building on existing international initiatives to help mitigate or prevent natural disasters.

The Secretary-General concluded that more detailed and specific proposals for further streamlining required a more in-depth technical analysis than was feasible in the time frame available to the Panel. In that connection, he would consider the establishment of an independent task force to further eliminate duplication within the UN system. He also requested the Deputy Secretary-General to oversee and support implementation of the system-wide coherence reform agenda.

UN and other humanitarian personnel

In response to General Assembly resolution 61/133 [YUN 2006, p. 1684], the Secretary-General, in a September report [A/62/324 & Corr.1], highlighted the challenges and threats to the safety and security of humanitarian and UN personnel over the preceding year and ongoing measures to ensure respect for their human rights, privileges and immunities according to relevant international instruments. He indicated that locally recruited UN staff continued to face increased security threats and, in certain cases, had become victims of abuse, harassment and unlawful detention. He
also expressed concern about the trends of unabated targeting of humanitarian workers in hostage incidents and deliberate threats against UN personnel in conflict areas, particularly in areas of UN peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations.

The Assembly, in resolution 62/95 of 17 December, called on Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel (see p. 1504).

Resource mobilization

Central Emergency Response Fund

In 2007, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), formerly known as the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (YUN 2006, p. 1061), a cash-flow mechanism for the initial phase of humanitarian emergencies established in 1992 (YUN 1992, p. 584), continued to allow for the rapid provision of assistance to populations affected by sudden-onset disasters and under-funded emergencies. The Fund was upgraded by General Assembly resolution 60/124 (YUN 2005, p. 991) to include a grant element, targeted at $450 million, to ensure the availability of immediate resources to address humanitarian crises. The loan element of the Fund continued to operate as a distinct and separately managed revolving fund with a target of $50 million. The 12-member CERF Advisory Group established to provide to the Secretary-General policy guidance and expert advice on the use and impact of the Fund met in May and October. In 2007, donors contributed $385.1 million to the Fund and, as at 31 December, $350.9 million in CERF funds had been allocated to 54 countries and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In addition, by early December some $420 million had already been secured towards the $450 million grant facility target for 2008.

Report of Secretary-General. In his June report on CERF [A/62/72-E/2007/73], which covered the period from the Fund’s launch on 9 March 2006 until the end of 2006, the Secretary-General indicated that CERF made progress towards its objectives of providing rapid, coordinated, predictable and equitable funding for humanitarian emergencies. CERF’s loan mechanism continued to serve as a tool for UN system entities and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to bridge critical funding gaps caused by delays in the receipt of funding, with some $53.3 million advanced in 2006, mostly to the Sudan, and another $37.7 million advanced through April 2007. On the grant component of the Fund, $259.3 million was committed to 331 humanitarian projects in 35 countries in 2006, and in the first four months of 2007 some $157 million was committed to 159 projects in 30 countries.

The Secretary-General observed that the Fund was most effective where country-level leadership was the strongest and decision-making was coordinated and broad-based, with the humanitarian/resident coordinators playing a facilitative and strategic role. The timeliness of grant disbursement had improved significantly as the Fund streamlined its operations. However, the success and sustainability of the Fund depended on increasing funding levels to $500 million by the end of 2008. The Secretary-General made recommendations for Member States to increase their contributions and make multi-year commitments to the Fund, and for OCHA, UN system entities and IOM to work more closely together and increase cooperation with NGOs to ensure that the Fund continued to facilitate a more timely, predictable, effective and accountable humanitarian response. In that connection, he looked forward to the two-year independent review of CERF, which would assess the grant and revolving elements of the Fund, its administration, criteria for resource allocations, actions and responses, and its ability to meet its objectives.

Advisory Group meetings. At its May meeting [A/62/94-E/2007/83], the CERF Advisory Group reviewed progress and made recommendations on the use and management of the Fund, as well as on the contribution goal for 2008. It advocated the creation of a standardized reporting and monitoring framework, focusing on outputs and achievements. The Group underlined the importance of conducting in 2008 the two-year evaluation of the Fund and asked for a review of the draft terms of reference for that evaluation, as the final report would be used by the General Assembly as a basis for considering the Fund’s achievements in 2008. The Group urged the Secretary-General to call on Member States to achieve the $500 million funding target by 2008.

In October [A/62/566], the Group reviewed the use of the loan and grant elements of the Fund and took note of allocations made from the rapid response and under-funded emergencies window in 2007, totalling $311 million. It welcomed the newly established guidelines on life-saving criteria and their contribution to improving the Fund’s predictability, transparency and efficiency. The Group also said that clarity was needed in the case of CERF allocations destined for under-funded or neglected crises; encouraged progress towards the finalization of an output-oriented performance and accountability framework; requested the CERF secretariat to continue to streamline and rationalize administrative procedures; and made recommendations on the terms of reference for the two-year evaluation of the Fund.

On 17 December, the General Assembly, in resolution 62/94 (see p. 915), requested the Secretary-General to report on the independent review of CERF at its sixty-third (2008) session.
Consolidated appeals

The consolidated appeals process (CAP), an inclusive and coordinated programme cycle for analysing context, assessing needs and planning prioritized humanitarian response, was the humanitarian sector’s main strategic planning and programming tool. In 2007, the United Nations and its humanitarian partners issued consolidated appeals seeking $5.1 billion in assistance to Bolivia, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of Korea, the Great Lakes region (Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania), Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nicaragua, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Pakistan, Peru, Somalia, the Sudan, Swaziland, Timor-Leste, the West Africa subregion (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo), Zambia and Zimbabwe. Separate appeals were launched for Burkina Faso, Burundi, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Bas-U’lundi, Ruanda-Urundi), the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Liberia, Pakistan, the Sudan and Uganda.

The latest available data indicated that 72 per cent ($3.72 billion) of requirements had been met.

Mine clearance

In response to General Assembly resolution 60/97 [YUN 2005, p. 994], the Secretary-General, in an August report [A/62/307 & Corr.1-3] on assistance in mine action, described progress achieved in implementing the UN mine-action policy since his previous report in 2004 [YUN 2004, p. 909]. Implementation of the revised UN mine-action strategy for the period 2001-2005 [YUN 2001, p. 828] was completed, while the six strategic goals and 48 objectives of that strategy were almost entirely realized. The lessons learned in its implementation guided the development of the more results-oriented UN Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy 2006-2010. The report summarized progress achieved in the four 2006-2010 strategic objectives: reduce death and injury by at least 50 per cent; mitigate the risk to community livelihoods and expand freedom of movement for at least 80 per cent of the most seriously affected communities; integrate mine-action needs into national development and reconstruction plans and budgets in at least 15 countries; and assist the development of national institutions to manage the landmine/explosive remnants of war threat and at the same time prepare for residual capacity in at least 15 countries. The United Nations Mine Action Team (UNMAT), which consisted of 14 departments, agencies, funds and programmes, remained at the forefront of efforts to ensure UN coherence in mine-action activities.

The Secretary-General concluded that while measurable progress had been achieved in the mine-action sector over the previous 10 years, considerable work remained to be done. In that connection, he made recommendations for action to be undertaken by Member States, UNMAT and the mine-action community.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 17 December [meeting 75], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fourth (Special Political and Decolonization) Committee [A/62/401], adopted resolution 62/99 without vote [agenda item 29].

Assistance in mine action

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 60/97 of 8 December 2005 and all its previous resolutions on assistance in mine clearance and on assistance in mine action, all adopted without a vote,

Recalling also all relevant treaties and conventions and their review processes,

Taking special note of the tenth anniversary of the creation of the United Nations Mine Action Service within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the Secretariat, its designation as the focal point for mine action within the United Nations system, and its ongoing collaboration with and coordination of all mine-related activities of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes,

Noting with appreciation the extent to which the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action has been commemorated worldwide,

Reaffirming its deep concern at the tremendous humanitarian and development problems caused by the presence of mines and explosive remnants of war that have serious and lasting social and economic consequences for the populations of countries affected by mines and explosive remnants of war,

Bearing in mind the serious threat that mines and explosive remnants of war pose to the safety, health and lives of local civilian populations, as well as of personnel participating in humanitarian, peacekeeping and rehabilitation programmes and operations,

Deeply alarmed by the number of mines that continue to be laid each year as well as the presence of a decreasing but still very large number of, and area of square kilometres infested by, mines and explosive remnants of war as a result of armed conflicts, and therefore remaining convinced of the necessity and urgency of strengthening mine-action efforts by the international community with a view to eliminating the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war to civilians as soon as possible,

Recognizing that, in addition to the primary role of States, the United Nations has a significant role to play in the field of assistance in mine action, and considering mine action to be an important and integrated component of United Nations humanitarian and development activities, as well as noting the integration of mine action in numerous United Nations peacekeeping operations,

Stressing the need to convince mine-affected States to halt new deployments of anti-personnel mines in order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of mine-clearance operations,
Stressing also the pressing need to urge non-State actors to halt immediately and unconditionally new deployments of mines and other associated explosive devices,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on assistance in mine action;

2. Calls, in particular, for the continuation of the efforts of States, with the assistance of the United Nations and relevant organizations involved in mine action, as appropriate, to foster the establishment and development of national mine-action capacities in countries in which mines and explosive remnants of war constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the local civilian population or an impediment to social and economic development efforts at the national and local levels;

3. Urges all States, in particular those that have the capacity to do so, as well as the United Nations system and relevant organizations and institutions involved in mine action, as appropriate, to provide:
   (a) Assistance to countries affected by mines and explosive remnants of war for the establishment and development of national mine-action capacities;
   (b) Support for national programmes, where appropriate, in cooperation with the relevant bodies of the United Nations system and relevant regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations, to reduce the risks posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war, taking into consideration the differing impacts on women, men, girls and boys;
   (c) Reliable, predictable and timely contributions for mine-action activities, including through national mine-action efforts and mine-action programmes of non-governmental organizations, including those relating to victim assistance and mine risk education, especially at the local level, as well as through the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and relevant regional trust funds for assistance in mine action;
   (d) Necessary information and technical, financial and material assistance to locate, remove, destroy and otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines, booby traps, other devices and explosive remnants of war, in accordance with international law, as soon as possible;
   (e) Technological assistance
      (i) to countries affected by mines and explosive remnants of war; and
      (ii) to promote user-oriented scientific research on and development of mine-action techniques and technology that are effective, sustainable, appropriate and environmentally sound;

4. Encourages efforts to conduct all mine-action activities in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) or IMAS-compliant national standards, and emphasizes the importance of using an information management system, such as the Information Management System for Mine Action, to help facilitate mine-action activities;

5. Urges all mine-affected States, pursuant to applicable international law, to identify all areas under their jurisdiction containing mines and other explosive remnants of war in the most efficient manner possible, including, where appropriate, through the use of area reduction;

6. Encourages affected States to proactively mainstream mine action and victim assistance requirements into development plans and processes to ensure that development priorities include mine action and that mine action is predictably funded;

7. Encourages all relevant multilateral, regional and national programmes and bodies to include, in coordination with the United Nations, activities related to mine action, including mine clearance, in their humanitarian, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development assistance activities, where appropriate, bearing in mind the need to ensure national and local ownership, sustainability and capacity-building, as well as to include a gender and age-appropriate perspective in all aspects of such activities;

8. Stresses the importance of cooperation and coordination in mine action, and emphasizes the primary responsibility of national authorities in that regard, also stresses the supporting role of the United Nations and other relevant organizations in that regard, and underlines the need for continuous assessment of the role of the United Nations in mine action;

9. Recognizes the importance of explicitly incorporating references to mine action, when appropriate, in ceasefire and peace agreements in light of the potential that mine action can have as a peace and confidence-building measure in post-conflict situations among parties concerned;

10. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and on follow-up to previous resolutions on assistance in mine clearance and on assistance in mine action, including on relevant United Nations policies and activities;

11. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fourth session the item entitled “Assistance in mine action”.

Humanitarian activities

Africa

Central African Republic

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Central African Republic, launched for $91.4 million in 2007, received 75 per cent of its target ($68.2 million).

Although the conflict in the north-east, which threatened to unsettle the Central African Republic, was stabilized following the April peace accords between the Government and the Union of Democratic Forces for Unification, and a UN-mandated European Union force was to be deployed to the area to prevent the violence in Darfur and Chad from spilling into the country, the situation continued to deteriorate in the north-west, along the border with Chad. During the year, 1 million persons were affected by conflict, forced displacement and widespread banditry. Some 197,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) who sought refuge in towns or fled to the bush were in need of emergency relief and were cut off from their access to water, clinics, schools and livelihoods. The Humanitarian and Development Partnership Team (HDPt), a partnership of NGOs and UN agencies, focused on four strategic...
priorities in 2007: promoting human security, providing protection to displaced persons, reinforcing local and national capacities, and improving coordination. Life-saving humanitarian assistance reached a higher number of people affected by conflict than in previous years. Aid agencies provided plastic sheeting for temporary shelters and basic household items to 193,000 IDPs; seeds and agricultural tools to more than 45,000 families in the north, improving the food security of some 225,000 people; and food assistance to 210,000 people in conflict areas. Members of the health cluster distributed 47,000 mosquito nets and supported health centres and hospitals, while members of the water and sanitation cluster repaired and maintained 47 water pumps and boreholes throughout the northern conflict-affected areas. IDPT also quickly organized programmes to respond to the needs of 2,650 Darfur refugees who arrived in the north-east of the country in May. Meanwhile, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) succeeded in getting 23,000 children in conflict areas back in school.

Communication. In September [S/2007/551], following the Secretary-General’s August recommendation to deploy an international presence in the north-eastern Central African Republic to protect civilians at risk, the Government welcomed the new concept of operations, declared its intention to establish, with UN support, a Chadian humanitarian protection force in eastern Chad and in the north-eastern Central African Republic (see p. 153).

Report of Secretary-General. In December [S/2007/697], the Secretary-General reported that while the situation in the north-east had stabilized, with displaced persons continuing to return to and resettle in their villages, in the centre-north and north-west the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate. Humanitarian operations intensified to cope with the needs of IDPs in the north-west, including the opening of a UN system common office in the town of Paoua to facilitate the delivery of relief assistance to the local civilian population.

Chad

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Chad sought $277.4 million in 2007, of which 100 per cent ($277.4 million) was received.

During 2007, the humanitarian situation in Chad deteriorated owing to increased political tensions and the worsening of the security environment, as well as developments in the neighbouring countries of the Sudan (Darfur) and the Central African Republic. Chad was host to some 239,700 Sudanese refugees in the east of the country and 45,300 Central African refugees in the south. The number of IDPs in eastern Chad, which increased due to activities of armed groups, incursions of Sudanese “Janjaweed” militias and intercommunal conflicts, totalled 173,000 in August. Increased banditry, crime and damage to humanitarian property exacerbated the situation. The UN system was forced to restrict its operations in the east due to the insecurity, which diminished the quantity and quality of humanitarian assistance provided to the population and hampered the implementation of development programmes. Despite these challenges, humanitarian assistance benefited more than 458,000 persons during the year, focusing on four strategic priorities: providing life-saving assistance in emergency situations to refugees and IDPs to improve their livelihoods and security; providing refugees, IDPs and host populations affected by insecurity with access to basic social services; ensuring that humanitarian assistance was followed by long-term development programmes to promote self-reliance and integration in host communities; and ensuring a safe work environment for humanitarian personnel. A multi-sectoral response covering needs in the areas of food security, health, protection, shelter, water, sanitation and education was established. The humanitarian community also developed the “90-Day Strategy Response” to address the increasing needs of the displaced. Some 150,000 IDPs received mattresses, blankets, soap, water and daily food rations, and had access to primary health care. Children received vaccinations and returned to school. However, the deterioration of the security situation and its impact on the civilian character of refugee camps in some regions remained a concern.

Communication. In September [S/2007/540], following the Secretary-General’s August recommendation to deploy an international presence in eastern Chad to protect refugees, IDPs and civilian populations at risk, facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance and create favourable conditions for reconstruction and development in the region, the Government welcomed the new operation, confirmed its intention to establish, with UN support, a Chadian humanitarian protection police and called on the international community, UN agencies and donors to provide support for economic rehabilitation and development in eastern Chad. By resolution 1778(2007) of 25 September (see p. 153), the Security Council authorized the deployment of a peacekeeping force in eastern Chad and in the north-eastern Central African Republic.

Report of Secretary-General. In December [S/2007/739], the Secretary-General reported that there were 240,000 Darfuran refugees and 180,000 IDPs in eastern Chad. Violations of the humanitarian and
conflicts, sexual exploitation, extreme poverty, poor health and lack of education and lack of knowledge regarding reproductive health.

Other concerns included access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene and the prevalence of diarrhoea and gastrointestinal infections due to consumption of unsafe water; food insecurity owing to the lack of road transport and insecurity; the inaccessibility of farming tools; the high rate of adult illiteracy, which stood at 28.4 per cent of men and 51.8 per cent of women; the estimated 1,500 children still in the ranks of former rebel militias; and the availability of small arms. The large presence of unemployed youth, who saw weapons as a tool for survival and power, constituted a real threat, together with the considerable number of weapons held by ex-combatants. The Government, with an external debt of $8.4 billion, was unable to invest consistently in social programmes or secure humanitarian assistance for affected populations in post-conflict areas, such as the Pool region. Consequently, humanitarian actors revised the strategy for the next six months, giving priority to saving lives and reducing vulnerabilities. As the strategy needed to adapt to the low funding of projects over the previous six months, the appeal was revised from $28.1 million to $22.2 million.

**Great Lakes region**

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Great Lakes region, launched for $94.3 million to cover 2007, received 63 per cent ($59.8 million) of that amount. In addition to the regional appeal, individual country appeals were made for Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (drc) and Uganda.

In 2007, the humanitarian situation in the region remained largely unchanged. The trends of peace consolidation and the transition from emergency to early recovery continued, including steady progress in peace and transitional processes and the return of some of the region’s displaced. The relative security that prevailed led to the return of refugee populations to Burundi and the drc, and improved security in Uganda triggered the return of populations, although not on a large scale. Nonetheless, humanitarian needs and insecurity persisted in some countries, posing a continuing challenge to humanitarian partners. The momentum towards peace and stability was disrupted by outbreaks of violence and persistent tensions in many other parts of the region. Durable solutions for refugees and displaced populations had yet to be found. Large pockets of food insecurity were still present due to a combination of natural hazards, displacement, livelihood and asset loss, human rights violations, and the absence of basic services and infrastructure. Despite the forecast of normal to slightly above normal rainfalls and good crop prospects, food and livelihood...
crises continued to prevail in central-eastern Burundi, eastern drc, and northern and western Uganda. In large parts of the region, low or non-existent access to health services and widespread vulnerability to diseases continued to generate significant humanitarian needs. In conflict-affected areas, hiv/aids transmission increased due to poverty, congested living conditions and an erosion of community structures. Finding ways to adapt the implementation of humanitarian programmes from a conflict to a post-conflict setting also remained a challenge. In that connection, the opening of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region Executive Secretariat in Burundi was indicative of strong support to the process (see p. 113).

During the year, the humanitarian community pursued eight priority sectors and themes for action: food security; health and nutrition; hiv/aids; gender-based violence; education; coordination and support services; emergency preparedness and response; and early recovery and transition.

Burundi

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Burundi, launched for $145.2 million in 2007, obtained 80 per cent ($116.8 million) of its goal.

In 2007, progress was made towards further peace consolidation, economic recovery and sustainable development, owing to the 2006 ceasefire agreement between the Government and the last remaining rebel group, the National Liberation Forces. The parties to the agreement met several times with a view to entering the implementation phase. The improved security environment enabled humanitarian access to populations in the provinces of Bubanza, Bujumbura Rural and Cibitoke. In addition, the poverty reduction strategy paper, which was endorsed by the World Bank, was presented at the donors’ conference held in Burundi in May. Nonetheless, humanitarian needs persisted. In the first half of the year, the humanitarian community responded to food insecurity caused by unexpected torrential rains, which affected vulnerable houses nationwide. The Government, UN system agencies and NGOs were mobilized to provide food, seeds and farming tools. Public demand for health and education services rose after the Government announced that it would provide free primary education, as well as free health care for children under five and for maternal deliveries. However, government resources to deliver such services remained limited. Meanwhile, school infrastructures and facilities were insufficient to meet the needs of pupils. The humanitarian community focused on three strategic priorities: surveillance of the humanitarian situation and early warning, with particular attention to the needs of IDPs and returnees; rapid response to localized humanitarian emergencies; and reduction of vulnerability resulting from the lack of access to basic services. The United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi, which brought together the activities of the UN system for peace consolidation, commenced operations on 1 January (see p. 137), and as a beneficiary of the UN Peacebuilding Fund, Burundi was allocated $35 million to fund projects related to its peacebuilding priority plan.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (drc) sought $686.6 million in 2007, of which 68 per cent ($463.5 million) was received.

In 2007, despite successful elections, the installation of a new Government in 2006, and the surrender of several armed groups, a number of people in the drc still required life-saving assistance and support. Armed conflict was ongoing in parts of the country and crises in the provinces of North and South Kivu raised concerns, as emergency contingency plans were revised twice within the first six months of the year to meet the needs of displaced persons. While difficult access and insecurity remained the two main challenges for humanitarian actors, the lack of Government capacity and limited availability of baseline data also hampered the provision of adequate assistance. There were large-scale returns during 2007, yet there were also new displacements, including more than 150,000 people in North Kivu alone, the highest rate in three years. In addition, returnees faced abject poverty and the absence of public services, and reintegration remained a challenge. Attention focused on protracted acute humanitarian needs in the western provinces and the needs of natural disaster victims. Although spared from armed conflict, the Bandundu, Equateur, Kasai and Oriental provinces experienced critical rates of malnutrition and extreme vulnerabilities. Moreover, at the beginning of the year, the drc experienced its worst floods in 10 years, which affected approximately 200,000 people and destroyed crops on a massive scale in the Equateur, Katanga and Oriental provinces. Humanitarian actors assisted some 488,000 people throughout the country with various forms of assistance, and another 500,000 victims of cholera were assisted by water and sanitation activities, primarily in the Kivus. Protection cluster members also established the first comprehensive protection monitoring project in North Kivu. Priorities focused on emergency response, particularly in North and South Kivu, the protection of civilians, return and reintegration, and increased humanitarian access to vulnerable populations. Two new priorities were added at the mid-year review: giving more attention to acute protracted humanitarian crises across all provinces, and producing improved humanitarian
analysis and baseline data for all sector clusters. An epidemic of Ebola declared in September, with 264 cases and 187 deaths, was contained in October.

**Uganda**

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Uganda requested $350.5 million to cover 2007 requirements, of which 80 per cent ($279.5 million) was received.

In 2007, the humanitarian situation in northern Uganda continued to improve, owing to peace negotiations between the Government and the Lord’s Resistance Army that began some 18 months prior. By September, more than half of the 1.8 million northern Ugandans internally displaced at the start of 2005 had entered the return process. In the Lango subregion, the return process was expected to conclude by the end of 2007. However, in the Acholi subregion, movements out of the camps were slower due to several factors, and the process was expected to continue past 2008. In addition, the majority of Acholis that left the camps had not returned to their villages of origin, settling instead in spontaneous transit sites from which they would have better access to their own land for farming. Although the humanitarian situation stabilized in IDP camps in the Acholi subregion, new concerns arose over the humanitarian situation in return areas, including both transit sites and villages of origin. In the Lango subregion, where 97 per cent of former IDPs had returned, decreased access to basic social services, such as health care and water and sanitation, as well as insufficient food, resulted in an increase in malnutrition and mortality rates. Lack of access to education led to increased instances of family separation. In the Teso subregion, there was little movement out of camps due to activities of illegally armed Karimojong. Anti-stock theft units were subsequently deployed to curtail Karimojong activities and instil confidence in the displaced population to return. In Karamoja, flooding that destroyed much of the first season agricultural harvest in eastern Uganda threatened food security.

In responding to the crisis, humanitarian efforts focused on five priority areas: enhancing protection and living conditions of IDPs in camps; supporting voluntary population movement; supporting returned populations and community recovery; improving protection, access to services and emergency preparedness in Karamoja; and ensuring protection for all refugees and asylum seekers. The cluster leadership approach was utilized (see p. 915) and focused on 10 thematic sectors: camp coordination and camp management; coordination; safety and security; education; food security; protection; water and sanitation; mine action; multi-sector (refugees); and health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS. Positive developments included an increased number of IDP camps that were accessible without escort, the distribution of over 144,740 metric tonnes of food to over 2.2 million beneficiaries, the success of the “Go Back to School Campaign”, the establishment of over 130 child protection committees across northern Uganda, and the protection of some 216,392 registered refugees and varying numbers of asylum seekers.

(See also p. 961 under “Disaster assistance”.)

**Somalia**

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Somalia, which sought $383.9 million in 2007, received 80 per cent ($307.9 million) of requirements.

In 2007, Somalia experienced a drastic deterioration in the humanitarian situation. Insufficient rains in the spring and increased violence in Mogadishu resulted in massive displacement. In January, Transitional Federal Government troops, backed by Ethiopian forces, took command of Mogadishu and much of south-central Somalia from the Islamic Courts Union. Violence and insecurity escalated, with battles between insurgents and Government/Ethiopian forces causing the displacement of one third of the population of Mogadishu. Although troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia arrived in the country in March, their presence did not diminish the level of violence. Hundreds of civilians were killed and thousands more were injured, with human rights abuses committed by all sides. In October, in the zones of Puntland and Somaliland, violence erupted over the disputed regions of Sool and Sanaag, displacing over 20,000 people. Overall, some 1.5 million people were in need of assistance and protection, a 50 per cent increase since the start of the year. As at 1 November, there were an estimated 450,000 new IDPs in Somalia, 400,000 protracted IDPs and 490,000 people in acute food and livelihood crisis. The combined effects of insufficient rains, conflict, displacement and diarrhoeal diseases exacerbated food security and caused a rise in acute malnutrition rates, particularly in regions that absorbed large numbers of conflict-related IDPs. An estimated 83,000 children were moderately or severely malnourished in south-central Somalia, excluding IDPs, among whom malnutrition rates were often higher. Humanitarian activities were hampered by checkpoints and roadblocks, ambushes of aid convoys, taxation of humanitarian cargo, Government-imposed curfews, the closure of air strips and sea piracy, including the hijacking of World Food Programme (WFP)–contracted vessels. Humanitarian personnel, in addition to harassment and arrest, faced new risks, such as roadside bombs. The low number of technically qualified partners in the field, lack of effective Government institutions, limited reliable data collection, and delays in getting supplies to Somalia also hindered humanitarian efforts.

Despite the challenges, humanitarian partners were able to provide assistance. Emergency response
focused on flood- and conflict-affected IDPs and controlling the cholera outbreak, while ongoing vaccination and food distribution programmes continued across all sectors. Some 101,438 metric tonnes of food were provided to 2,040,976 beneficiaries; drugs and health kits, reproductive health kits and hygiene kits were delivered throughout south-central Somalia; and approximately 50 per cent of an estimated 47,000 acutely malnourished children had access to selective feeding programmes. Access to safe water and sanitation services was provided to 455,538 IDPs and those affected by floods and cholera. Shelter materials, sleeping mats, jerry cans and kitchen sets were distributed to 150,000 IDP families, mainly in south-central Somalia. The Protection Monitoring Network, which served as a basis for advocacy and response, was strengthened. Primary school enrolment throughout Somalia rose by 3 per cent, and 144 community education committees were trained in emergency preparedness and response throughout the country.

**Emergency Relief Coordinator mission.** On 6 December [meeting 5792], in his briefing to the Security Council on his mission to Somalia, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, John Holmes, said that more than half of the population of Mogadishu, some 600,000 people, had fled the city and that 230,000 of them were living along a 15-kilometre stretch of road between Mogadishu and the small town of Afgooye. International humanitarian personnel were unable to work due to security concerns, including extortion and violence at checkpoints. The prevailing atmosphere of mistrust between the authorities and international organizations exacerbated the situation. He expressed concern about the situation of people displaced from Mogadishu, who were scattered over inaccessible areas in south and central Somalia, as well as those still in Mogadishu. Although WFP had recently started a programme to deliver 50,000 meals a day, those efforts were insufficient to cover the needs. He called on the donor community, agencies and NGOs to increase their presence and the resources dedicated to Somalia.

**Sudan**

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Sudan Work Plan 2007 (Humanitarian Action component) sought $1,333 million to provide 5.5 million people with relief assistance during the year, receiving 81 per cent ($1,086.7 million) of that amount.

In 2007, although political negotiations on a settlement for the Darfur conflict were initiated, progress remained slow. Conditions of insecurity and a lack of access continued to compromise the work of the United Nations and its partners. In addition, protection monitoring activities were limited due to the restrictions imposed on the United Nations Mission in the Sudan. Negotiation for free movement was ongoing. Humanitarian needs, therefore, remained paramount in Darfur. Natural disasters, such as drought and flooding, continued to impact the well-being of the population. Environmental changes aggravated the impact of riverine flooding in years of high rainfall and contributed to an increased frequency of flash floods (see p. 961). Ongoing conflict and natural disaster, as well as economic hardship, contributed to massive levels of displacement. There were approximately 5.4 million IDPs in the Sudan, representing 14 per cent of the population, with some having been displaced for more than 20 years. An additional 700,000 people lived abroad as refugees. In addition, the Sudan was host to 250,000 refugees and asylum seekers, mostly in protracted situations in the eastern part of the country.

Despite the challenges, steps were taken to build the foundation for early recovery through capacity building, skills training and other activities in areas such as education, water and sanitation, food security and basic infrastructure, where security permitted. Efforts by the UN and humanitarian partners focused on the delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable conflict-affected populations and implementation of programmes to enable a transition towards national recovery and development. By mid-2007, some 800,000 households were receiving food assistance and 198,000 households were supported through diversified livelihood activities; 276,347 households were receiving items to mitigate health threats; 2 million people had access to safe drinking water; 71,843 IDPs and refugees had returned with United Nations and Government support; 434 children had been removed from armed forces or groups; 5.4 million children had received vitamin A supplements and 9.1 million had been vaccinated against polio; over 3,000 teachers had been trained; 1,068 kilometres of roads had been cleared of landmines; and 226 kilometres of roads had been maintained and repaired. In addition, a major environmental assessment was completed, which revealed concerns such as environmental degradation and competing demands for diminishing resources by different groups, damage resulting from oil exploration and mechanized agricultural expansion, and uncontrolled urban development.

**Emergency Relief Coordinator mission.** On 6 December [meeting 5792], the Emergency Relief Coordinator briefed the Security Council on his mission to Darfur and said that some 13,300 relief workers were assisting 4.2 million people affected by the conflict, including 2.4 million IDPs. Clashes between signatories and non-signatories of the 2006 Darfur Peace Agreement [YUN 2006, p. 274], aerial bombardments, militia and inter-tribal clashes, banditry and general lawlessness continued to have a major impact on the population. Attacks on humanitarian personnel and property, which appeared to come mainly from rebel groups and Sudan Liberation Army/Minni Minawi
elements, were a concern. Another issue was the presence of arms in some of the more volatile IDP camps. He called for an inclusive peace agreement, reinforced by a peacekeeping force capable of monitoring the peace and ensuring the protection of civilians.

(See also p. 952 under “Disaster assistance”.)

**West Africa**

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the West Africa subregion sought $361 million in 2007 to assist beneficiaries in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, and received 56 per cent ($202.8 million) of the requirement.

In 2007, the region continued to experience the consequences of two decades of complex emergencies and recurrent natural disasters. Poverty, the lack of basic social services and weak governance resulted in extreme vulnerability to recurrent disasters, epidemics, violence, insecurity and population displacements. Geographical and logistical challenges exacerbated the situation, as well as socio-economic ones, such as combatants and child soldiers, the proliferation of arms, the large number of displaced populations, and the spread of HIV/AIDS and other epidemics. Three priority sectors were identified for action at the regional level: food security and nutrition in the Sahel, rapid response to health emergencies, and protection and population movements. Hence, humanitarian activities during the year focused on addressing high under-nutrition rates; ensuring that protection issues were translated into national policies; and responding to the effects of an erratic and unusually heavy rainy season.

The Sahel region continued to experience high rates of acute child under-nutrition. An estimated 1.5 million children under five suffered from acute under-nutrition at any point in time throughout the year in Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger. UNICEF and WFP hosted the second Joint Meeting on Nutrition in the Sahel (Dakar, February). Meeting organizers subsequently galvanized a broad range of allies to further strengthen synergies in the fight against child hunger and under-nutrition. Gains were achieved in protection and population movements due to a decrease in civil strife in some areas and progress in recovery efforts. In the Mano River countries (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) and Côte d’Ivoire, the number of conflict-affected displaced persons significantly decreased and large-scale refugee repatriation programmes were gradually ending. In Liberia the return process for IDPs was completed in June and completion of the refugee operation was expected by the end of the year. Durable solutions were still needed for the remaining 80,000 Liberian refugees scattered in the region. In April, Benin, Ghana and Togo signed tripartite agreements that paved the way for the organized repatriation of Togolese refugees from Benin. The socio-political crisis in Côte d’Ivoire improved with the March signing of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement (see p. 174) enabling humanitarian actors to begin implementing recovery programmes. Progress, however, was accompanied by a steady deterioration in the protection of civilians that was more severe than during times of open conflict, due to the lack of access to justice and basic services. In Guinea-Bissau and Senegal (Casamance), humanitarian partners implemented post-conflict recovery programmes in areas with high rates of food insecurity and under-nutrition. The political crisis in Guinea, in which 120 people were killed and 1,600 were injured following clashes between demonstrators and security forces (see p. 233), underscored how rapidly situations in West Africa could turn violent and uncertain for civilian populations and humanitarian actors.

Natural disasters remained a challenge, with several countries experiencing some of the worst floods in 10 years. The rainy season was characterized by unusually intense rains and flash flooding, affecting more than 600,000 people in Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, the Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo, causing widespread damage to crops and infrastructure, and displacing thousands of people who also lost their homes or their livelihoods. Although most West African countries had a natural disaster management plan to assist in disaster preparedness and response, local populations were often not familiar with national contingency plans and early warning systems, and Governments were overwhelmed by the scope of the disasters. The establishment of the UN Humanitarian Response Depot in Accra at the end of 2006 enhanced the emergency response capacity in the region. Several UN agencies were storing their emergency items at the depot and other agencies, international NGOs and governmental organizations expressed interest in the Accra hub.

**Côte d’Ivoire**

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Côte d’Ivoire sought $55.3 million to meet 2007 requirements, and received 58 per cent ($32.1 million) of that amount.

On 4 March, the Government and the rebel Forces Nouvelles signed the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement (see p. 174). The Secretary-General of the Forces Nouvelles was subsequently appointed Prime Minister, the new Government included representatives from nearly all factions and an integrated command centre for the military was established. Some local state authorities began redeploying back to the zones formerly controlled by the rebels, yet the redeployment of Government officials was slow and social services remained overstretched. Many persons displaced by the conflict...
returned to their places of origin, yet the social and economic infrastructure remained fragile. Land tenure and nationality disputes continued to pose a threat to social cohesion, stability and the peace process. Food security was not assured for large sectors of the population, particularly for the most vulnerable households, resulting in generalized child malnutrition, with pockets of high levels of acute malnutrition, particularly in the north. The health system, which was devastated by the war and the loss of qualified staff, remained weak despite a wide range of projects by humanitarian and Government actors, such as infrastructural repairs, immunizations and training of health workers.

During the year, humanitarian activities centred on three strategic objectives: supporting the re-establishment and reinforcement of access to health, education, water and electricity; providing assistance and protection to IDPs, host families, refugees and other vulnerable groups, as well as providing support for their gradual reintegration; and reinforcing food security and promoting means of livelihood. UN agencies, NGOs and local partners supported the Ministry of Health (MoH) locally in various areas, including primary health care, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. UNICEF rehabilitated 98 health care centres and the World Health Organization (WHO), along with MoH, organized vaccination campaigns against yellow fever. The third back-to-school campaign, launched in September, aimed to secure the return to school or continuation of studies of 830,000 schoolchildren. UNICEF, along with the Water Department and local NGOs, rehabilitated 1,400 pumps and 200 village wells. The protection cluster was established under the leadership of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and extended its activities from IDP-related protection needs to other sectors, such as child protection and sexual and gender-based violence. In other protection activities, 1,300 children, including 400 girls formerly associated with armed groups, were demobilized and reintegrated. Local and national authorities, as well as humanitarian partners, undertook a number of protection, security and assistance activities on the basis of a common IDP strategy, which resulted in an increased number of spontaneous returns.

Liberia

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Liberia, launched for $109.9 million in 2007, met 63 per cent ($68.9 million) of requirements.

In 2007, efforts continued to further consolidate peace and strengthen national authority, building on previous years’ achievements and paving the way to more sustainable recovery and development. Yet progress was limited. During the crisis and immediate post-crisis period, Liberia relied mainly on the support of international humanitarian organizations to provide basic social services, many of which closed operations or were cut back in the light of reduced funding. Many Liberians remained vulnerable and confronted acute humanitarian needs on a daily basis, including a lack of access to health care, safe drinking water, shelter and education. The Government was leading efforts to formulate a poverty reduction strategy that would prioritize development efforts. In order to ensure a more coherent response, the United Nations developed the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which advanced select programmatic initiatives aligned with national priorities. However, resource mobilization for development was subject to delay, and adequate funding for the poverty reduction strategy and UNDAF would take time. Resources needed in the interim, to address critical humanitarian gaps and the needs of highly vulnerable communities, proved difficult to secure. Approximately one third of the 2007 appeal was not funded, even after its overall request was reduced during the midterm review. Two sectors had significant shortfalls: health (only 29 per cent funded) and water and sanitation (31 per cent). The global competition for humanitarian support was another challenge to mobilizing funds for acute needs, despite Liberia’s worrying demographic indicators, such as ranking fifth worldwide in child mortality. CERF funding was instrumental in supporting activities not funded by the appeal.

Despite those challenges, Liberia continued to benefit from humanitarian efforts, particularly the ongoing humanitarian reform process. As one of the first countries to embrace the cluster approach and to support the formation of strong Government-led sector groups, Liberia exemplified a partnership among the Government, donors, UN agencies, NGOs and the Liberian Red Cross Society. Bolstered by the presence of more than 14,000 UN peacekeepers and some 1,200 international civilian police officers, the situation in the country remained calm. Throughout the first six months of the year refugees continued to return home. As at the end of June, more than 108,000 refugees had been repatriated by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Zimbabwe

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Zimbabwe requested $395.6 million to cover 2007 requirements, of which 58 per cent ($229.2 million) was received.

In 2007, complex, overlapping and often worsening economic and social factors affected the humanitarian situation. Spiralling inflation, deteriorating physical infrastructure, the inability of the public sector to deliver basic social services, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic led to a decline in the health and well-being of the population. The erosion of livelihoods, food insecurity, rising malnutrition and the possibility of disease
outbreaks further distressed the already vulnerable population. The inability of the agricultural sector to produce enough food and the difficulties of importing foodstuffs contributed to the growing food gap. National cereal production was estimated to be 44 per cent lower than in 2006. Policy constraints and an uncertain pattern of weather, characterized by poor rains and droughts, made farming difficult and unpredictable. Poor rains also imposed water shortages on a significant proportion of the population, particularly in the south. Access to safe drinking water and sanitation, especially in urban areas, including Harare, was a concern. Bulawayo was hard-hit by shortages due to inadequate rainfall. By October, the city was receiving only 30 per cent of its daily water requirement, affecting an estimated 1.5 million inhabitants.

The humanitarian community addressed two strategic priorities during the year: life-saving actions (emergency relief) and enhancing local coping mechanisms and livelihoods (transitional support), which translated into efforts to mitigate the impact of erosion of livelihoods; provide assistance to mobile and vulnerable populations and protection for the most vulnerable; incorporate HIV/AIDS considerations in all humanitarian actions; strengthen response and preparedness to acute disease outbreaks; improve access to populations of concern and ensure adequate service delivery; link humanitarian actions to medium- and longer-term rehabilitation objectives; improve access to basic social services to the most vulnerable; and improve information management and information sharing. WFP and its partners provided food assistance to an estimated 1.5 million people. In other activities, humanitarian actors provided an additional 1.5 million people with livelihood support, including seed and fertilizer, conservation farming, low-input gardens and low-cost water and sanitation programmes; reached 770,000 people with food aid through programmes such as safety-net feeding, school-based feeding, food-for-assets and market assistance; and responded to small-scale evictions by providing over 1,000 temporary shelters and 335 transitional shelters. On HIV/AIDS support, some 72,000 people were receiving antiretroviral therapy through the public sector, with an additional 8,000 receiving such therapy in the private sector, an increase from a total of 40,000 in 2006. Action was also taken to control a series of diarrhoea outbreaks, which were often linked to inadequate access to safe water and sanitation and poor hygiene practices.

Asia

Lebanon

On 20 May, fierce clashes that erupted between armed members of the radical group Fatah Al Islam (FAI) and the Lebanese army in Tripoli, quickly spread to the nearby Palestinian refugee camp of Nahr El Bared, which was infiltrated by up to 200 armed FAI fighters. Although a ceasefire brokered on 22 May held for over a week, fighting broke out again on 1 June with renewed intensity. The army siege of Nahr El Bared continued, with troops in a tense stand-off with FAI members holed up inside the camp and controlling all movement in and out of the camp. An estimated 27,000 registered refugees were living inside Nahr El Bared prior to the start of the crisis. By 25 May, most families had fled, seeking shelter in nearby Beddawi camp, in schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), or in other Palestinian refugee camps across Lebanon. As of 31 May, there were indications that between 3,000 to 5,000 refugees, including children, the sick and the elderly, remained inside the camp, without adequate water, sanitation and electricity from 20 May. Access to the camp remained problematic as the security situation inside Nahr El Bared was unresolved. The Palestine Red Crescent, which continued to run ambulance services into and out of the camp, stated that 18 civilians had been killed since the start of the crisis. UNRWA was concerned about the safety of the civilians who remained inside the camp and called for their rights under international human rights and humanitarian law to be upheld.

Nahr El Bared camp sustained significant damage during the fighting, with large numbers of public and private buildings affected, and water, sewage and electricity networks badly damaged. Over one third of the 315 UNRWA staff that fled the camp reported that their homes were destroyed or damaged. Water services were no longer functioning, as water reservoirs were damaged and many of the plastic household water containers on the roofs of refugee shelters had been shot through with arms fire. Sewage systems were clogged after several days without running water, presenting a major public health risk. Meanwhile, refugees who fled the camp when the fighting began were treated for dehydration, diarrhoea and stomach complaints. Due to the crisis, the population of Beddawi camp increased from approximately 16,000 persons to 37,000, stretching already crowded living conditions and overburdened facilities. While water services in Beddawi camp were able to meet the needs of the displaced, UNRWA was not able to test the water level in the wells to rule out the possibility of future shortages. The provision of adequate sanitation for affected families was also a concern. Over 2,000 of the displaced were living in UNRWA schools in and around Beddawi, which did not have adequate washing and toilet facilities. Moreover, private facilities in host households were coming under strain.

UNRWA worked with other UN agencies and humanitarian actors to assess and provide for the needs of the Palestine refugees of Nahr El Bared, both inside
and outside the camp. An UNRWA emergency team was established in northern Lebanon. The emergency appeal sought $12.6 million to meet emergency needs arising from the crisis until the end of August and to reimburse funds and resources already expended. Due to a very positive response from donors, the appeal received pledges of $17.2 million. UNRWA carried forward the additional pledged contributions of $5 million to cover activities within the appeal.

Nepal

In 2007, the peace process experienced more setbacks, with Constituent Assembly elections postponed until April 2008. Despite the comprehensive agreement signed in 2006 between the Government and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) ending a 10-year conflict, the political situation remained fragile. The situation in the Terai region continued to deteriorate with an increase in inter-communal tensions, where more than 21 opposition groups, several armed, were active. The majority of Nepal’s vulnerable and marginalized populations continued to suffer as political discord remained unresolved. Humanitarian access was impeded by politically organized strikes and protests. In the remote mountain areas of western Nepal, where the conflict was most acute, basic social services had yet to resume. In the southern lowlands region of Terai, the threat of new conflict arose from new opposition groups. In eastern Terai, several hundred families left their homes due to insecurity and threats of violence. In September, riots in Kapilvastu in the western region triggered new displacements. Some 1,600 IDPs remained in camps, while over 400 were displaced along the border with India. An estimated 50,000 to 70,000 people remained displaced nationwide as a result of the conflict.

The adverse political and climate conditions resulted in poor humanitarian indicators. Almost half a million people were food insecure as a result of drought and other seasonal disasters. Floods and landslides in July and August created new humanitarian needs and affected more than 70,000 families—more than 60 per cent of the country. Food supplies procured for the drought-affected population had to be diverted to flood and landslide victims. Cases of diarrhoea and cholera emerged. Acute malnutrition rates were estimated at 13 per cent. The problem was particularly severe in the mountain and hill areas of the Far and Mid-West regions where over 65 per cent of the children were stunted and 50 per cent were underweight. In response to evolving humanitarian needs, new initiatives were added to the appeal in the areas of food and non-food assistance for conflict and flood-affected populations, health care for mine victims and mine risk reduction. Total requirements for the appeal for transition support amounted to $60.6 million.

In January, the Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Nepal to support the peace process (see p. 324).

Palestine

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which sought $426.3 million in 2007, received 65 per cent ($277.4 million) of the requirements.

In 2007, political, economic and social conditions continued to deteriorate in Palestine. The February Fatah–Hamas ceasefire negotiated in Mecca collapsed in May, and inter-factional violence resumed, culminating in Hamas taking over the Gaza Strip in June. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas dissolved the short-lived National Unity Government and instituted a new emergency Government in mid-June without Hamas participation. In practice, two authorities were in control, the Government of Prime Minister Salaam Fayyed in the West Bank and Hamas in Gaza. Ordinary Palestinians continued to bear the brunt of the crisis. In addition to fatalities from the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, there was a dramatic increase in deaths and injuries due to internal Palestinian violence. The poverty rate stood at 57 per cent and food insecurity affected 34 per cent of the population. The impact was particularly severe in Gaza, which was sealed off from the rest of the world in mid-June; few residents could exit Gaza, even in the case of medical emergency, and only limited commercial and humanitarian supplies could enter. A complete halt to the import of raw materials and exports to Israel and the wider world resulted in 75,000 Gazan employees laid off by mid-September. Dependency on agencies such as UNRWA and WFP stood at 80 per cent. Following the May revision of the appeal, humanitarian assistance focused on meeting urgent humanitarian needs, supporting livelihoods and supporting the Palestinian Authority medium-term planning and budgetary efforts.

Sri Lanka

In 2007, fighting escalated in north and east Sri Lanka, creating significant humanitarian consequences for nearly 400,000 people. Meanwhile, the focus of the conflict in Sri Lanka moved from the east to parts of the north. The Government took action to resettle IDPs in the eastern districts following clearance of the area of landmines. However, there were new displacements in the northern Vanni and Jaffna areas. The Government also stated that it would complete the process of resettlement in the east and limit the military capacity of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, who threatened reprisals in the event of an army offensive in the north. In the latter part of the year, as the conflict affected more of the northern districts,
the risks increased for IDPs and other conflict-affected groups in those areas.

Humanitarian activities focused on 10 emergency-related sectors, with priority placed on protection, food, shelter and livelihoods, as well as on the provision of basic services such as health, water and sanitation, and education. A total of 265,000 IDPs were provided with sanitation facilities and safe drinking water; over 3,800 emergency and semi-permanent toilets were constructed; and nearly 1,000 cubic metres of safe drinking water was supplied daily. Food prices increased throughout the country, particularly in the conflict-affected areas of the north and the east. Despite restrictions on access, transportation difficulties and pipeline shortfalls, basic food aid benefited some 354,000 persons. Humanitarian activities also included the distribution of seed kits and agricultural supplies, support for establishing vegetable gardens and vaccination of livestock. Food security assessments were conducted and beneficiaries were trained in agriculture, livestock and fisheries production. Nonetheless, high food prices and insufficient local production levels continued to affect the food security of vulnerable households. To address the educational needs of some 300,000 children affected by the conflict, temporary learning structures, provision of essential learning materials, back-to-school campaigns and the development of a consolidated syllabus helped children to resume their schooling with minimal disruption. The initial action plan requested $66 million. However, following a review in June, which indicated that additional life-saving and life-sustaining activities were essential, as well as adjustments later in the year, the appeal amount was increased to $132.7 million, of which 74 per cent ($98.2 million) was received.

Timor-Leste

The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Timor-Leste, launched for $36.3 million in 2007, received 66 per cent of its target ($24.1 million).

In 2007, following successful presidential and parliamentary elections in April and June, Timor-Leste continued its transition from relief to development. However, the country continued to face many complex issues, such as an estimated 100,000 IDPs living in camps and with host families, increasing levels of food insecurity and limited access to basic social services, high rates of malnutrition, mortality and morbidity, and a total or partial destruction of over 3,000 homes in Dili affecting at least 14,000 IDPs. Other challenges included chronic poverty, vulnerability to natural disasters, high unemployment, increasing urbanization in Dili, high illiteracy, lack of economic opportunities and basic infrastructure, gender-based violence, lack of protection mechanisms, and insufficient institutional and budget execution capacity to carry out interventions. During the year, humanitarian efforts addressed four priorities: support the return, resettlement and reintegration of displaced populations; reduce vulnerability among IDPs and other vulnerable groups; ensure emergency preparedness and response to new crises and natural disasters; and support national reconciliation initiatives to ensure the reintegration of IDPs.

Europe

North Caucasus (Russian Federation)

In 2007, the joint recovery-oriented, humanitarian and development assistance operation conducted by nine UN agencies and 12 NGOs continued to provide assistance and protection to the population of Chechnya and its neighbouring republics. There were at least 150,000 IDPs in Chechnya, and as many as 40,000 in Ingushetia and Dagestan. Although there were signs of socio-economic recovery, the North Caucasus remained one of the poorest regions in the Russian Federation, with nearly 80 per cent of the population estimated to live on an income below the national poverty level. Health indicators suggested deep problems of poverty and inadequate social services. Public infrastructure in Chechnya was mostly destroyed, with 40 per cent of Grozny residents lacking access to running water. The work plan for humanitarian action in support of Government efforts identified three strategic goals: supporting the protection of the civilian population; meeting basic humanitarian needs and reducing vulnerability across the region through socio-economic recovery projects; and maintaining a strategic partnership with government and local communities that reinforced their capacity for humanitarian action and development. Total requirements sought for the transitional work plan for 2007 amounted to $79.6 million. Funding amounted to $41.3 million, or 52 per cent.

Special economic assistance

African economic recovery and development

New Partnership for Africa’s Development

The General Assembly in 2002, by resolution 57/7 [YUN 2002, p. 910], endorsed the Secretary-General’s recommendation [ibid., p. 909] that the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), adopted in 2001 by the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity [YUN 2001, p. 900], should be the framework within which the in-
ternal community should concentrate its efforts for Africa’s development.

Report of Secretary-General (March). In response to a request of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) [YUN 2005, p. 1004], the Secretary-General in March submitted a report [E/AC.51/2007/4] on UN system support for NEPAD, which detailed work undertaken since May 2006 and was organized around nine thematic clusters corresponding to the Partnership’s priorities and strategies: infrastructure development; governance; peace and security; agriculture, food security and rural development; industry, trade and market access; environment, population and urbanization; human resources development, employment and HIV/AIDS; science and technology; and communication, advocacy and outreach. In addition, three selected policy issues in the implementation of NEPAD were examined: revitalization of the cluster system and enhanced UN-African Union (AU) cooperation, support for the mobilization of financial resources for NEPAD, and advocacy, cross-cutting issues and institutional support. In terms of enhanced cooperation, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and UNDP formed a strategic partnership in January to jointly leverage their resources to increase capacity development. The International Monetary Fund continued to work with international partners to promote growth and poverty reduction, including through the provision of direct financial support and debt relief. As of January 2007, the Fund had granted 100 per cent debt relief to 16 African countries that had reached the Debt Initiative completion point. The report also identified challenges and constraints faced by the UN system in supporting NEPAD.

The Secretary-General concluded that further strengthening of NEPAD was vital. He recommended, among other things, the conduct of a comprehensive assessment of UN system modalities of work in Africa, the establishment by UN entities of a system-wide mechanism for sharing field experiences and lessons learned, and increased efforts by the UN system to scale up financial resources and allocate more funding to Africa-related programmes.

CEB report (May). The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), in its annual report for 2006-2007 [E/2007/69], reviewed emerging issues on its agenda, which included support to African development. CEB said that with the mid-point target date to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) [YUN 2000, p. 51] approaching fast, it was incumbent on the UN system to revitalize its common endeavours in support of Africa. The Board called for an inclusive preparatory process to CEB discussions, engaging outside experts to develop clear analyses and action-oriented recommendations to strengthen system support to African development.

It also agreed that Africa should be on the agenda of its next session.

CPC action. CPC, at its forty-seventh session (11 June–3 July [A/62/16], endorsed the recommendations in the Secretary-General’s report on NEPAD (see above), acknowledged the critical role of the Special Adviser on Africa as the focal point for UN system support for NEPAD, and stressed the need to fill the position of Special Adviser to mobilize support, capacity and resources for NEPAD priorities to ensure that Africa remained on the global development agenda, and to align funds, agencies and programmes with NEPAD objectives. The Committee recommended that the Assembly request the Office of the Special Adviser to ensure that UN support for NEPAD moved from debate, assessments and recommendations to tangible action and results in respect of NEPAD projects across the continent, and reiterated that ECA, through the regional consultation mechanism, should assume the role of strategic coordinator of UN support for NEPAD implementation.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION

On 26 July [meeting 46], the Economic and Social Council, on the recommendation of the Commission for Social Development [E/2007/26], adopted resolution 2007/28 without vote [agenda item 14 (b)].

Social dimensions of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling the outcomes of the World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995, and the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, entitled “World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world”, held in Geneva from 26 June to 1 July 2000,


Recalling the conclusions of the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Employment and Poverty Alleviation, held in Ouagadougou on 8 and 9 September 2004,

Recognizing the commitments made in respect of meeting the special needs of Africa at the 2005 World Summit,

Remaining concerned that Africa is the only continent currently not on track to achieve any of the goals set out in the Millennium Declaration by 2015, and in this regard emphasizing that concerted efforts and continued support are required to fulfil the commitments to addressing the special needs of Africa,

Bearing in mind the fact that African countries have primary responsibility for their own economic and social
development, that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized and that their development efforts need to be supported by an enabling international economic environment, and in this regard recalling the support given by the International Conference on Financing for Development to the New Partnership,

1. **Welcomes** the progress made by the African countries in fulfilling their commitments, in the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, to deepen democracy, human rights, good governance and sound economic management, and encourages African countries, with the participation of stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to intensify their efforts in this regard by developing and strengthening institutions for governance and creating an environment conducive to attracting foreign direct investment for the development of the region;

2. **Also welcomes** the progress that has been achieved in implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism, in particular the completion of the peer review process and the progress in implementing the recommendations of those reviews in some countries and the completion of the self-assessment process, the hosting of country support missions and the launching of the national preparatory process for the peer review in others, and urges African States that have not yet done so to join the peer review, as a matter of priority, and to strengthen the peer review process so as to ensure its efficient performance;

3. **Further welcomes** the efforts made by African countries and regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union, to mainstream a gender perspective and the empowerment of women in the implementation of the New Partnership;

4. **Recalls** that the African Union and the regional economic communities have a critical role to play in the implementation of the New Partnership, and in this regard encourages African countries, with the assistance of their development partners, to increase their support to enhancing the capacities of those institutions;

5. **Emphasizes** that progress in the implementation of the New Partnership also depends on a favourable national and international environment for Africa’s growth and development, including measures to promote a policy environment conducive to private sector development and entrepreneurship;

6. **Also emphasizes** that democracy, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development, transparent and accountable governance and administration in all sectors of society, and effective participation by civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector are among the indispensable foundations for the realization of social and people-centred sustainable development;

7. **Further emphasizes** that rising poverty levels and social exclusion faced by most African countries require significant changes in the development of social policy and comprehensive social policies, inter alia, to reduce poverty, promote economic activity, growth and sustainable development, ensure employment creation and decent work for all, enhance social inclusion, political stability, democracy, good governance and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and achieve Africa’s social and economic objectives;

8. **Recognizes** that while social development is primarily the responsibility of Governments, international cooperation and assistance are essential for the full achievement of that goal;

9. **Also recognizes** the contribution made by Member States to the implementation of the New Partnership in the context of South-South cooperation, welcomes, in that regard, the convening of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation on 4 and 5 November 2006 and the Africa-Latin America Summit, held in Abuja on 30 November and 1 December 2006, and encourages the international community, including the international financial institutions, to support the efforts of African countries, including through triangular cooperation;

10. **Welcomes** the various important initiatives of Africa’s development partners in recent years, including those of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Union and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, including the Africa-Asia Business Forum, the Africa Action Plan of the Group of Eight, the report of the Commission for Africa entitled “Our common interest” and the Africa Partnership Forum, and in this regard emphasizes the importance of coordination in such initiatives for Africa;

11. **Urges** continuous support of measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa, including, as appropriate, debt relief, improved market access, support for the private sector and entrepreneurship, enhanced official development assistance, increased foreign direct investment and the transfer of technology;

12. **Welcomes** the recent increase in official development assistance pledged by many of the development partners, including the commitments of the Group of Eight and the European Union, which will lead to an increase in official development assistance to Africa of 25 billion dollars per year by 2010, and encourages all development partners to ensure aid effectiveness through the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Ownership, Harmonization, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability of 2005;

13. **Recognizes** the need for national Governments and the international community to make continued efforts to increase the flow of new and additional resources for financing for development from all sources, public and private, domestic and foreign, to support the development of African countries;

14. **Welcomes** the efforts by development partners to align their financial and technical support to Africa more closely with the priorities of the New Partnership, as reflected in national poverty reduction strategies and in similar strategies, and encourages development partners to increase their efforts in this regard;

15. **Acknowledges** the activities of the Bretton Woods institutions and the African Development Bank in African countries, and invites those institutions to continue their support for the implementation of the priorities and objectives of the New Partnership;

16. **Notes** the growing collaboration among the entities of the United Nations system in support of the New
made in the operationalization of the African Energy Commission and, in the water sector, the Technical Advisory Committee of the African Ministers’ Council on Water met in February to engage the cooperation of the European Commission and the African Development Bank on improving the effectiveness of support provided by the two organizations. NEPAD also secured $14 million for support for improved assessment of African river basins. Action taken within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme framework included a meeting on “Biotechnology, crop production and seed systems” organized by the Rockefeller Foundation (Mozambique, March) and the convening of the first country round table of the Programme (Rwanda, March), where a mutual commitment between Rwanda, the AU Commission, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and development partners was signed.

On health and education issues, NEPAD collaborated with the AU Commission in preparing the African Health Strategy 2007-2015, which was presented to the AU Conference of Health Ministers in April. NEPAD also collaborated with the World Health Organization on strengthening health systems in Africa, which led to the establishment of the Africa Health Workforce Observatory in Brazzaville. Activities to implement components of the NEPAD e-schools initiatives continued, including the e-schools demonstration project and the e-schools business plan. E-schools were launched in Egypt in February and in South Africa in April. On science and technology, the African biosciences initiative advanced with the establishment of four regional hubs for the biosciences in West Africa (Senegal); North Africa (Egypt); East and Central Africa (Nairobi); and Southern Africa (South Africa). NEPAD commissioned 10 studies and assessments to identify priorities to enhance the procurement of health products and technologies and to strengthen research to improve public health, which would be presented at a January 2008 round table in Addis Ababa. In collaboration with NEPAD and other partners, the AU Commission finalized Africa’s Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action.

Despite limited financial and institutional capacity, the African Peer Review Mechanism process moved forward. As of June, 26 countries had voluntarily acceded to the Review Mechanism, accounting for about 75 per cent of the total population of the continent. The 2007 work plan of the Mechanism provided for review missions to three countries, review missions to four countries and post-review missions to six countries, support missions to four countries, regional missions to three countries, and review missions to four countries, regional missions to three countries.

The Secretary-General said that progress was made in implementing the two tracks of the infrastructure programme, namely the short-term action plan for infrastructure development and the medium- to long-term strategic framework. The Infrastructure Consortium for Africa met in January to discuss strategic issues such as increasing investment in infrastructure and capacity-building for the regional economic communities. It was estimated that $1.3 billion was needed to close the funding gap for projects ready for implementation, yet lacking funds. Progress was made in the operationalization of the African Energy Commission and, in the water sector, the Technical Advisory Committee of the African Ministers’ Council on Water met in February to engage the cooperation of the European Commission and the African Development Bank on improving the effectiveness of support provided by the two organizations. NEPAD also secured $14 million for support for improved assessment of African river basins. Action taken within the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme framework included a meeting on “Biotechnology, crop production and seed systems” organized by the Rockefeller Foundation (Mozambique, March) and the convening of the first country round table of the Programme (Rwanda, March), where a mutual commitment between Rwanda, the AU Commission, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and development partners was signed.

On health and education issues, NEPAD collaborated with the AU Commission in preparing the African Health Strategy 2007-2015, which was presented to the AU Conference of Health Ministers in April. NEPAD also collaborated with the World Health Organization on strengthening health systems in Africa, which led to the establishment of the Africa Health Workforce Observatory in Brazzaville. Activities to implement components of the NEPAD e-schools initiatives continued, including the e-schools demonstration project and the e-schools business plan. E-schools were launched in Egypt in February and in South Africa in April. On science and technology, the African biosciences initiative advanced with the establishment of four regional hubs for the biosciences in West Africa (Senegal); North Africa (Egypt); East and Central Africa (Nairobi); and Southern Africa (South Africa). NEPAD commissioned 10 studies and assessments to identify priorities to enhance the procurement of health products and technologies and to strengthen research to improve public health, which would be presented at a January 2008 round table in Addis Ababa. In collaboration with NEPAD and other partners, the AU Commission finalized Africa’s Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action.

Despite limited financial and institutional capacity, the African Peer Review Mechanism process moved forward. As of June, 26 countries had voluntarily acceded to the Review Mechanism, accounting for about 75 per cent of the total population of the continent. The 2007 work plan of the Mechanism provided for advance missions in five countries, follow-up missions to six countries, support missions to four countries, review missions to four countries and post-review missions to three countries.

On the response of the international community, there was evidence that aid and debt relief to Africa were making an impact in improving the lives of mil-
lions of people. However, for the first time since 1997, total official development assistance (ODA) to Africa provided by the Development Assistance Committee declined, falling by 1.8 per cent in 2005 and by 5.1 per cent to $103.9 billion in 2006. There were concerns that ODA would further decline in 2007. Progress was made in extending and deepening debt relief through the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and bilateral debt relief initiatives. As three countries had reached the completion point of the HIPC Initiative in the past year, as of July, 18 African countries were benefiting through the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative and seven countries were receiving interim relief through the HIPC Initiative, paying significantly reduced debt services. Thus, the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative and the HIPC Initiative combined were providing approximately $70 billion in debt relief to African countries, saving them an average of almost $2 billion a year in debt servicing costs. The two initiatives were complemented by bilateral debt relief granted by the Group of Eight countries and other donor countries.

As for foreign direct investment (FDI), in 2005, the year for which the latest data were available from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, FDI flows to Africa reached an unprecedented level of $31 billion, compared with $17 billion in 2004. Despite the record inflows, Africa’s share in global FDI remained at 3 per cent, which reflected slow progress in increasing productive capacity and diversification, developing the regional market and forming a highly skilled labour force.

International support for trade-related assistance continued to intensify and African countries were active in articulating their position, requesting, in particular, assistance in meeting standards and the cost of implementing other agreements of the World Trade Organization (WTO), strengthening their negotiating capacities and improving their chances of acceding to WTO. Negotiations on the economic partnership agreements between the European Union and African countries were well under way, with a view to replacing non-conforming trade preferences for Africa with agreements compatible with WTO agreements by year’s end. At the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Addis Ababa, April), ministers called on the European Union to make additional resources available to meet the adjustment and other associated costs. Japan continued to emphasize the Tokyo International Conference on African Development process as a cornerstone of cooperation between African countries and Japan. Meanwhile, South-South cooperation was gaining in importance. Cooperation between China and Africa was expanding. The China-Africa Development Fund, with capital of $5 billion, was established in March. Countries such as Brazil and India were more economically active in Africa, including by providing technical assistance. Bilateral links between African and South American countries were also expanding.

The UN system remained a pillar of international support. Subsequent to the 2006 declaration on “Enhancing UN-AU Cooperation” [YUN 2006, p. 340], the Organization was developing a 10-year capacity-building programme for the AU. In order to increase synergies and improve collaboration among UN agencies, the seventh regional consultation meeting of UN entities, agencies and organizations, convened in November 2006 by the Economic Commission for Africa [ibid., p. 1149], created new thematic clusters by dividing two existing ones. The governance, peace and security cluster was divided into a governance cluster and a peace and security cluster; and the agriculture, trade and market access cluster was split into a cluster for agriculture, food security and rural development and a cluster for industry, trade and market access. The terms of the latter cluster were adopted in May.

The Secretary-General concluded that although Africa’s development partners had made progress in cancelling the multilateral debt of qualified African countries, lack of progress in the Doha Round trade talks remained a major problem. He called on the international community to make progress on its pledges, on African countries to take steps to implement NEPAD projects and programmes they had adopted, and on Group of Eight member countries to increase their aid in line with their commitment to double assistance to Africa by 2010. He urged the international community to ensure that multilateral trade agreements, including the final Doha Round, prioritized Africa’s needs and incorporated developmental provisions. As the Aid for Trade initiative [YUN 2005, p. 1043] was expected to assist African countries in implementing trade arrangements by addressing constraints they faced, he emphasized that the initiative should be well formulated, adequately funded, efficiently managed and effectively implemented. He advocated further strengthening of the thematic clusters and the regional consultation mechanism by organizing more frequent and regular meetings, particularly at the senior level. He called on the UN system to monitor and evaluate the impact of its activities in support of the AU and NEPAD, and on African Governments to continue prudent borrowing policies, to strengthen their capacity to monitor and manage their debt, and to strengthen their public finance management practices.

**MDG Africa Steering Group.** In September, the MDG Africa Steering Group, which brought together leaders of multilateral development organizations to identify the steps needed to achieve the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals in Africa, was launched at UN Headquarters. The MDG
Africa Working Group, which supported the work of the Steering Group, was also established.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 19 December [meeting 78], the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/179 [draft: A/62/L.10/Rev.1 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 64 (a)].

New Partnership for Africa’s Development: progress in implementation and international support

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 57/2 of 16 September 2002 on the United Nations Declaration on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development,


Recalling further the 2005 World Summit Outcome, including the recognition of the need to meet the special needs of Africa, and recalling also its resolution 60/265 of 30 June 2006,

Bearing in mind that African countries have primary responsibility for their own economic and social development and that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized, and also the need for their development efforts to be supported by an enabling international economic environment, and in this regard recalling the support given by the International Conference on Financing for Development to the New Partnership,

Emphasizing that a favourable national and international environment for Africa’s growth and development is important for progress in the implementation of the New Partnership,

Stressing the need to implement all commitments by the international community regarding the economic and social development of Africa,

1. Welcomes the fifth consolidated report of the Secretary-General;

2. Reaffirms its full support for the implementation of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development;

3. Recognizes the progress made in the implementation of the New Partnership as well as regional and international support for the New Partnership, while acknowledging that much needs to be done in its implementation;

4. Reaffirms the resolve to provide assistance for prevention and care, with the aim of ensuring an HIV/AIDS-, malaria- and tuberculosis-free Africa, by addressing the needs of all, in particular the needs of women, children and young people, and achieving as closely as possible the goal of universal access by 2010 to comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, treatment, care and support in African countries, to accelerate and intensify efforts to expand access to affordable and quality medicines in Africa, including antiretroviral drugs, inter alia, by encouraging pharmaceutical companies to make drugs available, and to ensure increased bilateral and multilateral assistance, where possible on a grant basis, to combat malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases in Africa through the strengthening of health systems;

5. Reaffirms its full support for the implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, adopted at the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on 27 June 2001, and the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, adopted by the Assembly on 2 June 2006;

I

Actions by African countries and organizations

6. Welcomes the progress made by the African countries in fulfilling their commitments in the implementation of the New Partnership to deepen democracy, human rights, good governance and sound economic management, and encourages African countries, with the participation of stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector, to continue their efforts in this regard by developing and strengthening institutions for governance, creating an environment conducive to involving the private sector, including small and medium-size firms, in the New Partnership implementation process and to attracting foreign direct investment for the development of the region;

7. Also welcomes the commendable progress that has been achieved in implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism, in particular the completion of the peer review process in a number of countries, further welcomes the progress in implementing the national programmes of action resulting from these reviews, and in this regard urges African States that have not done so to consider joining the Mechanism process as soon as possible and to strengthen the Mechanism process for its efficient performance;

8. Welcomes and appreciates the continuing and increasing efforts of African countries to mainstream a gender perspective and the empowerment of women in the implementation of the New Partnership;

9. Stresses that conflict prevention, management and resolution and post-conflict consolidation are essential for the achievement of the objectives of the New Partnership, and welcomes in this regard the cooperation and support granted by the United Nations and development partners to the African regional and subregional organizations in the implementation of the New Partnership;

10. Recognizes the need for African countries to continue to coordinate, in accordance with their respective national strategies and priorities, all types of external assistance in order to integrate effectively such assistance into their development processes;

11. Encourages African countries to accelerate the achievement of the objective of food security in Africa, and in this regard reaffirms its support for the outcome of the post-Abuja meeting of the International Technical Committee of the Food Security Summit, held in Addis Ababa in May 2007;

12. Recognizes the important role that African regional economic communities can play in the implementation of the New Partnership, and in this regard encourages African countries and the international community to give regional economic communities the necessary support to strengthen their capacity;
13. Supports the ongoing efforts by the African Union to improve the coordination between the New Partnership secretariat, the African Union Commission, the regional economic communities and African States;

14. Encourages the establishment of national institutional mechanisms for further domestication and integration of the priorities and objectives of the New Partnership in national policies and programmes;

15. Encourages African countries to further enhance public awareness of and commitment to the New Partnership and its programmes through, inter alia, effective and comprehensive communication and outreach strategies;

II

Response of the international community

16. Welcomes the efforts by development partners to strengthen cooperation with the New Partnership;

17. Also welcomes the various important initiatives of Africa’s development partners in recent years, such as, inter alia, the Africa Partnership Forum, the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership, the China-Africa Partnership, the European Union-Africa Strategic Partnership, the Group of Eight, the Millennium Challenge Account, the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief of the President of the United States of America and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), and emphasizes in this regard the importance of coordination in such initiatives on Africa and the need for their effective implementation;

18. Recognizes the important role that South-South cooperation can play in supporting Africa’s development efforts, including implementation of the New Partnership;

19. Urges continued support of measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa including, as appropriate, debt relief, improved market access, support for the private sector and entrepreneurship, enhanced official development assistance and increased flows of foreign direct investment, and transfer of technology;

20. Reiterates the need for all countries and relevant multilateral institutions to continue efforts to enhance coherence in their trade policies towards African countries, and acknowledges the importance of efforts to fully integrate African countries into the international trading system through initiatives such as building Africa’s capacity to compete and the provision of assistance to address the adjustment challenges of trade liberalization;

21. Calls for a comprehensive and sustainable solution to the external debt problems of African countries, including cancellation or restructuring, as appropriate, and on a case-by-case basis, for heavily indebted African countries not part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative that have unsustainable debt burdens, and emphasizes the importance of debt sustainability;

22. Also calls for the fulfilment of pledges by the Group of Eight countries to double by 2010 official development assistance to Africa, and in this regard calls upon the international community, particularly the Group of Eight, to honour their commitments and to ensure that the increase in official development assistance translates into the actual flow of financial resources to developing countries;

23. Acknowledges efforts by developed countries to increase resources for development, including commitments by some developed countries to increase official development assistance, notes with concern the overall decline in official development assistance in 2006, and calls for the fulfilment of all official development assistance commitments, including the commitments by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance in developing countries by 2015 and to reach the level of at least 0.5 per cent of gross national income for official development assistance by 2010, as well as the target of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income for least developed countries, and urges those developed countries that have not yet done so to make concrete efforts in this regard in accordance with their commitments;

24. Welcomes the efforts of some developed countries, which are on target to meet the commitments made in terms of increased official development assistance;

25. Also welcomes recent efforts and initiatives to enhance the quality of aid and to increase its impact, including the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and the resolve to take concrete, effective and timely action in implementing all agreed commitments on aid effectiveness, with clear monitoring and deadlines, including by further aligning assistance with countries’ strategies, building institutional capacities, reducing transaction costs and eliminating bureaucratic procedures, making progress on untying aid, enhancing the absorptive capacity and financial management of recipient countries and strengthening the focus on development results;

26. Recognizes the need for the international community to make continued efforts to increase the flow of new and additional resources for financing for development from all sources, public and private, domestic and foreign, to support the development of African countries;

27. Invites developed countries to promote investment by their private sectors in Africa, to help African countries attract investments and promote policies conducive to attracting domestic and foreign investment, such as encouraging private financial flows and promoting and maintaining macroeconomic stability, to encourage and facilitate the transfer of the technology needed to African countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, and to assist in strengthening human and institutional capacities for the implementation of the New Partnership, consistent with its priorities and objectives and with a view to furthering Africa’s development at all levels;

28. Requests the United Nations system to continue to provide assistance to the African Union and the New Partnership secretariat and to African countries in developing projects and programmes within the scope of the priorities of the New Partnership and to place greater emphasis on monitoring, evaluation and dissemination of the effectiveness of its activities in support of the New Partnership;

29. Invites the Secretary-General, as a follow-up to the 2005 World Summit, to urge the United Nations development system to assist African countries in implementing quick-impact initiatives through, inter alia, the Millennium Villages Project, and also requests the Secretary-General to include in his report an assessment of those quick-impact initiatives;

30. Reaffirms its decision to hold within existing resources a high-level meeting on “Africa’s development
needs: state of implementation of various commitments, challenges and the way forward during its sixty-third session;
31. Stresses the need for close consultation between the United Nations and the African Union in preparing for the high-level meeting;
32. Requests the Secretary-General to promote greater coherence in the work of the United Nations system in support of the New Partnership, on the basis of the agreed clusters;
33. Reiterates the call upon the United Nations system to continue to mainstream the special needs of Africa in all its normative and operational activities;
34. Requests the Secretary-General to take measures to strengthen the Office of the Special Adviser on Africa in order to enable it to effectively fulfil its mandate, including monitoring and reporting on progress related to meeting the special needs of Africa;
35. Takes note of the fact that the post of the Special Adviser on Africa is vacant, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to address this issue as soon as possible;
36. Requests the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the implementation of the present resolution to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session on the basis of inputs from Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and other stakeholders in the New Partnership.

On 22 December, by decision 62/546, the Assembly decided that the agenda item on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development: progress in implementation and international support would remain for consideration during its resumed sixty-second (2008) session.

Djibouti

In response to General Assembly resolution 60/217 [YUN 2005, p. 1031], the Secretary-General, in his August consolidated report on humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation for selected countries and regions [A/62/310], provided information on the delivery of humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance by the United Nations and its partners in Djibouti.

Early warning systems in November 2005 indicated that erratic and insufficient rainfall throughout the Horn of Africa would lead to reduced water, pasture land and food availability, and identified pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities to be most at risk. In order to address the issue, the Government in January 2006 launched an international appeal for drought assistance [YUN 2006, p. 1105]. UN agencies coordinated emergency interventions to respond to the immediate needs of the most affected population groups. Despite those efforts, in 2006 the overall acute malnutrition rate increased to 20.7 per cent and severe malnutrition increased by 7.5 per cent. In March 2007, a food security update plan estimated a further increase in the number of food-insecure pastoralists from 47,500 to as many as 70,000. Moreover, some 150,000 people, including 30,000 under 5 years of age, remained at high risk of hunger and malnutrition. Although UN system entities were effective in tackling acute malnourishment and contributed to a significant drop in hunger-related deaths, the improved survival rate of malnourished children and adults led to an increase in the overall level of malnutrition. In May, the UN country team called for urgent support for ongoing relief activities while seeking to address issues such as food availability, water and sanitation, diseases and household food practices.

The country was also prone to natural disasters, such as recurring droughts, floods and earthquakes. The frequency of drought had increased, with fluctuating rainfall and shorter recovery periods, causing a chronic emergency, which contributed to livelihood insecurity, asset depletion and long-term vulnerability to crises. Assistance frameworks which could bridge the gap between recurrent emergencies and the recovery process were being discussed.

The Secretary-General said that the National Social Development Initiative and the new inter-ministerial task force on food security were positive steps taken by the Government to alleviate hunger and to work towards reaching the MDGs. However, the Government still needed to find the necessary technical and financial resources to address those areas effectively. Urgent humanitarian assistance was required to lessen the consequences of high levels of malnutrition. He added that the UN country team supported the new Initiative and that the newly formulated UN Development Assistance Framework reflected key areas of action as defined by the Initiative.

Ethiopia

In response to General Assembly resolution 60/218 [YUN 2005, p. 1032], the Secretary-General, in his August consolidated report [A/62/310], provided information on the delivery of humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance by the United Nations and its partners in Ethiopia.

Over the past two years, Ethiopia continued to face numerous humanitarian challenges. Chronic food insecurity affected the lives of approximately 10 million subsistence agriculturalists and agro-pastoralists who required food or cash assistance annually, including 7.2 million covered under the Government’s Productive Safety Nets Programme, while an estimated 1.4 million were in need of emergency food assistance. Consequently, in 2007, a joint Government/UN/humanitarian partners appeal requested $180 million to meet emergency food, health and other non-food requirements. Droughts and flooding also remained endemic problems. Unprecedented nationwide flooding
in 2006 had affected 8 of Ethiopia’s 11 regions, killing more than 700 people and adversely impacting the lives of 600,000 others. Health concerns continued to take their toll, especially among poor rural populations. Acute watery diarrhoea was a cause of concern across the country during 2007, with cases reported in the Afar, Amhara, Harari, Oromiya, Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples and Somali regions. Efforts by the Government and humanitarian partners to combat the disease were ongoing. Meanwhile, malaria and the potential for avian influenza and Rift Valley fever epidemics in the subregion remained threats. Intermittent animal health emergencies were also present in parts of the country.

Humanitarian challenges also developed from the political environment and complex inter-ethnic emergencies, such as the situation in the Somali region, which resulted from ongoing military operations by the Ethiopian National Defence Force in five zones. The military action had a severe impact on livelihoods and food security, as all commercial trade from Somalia was prohibited and humanitarian access to the region was restricted. In that context, the protection of civilians was a concern. Dialogue was ongoing between humanitarian partners and the Government to support targeted food and health assistance for the affected population. Displacements of populations owing to localized inter-ethnic conflict continued, including in the Oromiya and Gambella regions. In addition, inter-ethnic clashes were occurring more frequently and with increased complexity. The Government, with UN support, undertook various efforts for conflict resolution.

On response and preparedness, the Federal Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency was responsible for disaster management and overall emergency coordination. UN support to the Government was coordinated by the Humanitarian Coordinator with assistance from OCHA and the UN strategic disaster management team. As part of Government efforts to implement reform, the national disaster management policy and structure were under review. Government reform of the annual humanitarian appeal process was initiated in February with the launch of the joint Government/humanitarian partners appeal. Its goal was to transition from the monthly allocations of food aid performed in the past to a method of case-by-case verification assessments for food and other assistance, thus breaking the cycle of humanitarian aid dependence that had characterized Ethiopia. Negotiations were ongoing to refine the new approach and to ensure that all emergency beneficiary needs were addressed. Following visits of the United Nations Special Humanitarian Envoy for the Horn of Africa to the region, the Governments of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Uganda, with UN support, agreed to develop country-based food security roadmaps to tackle the root causes of rising hunger across the drought-plagued region.

On development matters, the UN Development Assistance Framework was the common strategic framework for operational activities of the UN system in Ethiopia; the Framework supported Government development efforts and reflected the national priorities included in Ethiopia’s second national poverty reduction strategy paper. The priority areas for action selected by the UN country team for development cooperation during the 2007-2011 period included humanitarian response; recovery and food security; basic social services and human resources; HIV/AIDS; good governance; and enhanced economic growth.

The Secretary-General observed that there was a need for improving preparedness, contingency planning and risk reduction, in particular for rapid onset emergencies such as floods, to facilitate early response, as well as for addressing the poor infrastructure, especially roads, which hampered humanitarian access. There was also a need for a more comprehensive approach to deal with the needs of vulnerable groups, including pastoralists; improved humanitarian access in the Somali region; and the need to link emergency water and sanitation interventions with long-term development programmes for prevention.

**Rwanda**

In response to General Assembly resolution 60/225 [YUN 2005, p. 225], the Secretary-General, in his August consolidated report [A/62/310], provided information on the delivery of humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance by the United Nations and its partners in Rwanda.

Rwanda’s society, infrastructure and economy were heavily damaged by the 1994 genocide and preceding decades of poor governance. With the majority of educated professionals massacred or displaced, the legal, educational and administrative infrastructure was greatly affected and capacities at all levels remained weak. Despite the atrocities of 1994, the Government and people of Rwanda made remarkable progress, including the adoption of a new Constitution and the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections. Considerable efforts were made to implement justice and to advance reconciliation, such as the reintegration of ex-combatants, returnees and displaced persons. The most serious genocide-related cases were heard in conventional courts or at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (see p. 1342). Over 740,000 persons accused of minor genocide-related crimes were envisaged to be judged through a modified traditional justice system called *gacaca* that was
launched in 2006. Rwanda’s economy continued to grow and poverty was declining, from around 70 per cent in 1994 to 57 per cent in 2007. Progress was also noticeable in the strengthening of financial institutions. The UN country team was conducting needs assessments, in consultation with concerned ministries, to support the development of the new poverty reduction strategy paper, which would inform planning and programming for the achievement of the MDGs. In that connection, the current UNDAF was extended for one year to allow an effective alignment with the national planning process. The UN country team also established good partnerships with other development organizations and was undertaking activities across key sectors. In other developments, the Government was formulating a new aid management policy to further improve the coordination of development assistance. Access to health services and education was increasing, with primary education enrolment at 94 per cent, with 100 per cent gender parity. Nonetheless, acute malnutrition and underweight rates persisted among children under 5 years of age. At the regional level, Rwanda played an increasingly stabilizing role and was one of the first three African nations to participate in the NEPAD African Peer Review Mechanism. It sent troops to the Sudan with the AU and was part of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan.

Challenges to development included the issue of poverty, with 56.9 per cent of the population living in poverty in 2006, while extreme poverty stood at 34 per cent. High levels of population growth, low and decreasing levels of agricultural productivity and increasingly harsh climatic cycles hampered development efforts and burdened the most vulnerable households. Although Rwanda made substantial progress in addressing health issues, too many Rwandans died of diseases that were easily cured or preventable through access to safe water and improved sanitation, simple health interventions and sensitization about disease prevention, nutrition and good hygiene practices. HIV/AIDS continued to threaten the economic and social fabric and the public health system in terms of cost of treatment, care and support. The combined effects of genocide, war and HIV/AIDS led to an unprecedented number of orphans and child- and elderly-headed households. Moreover, while Rwanda had a strong policy and planning framework for achieving the MDGs targets concerning health and HIV/AIDS, effective implementation of those instruments suffered from insufficient investment and human resources capacity at all levels of public administration. Positive developments included Rwanda’s progress in meeting primary education enrolment and parity goals and in public sector reform. However, challenges remained, such as the lack of access to primary education for vulnerable children and children with special needs and a high level of non-completion of primary education.

The Secretary-General said that past years had witnessed increased commitment by the UN system to support Rwanda. However, for the MDGs to be achieved, the UN country team needed further support to invest in the priority sectors of UNDAF: governance, health, education, environment, sustainable growth and social services. The main areas of intervention for the United Nations included education for orphans and adolescents in reproductive health; support to child-headed households and children in emergency situations; medical care and treatment for victims of sexual violence; capacity-building and rehabilitation of maternal and child health services; reproductive health education; trauma and psychological programmes for genocide survivors; assistance to women’s associations supporting vulnerable women; and support to the national witness protection programme.

Rwandophones in Tanzania. In March 2006, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania announced plans to expel an estimated 60,000 people of Rwandan origin, who sought refuge in Tanzania in previous years and who chose to live among the local population instead of living in refugee camps. The overall situation of the population of Rwandan origin was equal to the situation of the local population. Many of them possessed a large amount of livestock that they were forced to leave behind in part or whole when they were evicted. In January 2007, the Joint Government and Development Partners Appeal for the humanitarian, recovery and development assistance to Rwandophones expelled from Tanzania was issued. The appeal, which identified 10 priority sectors and themes for action, requested $53 million for an 18-month humanitarian response.

African countries emerging from conflict

Guinea-Bissau


The economic and social situation had continued to deteriorate, with an economic growth rate of 1.8 per cent in 2006, compared to 3.5 per cent in 2005, which was not sufficient to slow the worsening living conditions. The Government continued to struggle to pay
Civil service salaries and accumulated arrears, and was unable to generate adequate revenues owing to lower-than-expected taxes on cashew exports and fees from fishing licences. Strikes by trade unions and military veterans affected the public sector. The lack of salaries, combined with the crisis in the cashew market, had a negative impact on food security. In that connection, WFP and UNICEF noted a deterioration in the nutritional situation, especially among children under five, with malnutrition exceeding the WHO emergency threshold. The Government responded by funding salaries through short-term loans at commercial rates from banks in neighbouring countries, yet that solution was not sustainable and added to the Government’s debt burden. The UN system continued to provide support to Guinea-Bissau. In the area of food security, FAO, WFP and the Government supported food-for-work schemes to rehabilitate rice fields. UNICEF developed a special programme to reintegrate children and teachers in schools affected by military conflict in the north. UNICEF, WHO and a number of NGOs launched a joint effort with the Ministry of Health to organize a country-wide distribution of treated mosquito nets, targeting 187,000 children under five, and to provide children with vitamin A supplements and treatment for intestinal worms. This was followed by the launch of a national health plan for the period 2008-2012, supported by WHO, the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF. Meeting on 29 March to discuss the socio-economic challenges facing the country, the Group stressed the importance of an orderly political evolution and expressed its willingness to discuss the continuation of the reform programmes with the national authorities, in particular with regard to the administration, defence and security sectors. Another concern was the marked increase in drug trafficking and the potential for the increasing use of Guinea-Bissau as a transit point for drugs to further weaken the State and increase control of State institutions by criminal gangs.

On short-term priorities and medium-term prospects, the Group reported that the most urgent need facing Guinea-Bissau was the disbursement of pledged funds from the November 2006 donor round-table conference, particularly the pledges for budgetary support for 2007. The Government presented its poverty reduction strategy paper, its security sector reform plan and its 2006 and 2007 draft budget, which combined totalled $538 million. However, commitments mobilized fell short, with donors contributing $262.5 million, or 48 per cent of the funds requested, mainly towards the poverty reduction strategy paper ($233.1 million) and budgetary support ($29.5 million), with no pledges made for the security sector reform plan. The Group welcomed the formation of the new Government, was encouraged that the new Prime Minister had taken action to increase transparency in the management of public finances and encouraged further action in that regard. The Group also highlighted the need for the implementation of security sector reform; the disbursement of funds pledged to implement the national poverty reduction plan; the development of a comprehensive economic diversification strategy; and improvements in the management of public administration. While there had been significant improvement in the management of public funds, the Group was concerned by the lack of technical capacity within the public sector and urged the Bretton Woods institutions, the UN system and other multilateral organizations to provide technical assistance to the country to strengthen its public administration.

The Group was encouraged that the new multi-party system was able to resolve political crises within the framework of democratic institutions and encouraged the Government to strengthen its commitment to economic reforms and to full transparency and accountability in the management of public administration. It was clear that ongoing tension and instability in the country led to the delay in the implementation of tasks assigned to the Group and that their completion depended on a stable political and institutional environment, for which the upcoming legislative elections in March 2008 were a prerequisite. The Group also advocated expanding its interaction with national authorities and its collaboration with other organizations in support of Guinea-Bissau. The Group welcomed the creation of the International Contact Group for Guinea-Bissau, a new initiative launched in September 2006 to mobilize support for the country, and looked forward to a close working relationship. In the light of the above, the Group indicated that Guinea-Bissau should continue to receive sustained support from the international community and invited the Economic and Social Council to consider placing Guinea-Bissau on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

(For more information on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, see p. 220.)

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION**

On 26 July [meeting 45], the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2007/15 [draft: E/2007/L.27] without vote [agenda item 7(g)].

**Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau**

Noting the appointment of a new Government in April 2007, and encouraging the Government of Guinea-Bissau to intensify its efforts to further deepen economic reforms and to strengthen governance,

Expressing concern at the marked increase in the use of the territory of Guinea-Bissau for drug trafficking and its possible impact on the State, and in this regard encouraging the efforts of the Government of Guinea-Bissau, with the assistance of the international community, to combat this newly emerging challenge,

Recognizing the need for strong regional and international support for the continuing efforts of the Government of Guinea-Bissau to improve political and institutional stability,

Welcoming the establishment of the International Contact Group on Guinea-Bissau and its role in mobilizing support for the country,

Also welcoming the positive and constructive role of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau in supporting the country in its pursuit of its pressing short- and long-term development objectives,

1. Takes note of the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau;
2. Welcomes the holding of the donor round-table conference in Geneva on 7 and 8 November 2006, and urges the donor community to disburse funds in line with the pledges made, including for budgetary support, with a view to contributing to the clearing of the 2007 fiscal deficit;
3. Stresses the importance of implementing the country’s poverty reduction strategy and its security sector reform plan, and of funding them;
4. Reaffirms the need to create an enabling environment in Guinea-Bissau to promote sustainable development in the country, including through a commitment to transparent and sound public expenditure management;
5. Invites the partners of Guinea-Bissau to provide both technical and financial support for the next legislative elections, which are due by March 2008;
6. Requests the Secretary-General, the United Nations Development Group and relevant funds, programmes and specialized agencies to continue to assist the Advisory Group in accomplishing its mandate, and invites the Bretton Woods institutions to continue to cooperate towards that end;
7. Expresses its satisfaction to the Secretary-General for the support provided to the work of the Advisory Group and requests him to continue to adequately support its activities;
8. Decides to extend the mandate of the Advisory Group until the substantive session of 2008, unless the Council decides on an earlier review of the mandate, and requests the Advisory Group to report, as appropriate, to the Council.

Other economic assistance

Haiti

In response to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/10 [YUN 2006, p. 1087], the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti reported in June [E/2007/78] on the economic and social situation in the country, elaborated on the need for capacity-building to respond to the institutional weaknesses of Haitian society and analysed issues related to development planning and aid coordination. The programme of the Group’s mission to Haiti (18-21 April), including a comprehensive description of its interaction with relevant stakeholders, was annexed to the report.

Although the socio-economic situation remained a concern with various basic indicators declining, such as the per capita gross national product and the maternal mortality ratio, some progress had been achieved. Haiti had emerged from a period of negative growth of its gross domestic product (GDP), with an increased growth rate of 2.5 per cent in 2006, a decrease in the inflation rate from 38 per cent in 2003 to 8.6 per cent in February 2007, and an overall reduction of the deficit of the Government, which was expected to average 2 per cent of GDP. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund determined that Haiti qualified for debt relief under the HIPC Initiative, and in March the Inter-American Development Bank, Haiti’s main creditor, announced debt cancellation for Haiti. Despite those developments, Haiti’s economic governance structures were extremely limited. Social indicators remained persistently low, particularly in the health sector. Only half of the population had access to health services and Haiti had the highest rates of under-five mortality and maternal mortality in the western hemisphere, with life expectancy estimated at 52 years. Poverty remained endemic, with 78 per cent of the population living below the $2 per day poverty line and 54 per cent living in extreme poverty (less than $1 per day). Moreover, Haiti was not in a position to reach any of the MDGs by 2015.

During its mission, the Group visited the Cité Soleil district of Port-au-Prince and the city of Ouanaminthe, located in a rural area of the North-East Department, including the “bi-national market” with the Dominican Republic, where Haitians imported large amounts of agricultural and other products and retailed them. The market demonstrated another weakness of the rural economy: the increasing dependency of the entire North-East Department on the Dominican economy. Other challenges included the increase in the population; the living conditions of children, with 50 per cent of the population younger than 20; the feminization of poverty; the increase in violence and organized crime; and continued environmental degradation. The Group identified areas that would allow for economic growth, job creation and political stability, such as large-scale tourism; promotion of the agricultural sector; development of the industrial sector owing to the low cost of manpower; and opportunities in the fields of electronics, toys and call centres for francophone markets.
The Group also observed the weakness of State institutions, including the public sector, and the need for development assistance and international support to raise the capacity of law-enforcement institutions to perform their duties. The President and the Government, supported by UNDP and other actors, established mechanisms to launch a reform of the civil service to improve management of human resources and to harmonize the working methods among ministries. Members of Parliament, which had a decisive role in the aspects of institutional reform that required new legislation, were ill-equipped for those tasks and needed training and capacity-building. In that connection, the Group supported the idea of Parliament receiving support from development partners, including through the strengthening of a “parliamentary unit” within the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). Given the limited capacity of the State to absorb development assistance, it was important to define immediate short-, medium- and long-term action, and start with easily attainable goals, such as the quick-impact projects carried out by MINUSTAH, which often benefited the municipalities. The concept of an “evolving MINUSTAH”, which would increasingly focus on strengthening institutional capacities, was presented to the Group. Support and training for the police and law-enforcement officials, such as coast guards and customs officers, was also critical in order to fight drug trafficking and organized crime.

As for development planning, the Haitian authorities in March established a committee to prepare the poverty reduction strategy paper, scheduled for completion by July. As there was little time to complete that task, the Group emphasized the need for continued support to the Government, which relied on international assistance for its operations and capital investments, in addition to the need for a clear vision of longer-term development. The Group said that the best use should be made of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which maintained that aid was more effective when recipient countries had strong leadership over their development policies. It encouraged the Government and donors to jointly assess mutual progress in implementing commitments on aid effectiveness by making the best use of local mechanisms.

In its recommendations, the Group called for the completion of the poverty reduction strategy paper, reflecting a political and popular consensus within Haiti; the establishment of an effective coordination mechanism between donors and the Government and a mechanism to track the disbursement of pledged funds; and the gradual transfer of allocated funds from NGOs to the principal ministries as their capacities increased. On institutional capacity-building, the Group urged the national authorities and parliamentarians to adopt legislation to reform the justice sector and other rule-of-law institutions, and to address the issue of corruption as an impediment to the strengthening of State institutions and as a necessary condition for improving the delivery of basic services to the population. The Group made further recommendations for the authorities to integrate the gender dimension in all social and economic policies and for the Government to continue its work in developing business strategies for the tourism, agriculture and assembly industries.

**Humanitarian appeal.** The UN transitional appeal for Haiti, which sought $97.9 million for the further stabilization of the country for 12 months, aimed at strengthening democratic institutions, modernizing the State authority, increasing national output in line with population growth and providing basic services throughout the country.

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ACTION**

On 25 July [meeting 44], the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2007/13 [draft: E/2007/L.18] without vote [agenda item 7 (d)].

**Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti**

_The Economic and Social Council_,


1. Takes note of the report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Haiti and the recommendations contained therein;

2. Commends the Government and people of Haiti on the evolution of the political and economic situation, and welcomes the support provided by the international community to this process;

3. Notes the progress made by the Government of Haiti in terms of gender equality, and also notes the importance of gender equality as a necessary dimension of any strategy for development;

4. Also notes that the preparation of a national poverty reduction strategy is advancing, and looks forward to continued support from donors, the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions in connection with the future implementation of this strategy;

5. Recognizes the need for effective coordination between donors and the Government of Haiti, including a standing mechanism for consultation with the main non-governmental organizations active in Haiti;

6. Decides to extend the mandate of the Advisory Group until the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council in July 2008, with the purpose of following closely and providing advice on the long-term development strategy of Haiti to promote socio-economic recovery and stability, with particular attention to the need to ensure the coherence and sustainability of international support for Haiti, based on the long-term national development priorities and building upon the Interim Cooperation Framework and the forthcoming poverty reduction strategy, and stressing the need to avoid overlap and duplication with respect to existing mechanisms;
7. Expresses its satisfaction to the Secretary-General for the support provided to the Advisory Group, and requests him to continue to support the activities of the Group adequately from within existing resources, where possible;

8. Requests the Advisory Group, in accomplishing its mandate, to continue to cooperate with the Secretary-General and his Special Representative in Haiti, the head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti, the United Nations Development Group, relevant United Nations funds and programmes and specialized agencies, the Bretton Woods institutions, regional organizations and institutions, including the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Organization of American States, the Caribbean Community, the Inter-American Development Bank and other major stakeholders;

9. Also requests the Advisory Group to submit a report on its work, with recommendations, as appropriate, to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2008;

10. Decides that the work of the Advisory Group will be reviewed at its substantive session of 2008, with a view to considering whether to continue its mandate, based on the Council’s consideration of the report of the Group and the situation then prevailing in Haiti, due account being taken of the activities of the entities of the United Nations system active in peacebuilding.

The Philippines

In response to General Assembly resolution 61/217 [YUN 2006, p. 1088], the Secretary-General, in his August consolidated report on humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation [A/62/310], provided a review of developments in the Philippines following the oil spill from a tanker that sank off the coast of Guimaras Island in August 2006 [YUN 2006, p. 1088] and challenges to the delivery of both humanitarian and relief and rehabilitation assistance to the country.

To address the oil spill, the Government used $100,000 of the UNDP core funds specifically earmarked for emergencies, which was utilized for support to the damage assessment team (Guimaras Task Force); environmental damage assessments; early recovery projects for the community; and building local capacity for disaster rehabilitation and preparedness. An initial fact-finding mission composed of members of UNDP and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) identified the humanitarian needs of the affected population and developed a strategy to assist coastal clean-up activities. A subsequent rapid needs assessment mission issued an early recovery assessment report, which stressed the need for a clear and authoritative coordination structure to guide multidepartmental inputs and responsibilities, donor contributions and media relations, and recommended preparing a communications strategy, in collaboration with local and national media. The provincial government, in coordination with Government agencies, provided assistance to affected populations through the establishment of an alternative livelihood programme for coastal residents who were dependent on fisheries, which was so successful that it continued beyond its intended cycle. The programme significantly diversified the local economy and at least 3,500 families benefited from it. Although DENR was still conducting environmental damage assessments, quarterly reports on the issue had created a positive impact by enhancing Government planning in coastal clean-up, food safety of marine products, and identification and planning of environmental rehabilitation programmes. Meanwhile, individuals and organizations whose property was damaged by the oil spill were provided with instruction and materials on how to make compensation claims. The first phase of coastal clean-up activities concluded at the end of 2006. Other developments included the conduct of capacity-building training on integrated coastal zone and disaster risk management conducted by DENR, and as part of ongoing efforts to clean up, rehabilitate and stabilize the environment in the spill zone, the submission to UNDP by DENR of a work and financial plan outlining intended monitoring and evaluation approaches. There was still a need for additional support in achieving the longer-term objectives, including full restoration of the damaged environment, further development of alternative livelihood programmes, improved disaster risk management preparedness and mitigation to build disaster-resilient communities, and development of the tourism sector.

Third States affected by sanctions

In response to General Assembly resolution 61/38 [YUN 2006, p. 1532], the Secretary-General in August submitted a report [A/62/206 & Corr.1] that highlighted developments concerning Assembly and Economic and Social Council activities in the area of assistance to third States affected by the application of sanctions; arrangements in the Secretariat related to assistance to those States; and operational changes as a result of the shift in focus towards targeted sanctions in the procedures and working methods of the Security Council and its sanctions committees.

The Assembly took action with regard to the Secretary-General’s report in resolution 62/69 (see p. 1381).

Disaster response

In 2007, disasters associated with natural hazards, such as earthquakes, floods and droughts, were primarily driven by the increased incidence and severity of extreme weather events, mostly associated with
climate change. Some 414 disasters associated with natural hazards caused more than 16,800 deaths and affected more than 211 million people. The cost of natural disasters was estimated at $74.9 billion in economic damages. Floods and storms were responsible for 86 per cent of all natural disaster deaths and 98 per cent of populations affected by natural disasters. In places where they were prepared, affected communities and Governments were able to respond effectively to disasters. Investment in early-warning systems and improved cooperation among Governments in managing river systems led to a dramatic decrease in the number of deaths. Preparedness measures, including contingency planning and pre-positioning of relief items contributed to a more timely response.

In Southern Africa, a combination of extremely high temperatures and low rainfall throughout the summer led to one of the worst droughts in the region, affecting Lesotho and Swaziland in particular, with over 400,000 people requiring assistance. In the latter part of the year, unusually heavy rainfall caused unprecedented widespread flooding. Flooding in the eastern, central and western parts of Africa killed more than 200 people, displaced over 600,000 and affected millions. The Southern African region was worst hit, including Madagascar, Mozambique and Zambia. Livelihoods were further endangered by the large loss of livestock. The floods also contributed to outbreaks of diseases such as malaria and acute water diarrhoea. Asia continued to be the region hardest hit by hazard-related disasters. Severe monsoon flooding throughout the continent during the summer, which affected some 170 million people, was followed in September by heavy rains and subsequent floods that swept across Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, killing more than 4,000 people. Torrential rains in August caused severe flooding in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and Viet Nam. In November, cyclone Sidr struck Bangladesh, killing more than 4,200 people and causing extensive damage to the country’s south-western districts. In Latin America and the Caribbean, two Atlantic hurricanes, Dean and Felix, made landfall at maximum strength in the same season, affecting Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua. In the latter part of the year, the Dominican Republic was hit by two tropical storms, and in October, heavy rains in Mexico resulted in flooding that affected over 1 million people. Crops were destroyed, livestock killed and most businesses were affected. An earthquake that struck the coast of Peru in August killed more than 500 people, destroyed many buildings and seriously affected many areas, including the capital, Lima.

Human influenza. The United Nations continued efforts to prepare for a potential influenza pandemic. The highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 virus was endemically circulating in poultry in at least five countries. In June, experts met in Rome to review strategies used to control avian influenza and prepare for the next influenza pandemic. The Secretary-General issued a September report on ensuring operational preparedness and business continuity in a protracted human influenza pandemic crisis [A/62/328]. The UN Consolidated Action Plan on Avian and Human Influenza was also issued in September, which indicated that since 2005, some 60 countries and territories had reported H5N1 outbreaks (43 in poultry) and 12 countries had reported 327 cases of confirmed human H5N1 infections, resulting in 200 deaths. In December, donors pledged $406 million to control avian influenza and prepare for a possible pandemic.

On 22 December, in section VII of resolution 62/238 (see p. 1453), the General Assembly took note of the Secretary-General’s report and requested that he report on business continuity, including in the event of a pandemic, at its sixty-third (2008) session.

International cooperation

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 61/131 [YUN 2006, p. 1091], the Secretary-General, in a September report on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters [A/62/323], highlighted significant trends and their humanitarian implications, as well as key challenges in improving the international response to disasters and in strengthening the capacity of disaster-prone countries in disaster management. The report stated that 2006 figures conformed to a trend of increasing numbers of natural hazard events, with some 427 disasters affecting approximately 143 million people and resulting in 23,000 deaths.

Risk patterns were changing, with implications for exposed and vulnerable communities, particularly in low-income settings. Communities with a multiplicity of threats or recurrent disasters were in danger of depleting their assets and eroding traditional coping mechanisms. In addition to climate change, environmental degradation and increased population pressure, factors contributing to changing disaster risk patterns included the growth of megacities, persistent poverty and the increasing risk of epidemics and contagious diseases. The changing risk patterns presented significant challenges and underscored the importance of improved risk management, including increased investment in disaster preparedness. Strengthening national preparedness systems was particularly important given the central role of front-line communities in responding to disasters. A growing awareness of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (see p. 947), climate change and the increased incidence of disasters helped to mobilize attention and strengthened the capabilities of disaster-prone communities. However, that develop-
ment needed to be translated into steadfast commitments and concrete support. Responding to disasters in a manner that promoted early recovery in a risk-reduction framework was critical. There was a need for increased, more accountable resource allocation for disasters, for improved targeting and tracking of funds for preparedness, and for greater prioritization of high-risk, less-prepared settings. In June, representatives of 124 Member States and 105 regional and intergovernmental organizations and NGOs participated in the first meeting of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (see p. 949), which highlighted the importance of prioritizing investment in disaster reduction and the need for countries to quickly establish systems to monitor and report on their risk profiles. Greater engagement with the private sector was also encouraged. Considerable progress was made in augmenting locally available disaster response expertise in high-risk areas by incorporating developing country members into the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination System, thereby facilitating the rapid deployment of local resources at lower cost. Other initiatives under way involved UN agencies and partner organizations in Asia and the Pacific, which were jointly developing tools to model the risk, vulnerability and response capacity of countries. IASC was developing a guidance and indicator package to facilitate implementation of priority five (preparedness) of the Hyogo Framework for Action; and the IASC Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery and the Joint Working Group on Transition Issues were collaborating with UN agencies and partners to develop a unified approach to post-disaster recovery. The multilateral Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System was strengthened to incorporate several components into one Internet-based global system, including country-based systems, the European Commission disaster alert tool, seismological laboratories, the UNITAR Operational Satellite Applications Programme, the Humanitarian Early Warning Service and Relief Web. As a result, responders could receive early warning of disasters by text message or e-mail. Efforts to promote the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations (YUN 1998, p. 871), which came into effect in 2005, continued, and 35 States had ratified the Convention. Meanwhile, the United Nations commissioned the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute to undertake an independent study on the effectiveness of using foreign military assets in international disaster response. On improved accountability in disaster response, the IASC Working Group in March endorsed a one-year initiative to pilot inter-agency “real-time evaluations”, which involved conducting evaluations of humanitarian operations during disaster response.

The Secretary-General made recommendations for Member States and regional and international organizations to disseminate best practices on improving disaster preparedness; to expand successful local initiatives; and to increase resources to address disasters, particularly in high-risk, low-capacity settings. He called on humanitarian and development actors to prioritize programming to reduce the risk that natural hazards would exacerbate the transmission of communicable diseases, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, to support populations already vulnerable due to HIV/AIDS, and to bolster health mechanisms to meet future health care needs. He urged Member States to strengthen legal preparedness and regulatory frameworks to support response action; integrate support for disaster preparedness into their national budgets; explore opportunities to provide low-cost disaster insurance to populations at high risk; contribute information regularly to the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities; ratify the Tampere Convention, incorporate its provisions into domestic legislation and implement it as a resource for relief efforts; increase activities to implement the 2005 Hyogo Framework; and strengthen systems for identifying and monitoring disaster and risk vulnerability. He encouraged the United Nations to review the use of military assets for disaster relief with the aim of improving the predictability and use of those assets. He also requested the United Nations to report on the implementation of the key recommendations of the publication issued in 2006 by the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, entitled Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami: Synthesis Report.

**SPIDER programme.** On 12 September, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (see p. 641) submitted a report [A/AC.105/894] on the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (SPIDER), an international coordination entity which would provide universal access to all countries and international and regional organizations to space-based information and services relevant to disaster management. The report contained the SPIDER programme for 2007-2009 and the work plan for 2008-2009.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 17 December [meeting 74], the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/92 [draft: A/62/L.34 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 71 (a)].

> International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development

*The General Assembly, Reaffirming* its resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, the annex to which contains the guiding principles for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system, as well as all
its resolutions on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development, and recalling the resolutions of the humanitarian segment of the substantive sessions of the Economic and Social Council,

Recognizing the importance of the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance,

Welcoming the Hyogo Declaration, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015; Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters and the common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster: risk reduction for a safer future, as adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005,

Emphasizing that the affected State has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory and in the facilitation of the work of humanitarian organizations in mitigating the consequences of natural disasters,

Emphasizing also the responsibility of all States to undertake disaster preparedness, response and early recovery efforts in order to minimize the impact of natural disasters, while recognizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of affected countries which may have limited capacities in this regard,

Noting that local communities are the first responders in most disasters, and underlining the critical role played by in-country capacities in disaster risk reduction, including preparedness, response and recovery,

Recognizing the importance of international cooperation in support of the efforts of the affected States in dealing with natural disasters in all their phases, in particular in preparedness, response and the early recovery phase, and of strengthening the response capacity of countries affected by disaster,

Noting with appreciation the important role played by Member States, including developing countries, that have granted necessary and continued generous assistance to countries and peoples stricken by natural disasters,

Recognizing the significant role played by national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, as part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in disaster preparedness and risk reduction, disaster response, rehabilitation and development,

Emphasizing the importance of addressing vulnerability and integrating risk reduction into all phases of natural disaster management, post-natural disaster recovery and development planning,

Recognizing that efforts to achieve economic growth, sustainable development and internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, can be adversely affected by natural disasters, and noting the positive contribution that those efforts can make in strengthening the resilience of populations to such disasters,

Emphasizing, in this context, the important role of development organizations in supporting national efforts to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General;
2. Expresses its deep concern at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact, resulting in massive losses of life and property worldwide, in particular in vulnerable societies lacking adequate capacity to mitigate effectively the long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences of natural disasters;
3. Calls upon States to fully implement the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015; Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, in particular those commitments related to assistance for developing countries that are prone to natural disasters and for disaster-stricken States in the transition phase towards sustainable physical, social and economic recovery, for risk-reduction activities in post-disaster recovery and for rehabilitation processes;
4. Calls upon all States to adopt, where required, and to continue to implement effectively, necessary legislative and other appropriate measures to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and integrate disaster risk reduction strategies into development planning, and in this regard requests the international community to continue to assist developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition, as appropriate;
5. Welcomes the effective cooperation among the affected States, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, donor countries, regional and international financial institutions and other relevant organizations, such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and civil society, in the coordination and delivery of emergency relief, and stresses the need to continue such cooperation and delivery throughout relief operations and medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, in a manner that reduces vulnerability to future natural hazards;
6. Reiterates the commitment to support the efforts of countries, in particular developing countries, to strengthen their capacities at all levels in order to prepare for and respond rapidly to natural disasters and mitigate their impact;
7. Stresses that, to increase further the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, particular international cooperation efforts should be undertaken to enhance and broaden further the utilization of national and local capacities and, where appropriate, of regional and subregional capacities of developing countries for disaster preparedness and response, which may be made available in closer proximity to the site of a disaster, and more efficiently and at lower cost;
8. Also stresses, in this context, the importance of strengthening international cooperation, particularly through the effective use of multilateral mechanisms, in the timely provision of humanitarian assistance through all phases of a disaster, from relief and recovery to development, including the provision of adequate resources;
9. Takes note that a review of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities, planned for 2008, is expected to assess its value added and user satisfaction, and requests the Secretary-General to report on its findings;
10. Reaffirms the role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat as the focal point within the overall United Nations system for advocacy for and coordination of humanitarian assistance among United Nations humanitarian organizations and other humanitarian partners;
11. "Welcomes, so as to increase further the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, the incorporation of experts from developing countries that are prone to natural disasters into the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination system, and the work of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group in assisting such countries in strengthening urban search and rescue capacities and establishing mechanisms for improving their coordination of national and international response in the field, and recalls in this regard its resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 entitled "Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance";

12. "Recognizes that information and telecommunication technology can play an important role in disaster response, encourages Member States to develop emergency response telecommunication capacities, and encourages the international community to assist the efforts of developing countries in this area, where needed, including in the recovery phase;

13. "Encourages States that have not acceded to or ratified the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations to consider doing so;

14. "Encourages the further use of space-based and ground-based remote-sensing technologies, as well as the sharing of geographical data, for the prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters, where appropriate;

15. "Reaffirms the request made by the Economic and Social Council to the Secretary-General to review and report, in consultation with Member States, on the use of military assets for natural disaster response with the aim of improving the predictability and use of these assets, based on humanitarian principles, while emphasizing the fundamentally civilian character of humanitarian assistance, and reaffirming the leading role of civilian organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance;

16. "Encourages Member States, relevant United Nations organizations and international financial institutions to enhance the global capacity for sustainable post-disaster recovery in areas such as coordination with traditional and non-traditional partners, identification and dissemination of lessons learned, development of common tools and mechanisms for recovery needs assessment, strategy development and programming, and incorporation of risk reduction into all recovery processes, and welcomes the ongoing efforts to this end;

17. "Encourages Member States and relevant regional and international organizations to identify and improve the dissemination of best practices for improving disaster preparedness, response and early recovery and to scale up successful local initiatives, as appropriate;

18. "Requests the United Nations system to improve its coordination of disaster recovery efforts, from relief to development, inter alia, by strengthening institutional, coordination and strategic planning efforts in disaster recovery, in support of national authorities;

19. "Calls upon relevant United Nations humanitarian and development organizations, in consultation with Member States, to strengthen tools and mechanisms to ensure that early recovery needs and support are considered as part of the planning and implementation of humanitarian response and development cooperation activities, as appropriate;

20. "Also calls upon relevant United Nations humanitarian and development organizations to continue efforts to ensure continuity and predictability in their response and to further improve coordination in recovery processes in support of the efforts of national authorities;

21. "Stresses the importance of rapid access to funds to ensure a more predictable and timely United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies, and welcomes in this regard the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund and its contribution to the promotion and enhancement of early humanitarian response;

22. "Emphasizes the need to mobilize adequate, flexible and sustainable resources for recovery activities;

23. "Requests the Secretary-General to continue to improve the international response to natural disasters, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.

Disaster reduction

International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

In response to General Assembly resolution 61/198 [YUN 2006, p. 1094], the Secretary-General, in a September report [A/62/320], reviewed the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (isdnr), adopted by the programme forum of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (1990-2000) in 1999 [YUN 1999, p. 859] and endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 54/219 [ibid., p. 861]. It also detailed efforts to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action, the 10-year plan for reducing disaster risks, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005 [YUN 2005, p. 1015] and endorsed by the Assembly in resolution 60/195 [ibid., p. 1018].

Significant steps were taken to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action at the national, regional and international levels, with a focus on its five priority areas: disaster risk reduction as a priority with a strong institutional basis; risk assessment and early warning; building a culture of safety and resilience; reduction of underlying risk factors; and strengthened disaster preparedness and response. The Strategy secretariat had supported those efforts, including by developing guidelines for the Framework’s implementation, facilitating information exchange through the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and organizing regional and national stakeholder meetings and sector platforms and networks. At the national level, 38 countries had established their national platforms and 109 Governments had designated focal points for implementing the Framework. A large number of countries had implemented disaster risk reduction measures in one or several of the five priority areas. African and Asian Govern-
ments were cooperating to develop a tsunami warning system through the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System. Eleven Governments submitted official requests with budget proposals in response to the offer by the Indian Ocean Consortium to provide technical assistance to develop plans for national tsunami early warning systems. Nonetheless, many gaps in observation and warning systems remained. Increased concern about the effects of climate change and its link to disasters rallied more actors at all levels to consider investments in risk reduction. However, in many cases, implementation activities were limited and isolated. Recurrent challenges remained, such as insufficient support from higher government levels, constant political changes, lack of stable human resources and technical expertise, insufficient financial resources and limited capacity to integrate disaster risk reduction into development programmes.

On regional progress, the Commission of the Economic Community of West African States, in January, approved the subregional Policy and Mechanism for Disaster Risk Reduction. The African Union launched the Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction with the objective to accelerate coordinated action among African Governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs and UN entities in implementing the African strategy for disaster reduction. Among the 24 African countries with national platforms, seven had integrated disaster risk reduction into their poverty reduction strategy papers. The Coordination Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America relaunched the Regional Strategy for Disaster Reduction 2006-2015, and the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission was assisting 14 Pacific countries in various priority areas. In preparation for the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (see p. 949), the Strategy secretariat supported regional risk updates and regional progress assessments with the support of the World Bank and regional organizations.

The Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, which was launched in 2006 [YUN 2006, p. 1093], continued efforts to boost national, regional and global capacities to reduce disaster risk and respond effectively after disasters, particularly in low- and middle-income countries at high risk and to facilitate a coordinated approach among donors to incorporate risk reduction in development processes. Its three tracks supported global and regional capacities, national risk reduction and post-event recovery. Track I resources contributed to the establishment of a global platform for disaster risk reduction, consisting of a virtual clearing house, PreventionWeb; a global report on risk benchmarking and emerging risks to be issued in 2009; and a 2007 global report on progress made in implementing the Framework for Action.

In 2007, implementation of track II, which provided technical assistance, was started in five countries. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) conducted an assessment of technical capacities for observing, monitoring, detecting and warning of weather-, climate- and water-related hazards at the national and regional levels, with 144 countries contributing to the national survey. The international campaign for disaster risk reduction, 2007-2008, whose theme was “Disaster risk reduction begins at school”, aimed to promote safer school buildings and incorporate disaster reduction knowledge into school curricula. The Strategy secretariat produced an online educational game entitled “Stop disasters”. Nearly 60 countries organized activities on the International Day of Disaster Reduction. The Disaster Management Training Programme was transformed into a Strategy-based platform entitled the “Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative” and launched in June to provide an international platform to support training of organizations and practitioners.

On coordination and guidance through the Strategy system, the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction held its first meeting in June (see p. 949), which proved to be a useful forum for Member States and other stakeholders to enhance awareness of disaster risk reduction, share experiences and learn from good practices. To support regional efforts for implementing the Hyogo Framework, the secretariat strengthened its activities and staff resources at the regional level. A combination of United Nations Volunteers and national and international experts were recruited to work with partners to enhance national and regional commitments and actions for its implementation. The Strategy secretariat developed guidelines and tools for lessons learned, including “Words into action: a guide for implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action”, which provided step-by-step advice for Government authorities and other organizations on key tasks for each of the five priority areas. Meanwhile, progress was made on investments in disaster reduction since the 2005 World Conference for Disaster Reduction [YUN 2005, p. 1015] had fallen short of aspirations. Although support from donor Governments increased in response to General Assembly resolution 61/198 [YUN 2006, p. 1094] urging the international community to contribute to the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction, the lack of multi-year funding posed challenges in planning Strategy activities. There was a need to secure a stable and predictable flow of resources to support the secretariat and joint activities by Strategy system partners. Roadblocks to increasing investment included the absence of clear and accessible scientifically based studies on the economic and social costs and benefits of various risk reduction measures, as well as the lack of reliable data and information on current investments in disaster risk reduction. Two ini-
tiatives that could have a positive impact on investment included the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery and the development of new donor policies to increase funding.

The Secretary-General observed that while many States had reported active pursuit of policies to reduce disaster risks, the world was not on track to achieve the Hyogo Framework outcome of a substantial reduction in disaster losses by 2015. Major strides were made in increasing knowledge and commitment to reducing disaster risks, yet the implementation of concrete measures was lagging behind. Clear and appropriate targets needed to be articulated at the global and national level, more sustained and systematic investments in risk reduction were required and efforts were needed to track progress and to identify remaining gaps. The Secretary-General encouraged States to increase their commitment to implement the Hyogo Framework, make disaster reduction a core element of their development policies, develop national platforms and similar coordination mechanisms for disaster reduction, establish targets, programmes and budgets for their disaster reduction efforts, monitor their achievements and share progress through the Strategy system. He also urged Governments, donors and funding institutions to increase their investment in disaster risk reduction and to improve the coordination and tracking of those investments.

Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, established as the successor to the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction to provide a regular global forum for advocacy, information-sharing and the coordination of action, held its first session (Geneva, 5-7 June), which was attended by some 1,150 participants representing 124 Governments, UN system entities, international financial institutions, regional bodies, civil society, the private sector and the scientific and academic communities. A high-level dialogue event examined the issues of urban risk, climate change adaptation, and political and economic challenges to implementation of risk reduction. Inputs to the session included a global review of disaster risk reduction [ISDR/GP/2007/3] and contributions from regional meetings. The Global Platform outcomes were summarized in the Chair’s summary [ISDR/GP/2007/6] and were available together with other conference documents on the PreventionWeb site.

Global survey of early warning systems. In response to General Assembly resolution 61/198 [YUN 2006, p. 1094], the Secretary-General in September submitted a report [A/62/340] on a global survey of early warning systems, which was undertaken to advance the development of global early warning system capacities for all natural hazards. The survey examined the information provided by Governments and organizations in preparation for the 2003 international conference on early warning and for the 2005 conference on disaster reduction, the latter comprising 122 country reports. Twenty-two Governments and the European Commission responded to a request for additional information on their capacities and gaps in early warning. Information was also received from the members of the working group of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction and from other organizations. The survey mainly considered early warning systems for hydrometeorological and geological hazards, but also for related biological, environmental, humanitarian and industrial factors, such as famine, locust plagues and forest fires.

The report on the survey concluded that while some warning systems and capacities were well advanced, there were numerous gaps and shortcomings, particularly in developing countries, and in terms of effectively reaching those at risk. A major challenge was to integrate the knowledge and insight of relevant social and economic communities into the predominantly technically based existing systems, translate hazard warnings into risk warnings and include advice on how to respond to warning messages. The survey observed that early warning systems were based on the nature of the hazard involved: early warning needs for tsunamis and for drought, for example, were very different. There were also disparities in the way different hazards were handled, with weather-related hazards being generally well-covered. By considering all hazards and vulnerabilities together it would be possible to achieve gains in institutional effectiveness, operational efficiency and public preparedness in respect of early warning systems. The survey made five recommendations aimed at Governments, international organizations and authorities responsible for the safety of citizens: to develop a globally comprehensive early warning system, rooted in existing early warning systems and capacities; build national people-centred early warning systems; fill the main gaps in global early warning capacities; strengthen the scientific and data foundations for early warning; and develop the institutional foundations for a global early warning system.

In activities taken up in follow-up to the survey, WMO conducted two surveys at the national and regional levels, in which 139 countries participated and provided an analysis of the capacity of national meteorological and hydrological services to support disaster risk reduction, including early warning systems. At the first meeting of the Advisory Group of the International Early Warning Programme (Bonn, Germany, 26-27 March), participants agreed that a comprehensive global early warning system should be built on existing capacities and noted that this required strengthened international and regional mechanisms for governance, coordination and support.
The multi-donor Flash Appeal project continued to assist Member States in the affected region to develop tsunami warning systems, and a report on its activities was submitted to donors in June. Efforts were also under way to develop the Humanitarian Early Warning Service, which would establish a common platform for humanitarian early warnings and forecasts for natural hazards. The Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System, a collaboration between the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and OCHA, was developed as a web-based platform that combined existing web-based disaster information systems.

The Secretary-General observed that there was widespread recognition of the need for early warning systems as an essential component of strategies to build resilience to natural disasters. However, without further efforts, some hazards would continue to strike without warning and existing warning systems might continue to fail to reach people at risk or elicit appropriate life-saving and property-saving responses. As the global survey provided a starting point for the task of developing more systematic global approaches to early warning systems by outlining the main issues and identifying specific needs for action by Governments, UN entities and other organizations, as a first step the Secretary-General would request that the Strategy secretariat undertake an assessment of the financing of early warning systems. He added that coordinated planning was needed to define priorities and practical objectives and to ensure the participation of all stakeholders. He urged Member States to ensure that early warning systems were integrated in their national disaster risk reduction strategies and plans, supported by legislation and organizational coordination from international to local levels, and to implement the early warning-related priorities of the Hyogo Framework for Action. He also requested that the ISDR secretariat facilitate, in cooperation with UN system entities, the development of globally comprehensive early warning systems, rooted in and composed of Member States’ systems, capacities and networks.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 19 December [meeting 78], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Second Committee [A/62/419/Add.3], adopted resolution 62/192 without vote [agenda item 54 (/)].

**International Strategy for Disaster Reduction**

_The General Assembly,_


Recalling also the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

Reaffirming the Hyogo Declaration, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters and the common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster: risk reduction for a safer future, as adopted by the World Conference on Disaster Reduction,

Reaffirming its role of providing policy guidance on the implementation of the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits,

Recalling that the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction has been serving as the main forum within the United Nations system for devising strategies and policies for disaster reduction and ensuring complementarity of action by agencies involved in disaster reduction, mitigation and preparedness,

Expressing its deep concern at the number and scale of natural disasters and their increasing impact within recent years, which have resulted in massive loss of life and long-term negative social, economic and environmental consequences for vulnerable societies throughout the world and hamper the achievement of their sustainable development, in particular in developing countries,

Emphasizing that disaster risk reduction, including reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, is an important cross-cutting element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

Recognizing the clear relationship between development, disaster risk reduction, disaster response and disaster recovery and the need to continue to deploy efforts in all these areas,

Recognizing also the urgent need to further develop and make use of the existing scientific and technical knowledge to build resilience to natural disasters, and emphasizing the need for developing countries to have access to appropriate, advanced, environmentally sound, cost-effective and easy-to-use technologies so as to seek more comprehensive solutions to disaster risk reduction and to effectively and efficiently strengthen their capabilities to cope with disaster risks,

Recognizing further that certain measures for disaster risk reduction in the context of the Hyogo Framework for Action can also support adaptation to climate change, and emphasizing the importance of strengthening the resilience of nations and communities to natural disasters through disaster risk-reduction programmes,

Stressing the importance of advancing the implementation of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and its relevant provisions on vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management,

Taking note with great interest and appreciation of the holding at Geneva, from 5 to 7 June 2007, of the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction,

Recognizing the need to continue to develop an understanding of, and to address, socio-economic activities that exacerbate the vulnerability of societies to natural disasters...
and to build and further strengthen community capability to cope with disaster risks,

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction;

2. Recalls that the commitments of the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters include the provision of assistance for developing countries that are prone to natural disasters and disaster-stricken States in the transition phase towards sustainable physical, social and economic recovery, for risk-reduction activities in post-disaster recovery and for rehabilitation processes;

3. Welcomes the progress made in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, and stresses the need for a more effective integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies, planning and programming; for the development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards; and for a systematic incorporation of risk-reduction approaches into the implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes;

4. Calls upon the international community to increase its efforts to fully implement the commitments of the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action;

5. Invites Member States, the United Nations system, international financial institutions, regional bodies and other international organizations, including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, as well as civil society, including non-governmental organizations and volunteers, the private sector and the scientific community, to increase efforts to support, implement and follow up the Hyogo Framework for Action;

6. Calls upon the United Nations system, and invites international financial institutions and regional and international organizations, to integrate the goals of and take into full account the Hyogo Framework for Action in their strategies and programmes, making use of existing coordination mechanisms, and to assist developing countries with those mechanisms to design and implement, as appropriate, disaster risk-reduction measures with a sense of urgency;

7. Also calls upon the United Nations system, and invites the international financial institutions and regional banks and other regional and international organizations, to support, in a timely and sustained manner, the efforts led by disaster-stricken countries for disaster risk reduction in post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes;

8. Recognizes that each State has the primary responsibility for its own sustainable development and for taking effective measures to reduce disaster risk, including for the protection of people on its territory, infrastructure and other national assets from the impact of disasters, including the implementation of and follow-up to the Hyogo Framework for Action, and stresses the importance of international cooperation and partnerships to support those national efforts;

9. Also recognizes the efforts made by Member States to develop national and local capacities to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action, including through the establishment of national platforms for disaster reduction, and encourages Member States that have not done so to develop such capacities;

10. Further recognizes the importance of coordinating climate change adaptation with relevant natural disaster risk-reduction measures, invites Governments and relevant international organizations to integrate these considerations in a comprehensive manner into, inter alia, development plans and poverty eradication programmes, and invites the international community to support the ongoing efforts of developing countries in this regard;

11. Stresses that continued cooperation and coordination among Governments, the United Nations system, other organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental organizations and other partners, as appropriate, are considered essential to address effectively the impact of natural disasters;

12. Welcomes the regional and subregional initiatives developed in order to achieve disaster risk reduction, and reiterates the need to further develop regional initiatives and risk-reduction capacities of regional mechanisms where they exist and to strengthen them and encourage the use and sharing of all existing tools;

13. Also welcomes the launch of the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery, a partnership of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system managed by the World Bank on behalf of the participating donor partners and other partnering stakeholders, as a significant initiative to support the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action;

14. Calls upon the international community to support the development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards;

15. Takes note with great interest and appreciation of the holding at Geneva, from 5 to 7 June 2007, of the first session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, the successor mechanism of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction, as a useful forum for Member States and other stakeholders to assess progress made in the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, enhance awareness of disaster risk reduction, share experiences and learn from good practice, identify remaining gaps and identify actions to accelerate national and local implementation;

16. Encourages Member States to increase their commitment to the effective implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action, making full use of the Strategy system’s mechanisms, such as the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction;

17. Recognizes the importance of integrating a gender perspective and engaging women in the design and implementation of all phases of disaster management, particularly at the disaster risk-reduction stage;

18. Expresses its appreciation to those countries that have provided financial support for the activities of the Strategy by making voluntary contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund for Disaster Reduction;

19. Encourages the international community to continue providing adequate voluntary financial contributions to the Trust Fund in the effort to ensure adequate support for the follow-up activities to the Hyogo Framework for Action;
20. Takes note of the conclusions of the review conducted at the request of Member States on the current usage and feasibility for the expansion of the Trust Fund, inter alia, to assist disaster-prone developing countries in setting up national strategies for disaster risk reduction, which indicated that the Trust Fund is an appropriate vehicle for expanded action of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system, at the global and regional levels, in support of countries’ implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action;

21. Encourages Governments, multilateral organizations, international and regional organizations, international and regional financial institutions, the private sector and civil society to systematically invest in disaster risk reduction with a view to implementing the objectives of the Strategy;

22. Stresses the importance of disaster risk reduction and subsequent growing demands on the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the need to review the current methods of financing the secretariat, with a view to stabilizing its financial base, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a proposal for that purpose in his next report on this subject;

23. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the result of the Global Survey of Early Warning Systems, encourages Member States to integrate early warning systems into their national disaster risk-reduction strategies and plans, and invites the international community to support the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in its role in facilitating the development of early warning systems;

24. Stresses the need to foster better understanding and knowledge of the causes of disasters, as well as to build and strengthen coping capacities through, inter alia, the transfer and exchange of experiences and technical knowledge, educational and training programmes for natural disaster risk reduction, access to relevant data and information and the strengthening of institutional arrangements, including community-based organizations;

25. Emphasizes the need for the international community to maintain its focus beyond emergency relief and to support medium- and long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and risk reduction, and stresses the importance of implementing programmes related to the eradication of poverty, sustainable development and disaster risk-reduction management in the most vulnerable regions, particularly in developing countries prone to natural disasters;

26. Stresses the need to address risk reduction of and vulnerabilities to all natural hazards, including geological and hydrometeorological hazards, in a comprehensive manner;

27. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, under the item entitled "Sustainable development".

Disaster assistance

Indian Ocean tsunami aftermath

Two and a half years after the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and resulting tsunami [YUN 2004, p. 952], progress was apparent across the affected region, where recovery partners and local communities made significant strides towards rehabilitation and reconstruction. Populations were living in newly constructed homes, children were back in school, and hospitals were being rebuilt and repaired. By the end of 2006, some 150,000 houses and nearly 1,000 schools were built or repaired and approximately 430 health centres constructed. Moreover, the affected countries were fulfilling the promise of building back better in many areas, with safer houses under construction and improved education and health facilities. Yet, while progress was palatable, many complex challenges remained as recovery efforts across the region continued. Each affected country faced different challenges and thus the progress achieved was uneven. A continuing challenge for leading agencies was to link the different recovery processes, such as needs assessments, access to critical information and capacity-building of local government. Instead of supplying critical information, many of the tsunami systems provided unanalysed data on inputs which were not linked back to ongoing needs assessments. In the most affected tsunami countries, the planning systems of implementing agencies continued to be based on needs assessments and commitments made in January 2005, despite the fact that needs had changed considerably in many sectors.

During the year, the Tsunami Trust Fund established to manage contributions for recovery and reconstruction, and managed by OCHA, disbursed $560,000 to support projects aimed at building sustainable capacity in tsunami preparedness among national authorities and communities in seven countries. The Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, established by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in 2005, continued to build and enhance tsunami warning capabilities in accordance with the needs of Indian Ocean and South-East Asian countries. In December, UNICEF released its three-year tsunami anniversary monitoring report, which summarized progress achieved in the eight affected countries and indicated that, of the $695.2 million received for tsunami programmes, $517.1 million had been spent, including $169.9 million between 1 January and 31 October 2007.

Report of Secretary-General. In response to General Assembly resolution 61/132 [YUN 2006, p. 1101], the Secretary-General in May submitted a report [A/62/83-E/2007/67] on strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, recovery and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami, which provided an overview of the tsunami and its impact on affected countries, as well as an update on the recovery process after two and a half years. The report contained updates on the status of implementation of the Secretary-General’s recommendations in his 2006 report [YUN 2006, p. 1100]. Themes discussed
included coordination in the humanitarian and recovery phases; models of Government humanitarian and recovery institutions; assessments of damages and needs; transparency and accountability to donors; and risk reduction, tsunami early warning and incorporation of prevention in development planning.

On assessing damages and needs, partners of the Tsunami Recovery Impact Assessment and Monitoring System made recommendations to facilitate reform in the needs assessments process, such as the need for the United Nations and other stakeholders to support coordination between ministries and data-collection agencies; for the disaggregation of data to be carried out down to the smallest possible denominator, namely the sub-district or village level; and for data collection to include non-affected populations, in order to monitor inequities that could be created or exacerbated by the disaster response. It was also recommended that data be analysed and transformed into a useful product for decision-makers. In other developments, action was taken on the Secretary-General’s recommendation that all local and international organizations provide comprehensive information to the Development Assistance Database systems. The four national development assistance databases established to track recovery and reconstruction assistance had been updated regularly and provided project-by-project data on over $7 billion in assistance and on more than 2,500 projects. Information from the Development Assistance Database also fed into the Tsunami Recovery Impact Assessment and Monitoring System, a common analytical framework designed to assist Governments, aid agencies and affected populations in assessing and monitoring the rate and direction of tsunami recovery. The Office of the UN Recovery Coordinator for Aceh and Nias, working with other partners, prepared a Tsunami Recovery Indicator Package report, which was presented at the Tsunami Recovery Impact Assessment and Monitoring System workshop (Bangkok, Thailand, 21-23 March). Significant progress was made in piloting the System framework. Participating countries added risk reduction indicators to the framework in April and updated indicators reflecting changes in the recovery situation in most countries. At least two countries were making efforts to link the System framework with UNDAF to allow for a smoother transition in respect of the monitoring and evaluations systems supported by various stakeholders and to encourage the UNDAF process to empower local decision-makers by supporting disaggregation of data and analysis to the lowest level possible.

Since the tsunami, efforts focused on risk reduction, tsunami early warning and the incorporation of prevention in development planning. Several targeted training activities involving more than 150 national officials and researchers took place in Indian Ocean countries and were ongoing. Twenty-five nations (out of a possible 28) had established Tsunami Warning Focal Points capable of receiving and disseminating tsunami advisers around the clock. As at 18 May, 11 Indian Ocean countries had submitted national action plans for a tsunami early warning and response system. Under the coordination of ISDR, a major achievement was the establishment of partnership and coordination mechanisms across a wide spectrum of partners and donors. Countries were working to establish clearer responsibilities to ensure that early warning systems were people-centred. However, the critical elements of community preparedness, community education and outreach programmes were not yet in place in most countries. Only a few countries had developed tsunami emergency plans or tested response procedures for tsunamis and earthquakes. Moreover, much of the data needed to develop those plans had yet to be collected. On a positive note, there was a much greater awareness among policymakers of the importance of disaster reduction and environmental issues.

**ICG-IOTWS working groups.** Within the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG-IOTWS), established by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) in 2005, five intersessional working groups continued work on data collection and exchange, hazard identification and modelling, as well as the establishment of warning systems. A sixth group, the Working Group on Mitigation, Preparedness and Response, established in 2006 [YUN 2006, p. 1101], held an intersessional meeting (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 24-25 January). At the fourth session of ICG-IOTWS (Mombasa, Kenya, 28 February–2 March), the Intergovernmental Coordination Group adopted a resolution in which it invited Indian Ocean countries to review their potential to be Regional Tsunami Watch Providers (RTWPs) and agreed to develop by the end of 2007 an implementation plan for an interoperable system of RTWPs, including a transition from the interim service providers. The Group also agreed to work towards providing full regional coverage for the Indian Ocean countries by the end of 2008.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 17 December [meeting 74], the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/91 [draft: A/62/L.30 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 71 (a)].

**Strengthening emergency relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and prevention in the aftermath of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster**

_The General Assembly,_

2005, 60/15 of 14 November 2005 and 61/132 of 14 December 2006,

**Commending** the prompt response, continued support, generous assistance and contributions of the international community, Governments, civil society, the private sector and individuals, in the relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, which reflect the spirit of international solidarity and cooperation to address the disaster,

**Noting** the Declaration on Action to Strengthen Emergency Relief, Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Prevention in the Aftermath of the Earthquake and Tsunami Disaster of 26 December 2004, adopted at the special meeting of leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, held in Jakarta on 6 January 2005,

**Recalling** the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, as well as the common statement of the special session on the Indian Ocean disaster, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, held in Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, from 18 to 22 January 2005,

**Taking note of** the report of the Secretary-General,

**Stressing** the need to continue to develop and implement disaster risk reduction strategies and to integrate them, where appropriate, into national development plans, in particular through the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, so as to enhance the resilience of populations in disasters and reduce the risks to them, their livelihoods, the social and economic infrastructure and environmental resources, and stressing also the need for Governments to develop and implement effective national plans for hazard warning systems with a disaster risk reduction approach,

**Emphasizing** that disaster reduction, including reducing vulnerability to natural disasters, is an important element that contributes to the achievement of sustainable development,

**Emphasizing also** the role of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in coordinating the establishment of the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System, given the importance of strengthening regional and subregional cooperation and coordination, which is essential for effective early warning system arrangements for tsunamis,

**Commending** the operationalization of the Multi-Donor Voluntary Trust Fund on Tsunami Early Warning Arrangements in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, and inviting Governments, donor countries, relevant international organizations, and private sector and civil society to consider contributing to the Trust Fund through financial contributions and technical cooperation to support the establishment of the tsunami early warning system in accordance with the needs of the countries of the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia so that the Trust Fund contributes to the development of an integrated early warning system based on adequate resources and comprising a network of collaborative centres connected to the global system,

**Stressing** the need for continued commitment to assist the affected countries and their peoples, particularly the most vulnerable groups, to fully recover from the catastrophic and traumatic effects of the disaster, including in their medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, and welcoming Government and international assistance measures in this regard,

**Noting** that progress has been achieved in the recovery and rehabilitation efforts of tsunami-affected countries, and noting also that efforts and assistance are still required to re-establish the basis for long-term sustainable development,

**Welcoming** the development or strengthening of disaster management institutions in some affected countries that provide leadership in comprehensive disaster risk reduction as well as strengthen emergency response at local and national levels,

1. **Notes with appreciation** the efforts by the Governments of affected countries to undertake the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase, as well as in enhancing financial transparency and accountability, with respect to the channelling and utilization of resources, including, as appropriate, through the involvement of international public auditors;

2. **Recognizes and encourages** ongoing efforts to promote transparency and accountability among donors and recipient countries by means of, inter alia, a unified financial and sectorial information online tracking system, and highlights the importance of timely and accurate information on assessed needs and the sources and uses of funds, and the continued support of donors, where needed, for further development of online tracking systems in the affected countries;

3. **Stresses** the importance of a coordinated process of accessing lessons learned in the international response to a given humanitarian emergency and in this regard welcomes relevant efforts by Governments, international organizations and United Nations agencies and other multistakeholder efforts to identify and evaluate lessons learned from tsunami response and recovery operations in order to improve coordination and effectiveness of disaster response and post-disaster recovery, and encourages international and national efforts to continue to strengthen the capacity for adequate disaster response and post-disaster recovery based on lessons learned;

4. **Encourages** donor communities and international and regional financial institutions, as well as the private sector and civil society, to strengthen partnerships and to continue to support the medium- and long-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs of the affected countries;

5. **Urges** Governments of the affected countries to identify their unmet needs in terms of financial and technical assistance in order to foster the ongoing efforts to enhance national capacity and create a reliable tsunami early warning system in the region in concert with the activities of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;

6. **Notes with appreciation** the efforts of international agencies, donor countries and relevant civil society organizations in supporting the Governments of affected countries to develop national capacity for tsunami warning and response so as to increase public awareness and provide community-based support for disaster risk reduction;

7. **Encourages** the continued effective coordination among the Governments of affected countries, relevant bodies of the United Nations system, international organizations, donor countries, regional and international financial
8. **Emphasizes** the need for the development of stronger institutions, mechanisms and capacities at the regional, national and local levels, as affirmed in the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015, and the promotion of public education, awareness and community participation, in order to systematically build resilience to hazards and disasters, as well as reduce the risks and the vulnerability of populations to disasters, including an effective and sustained tsunami warning system;

9. **Stresses** the need for relevant bodies of the United Nations system, international organizations, regional and international financial institutions, civil society and the private sector to implement programmes according to assessed needs and agreed priorities of the Governments of tsunami-affected countries and to ensure full transparency and accountability for their programme activities;

10. **Calls upon** States to fully implement the Hyogo Declaration and the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015, in particular those commitments related to assistance for developing countries that are prone to natural disasters and for disaster-stricken States in the transition phase towards sustainable, physical, social and economic recovery, for risk-reduction activities in post-disaster recovery and for rehabilitation processes;

11. **Stresses** the importance of and the need for regular updating of recovery assessment by the Governments of affected countries, the United Nations system and international and regional financial institutions, based on the affected countries’ national data and utilizing a consistent methodology, in order to reassess progress and identify gaps and priorities, with the participation of the local community during the recovery and reconstruction phase in order to build back better;

12. **Recognizes** that relevant activities in evaluating and strengthening the tsunami early warning systems have focused principally on establishing the system’s governance structure, its technical implementation, increasing public awareness and preparedness, including training, and technical advice and that the Tsunami Recovery Impact Assessment and Monitoring System is a common analytical framework to assess and monitor the rate and direction of tsunami recovery;

13. **Welcomes** the establishment of Tsunami Warning Focal Points capable of receiving and disseminating tsunami advisories around the clock, and encourages the continuation of the efforts of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission supported by Member States, United Nations agencies and donors, including for developing national action plans for all countries participating in the Indian Ocean tsunami early warning system;

14. **Takes note with appreciation** of the efforts of the secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction in establishing partnership among relevant actors, and stresses the importance for countries to establish early warning systems that are people-centred;

15. **Encourages** the Emergency Relief Coordinator to continue his efforts to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance, and calls upon relevant United Nations organizations and other humanitarian and relevant development actors to work with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to enhance the coordination, effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian assistance;

16. **Urges** Governments and the United Nations system, in planning for disaster preparedness and responding to natural disasters, and in implementing recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts, to integrate a gender perspective and provide every opportunity for women to take a full, active and equal role in all phases of disaster management;

17. **Requests** the Secretary-General to continue to explore ways to strengthen the rapid response capacities of the international community to provide immediate humanitarian relief, building on existing arrangements and ongoing initiatives;

18. **Also requests** the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution under the item entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance”, through the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2008, with a view to reviewing the future consideration of this item.

**Oversight activities**

**JIU coordination assessment**

In January, the Secretary-General transmitted to the General Assembly [A/61/699-E/2007/8] an evaluation, conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) in 2006 [JIU/REP/2006/5], of the UN capacity to coordinate and support humanitarian assistance for disaster reduction and response. The report, entitled “Towards a United Nations Humanitarian Assistance Programme for Disaster Response and Reduction: Lessons learned from the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster”, stressed the need for strengthening the understanding and application of internationally established guidelines on disaster relief and recovery in most of the disaster-affected countries. It also demonstrated that, except for the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations [YUN 1998, p. 871], no clear and coherent regulatory agreements on disaster management and humanitarian assistance existed. JIU concluded that it was crucial for the UN system to assist in strengthening national disaster management frameworks, and for the Economic and Social Council to initiate a process of formulating coherent international legal instruments and regulations in an intergovernmental decision-making process open to all stakeholders and actors.
The report contained a series of recommendations for the Secretary-General to, among others, review existing agreements, rules, regulations and guiding principles on international humanitarian assistance for disaster response and present an assessment in 2007; formulate an additional minimum standard requirement in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement; conduct an in-depth study of the Thai Tsunami Identification Operation experience; propose guidelines on the rapid start-up of a transboundary disaster management process; develop standardized terminology for disaster response; review the terms of reference of humanitarian coordinators and develop a set of procedures to enable States to monitor their performance and accountability; commission an independent evaluation of UNDP work and its use of grants; study the feasibility of strengthening the capacity of national oversight authorities of affected countries for monitoring the use of funds raised in the context of the consolidated appeal process; and submit a report on the use of CERF funds by participating agencies. The report also made recommendations for the General Assembly to merge the general trust funds other than CERF into one single trust fund under the management of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, with a body composed of Member States to oversee its management; for heads of UN system entities to develop a joint system-wide planning framework for the management and coordination of humanitarian assistance and disaster reduction and response activities; and for humanitarian coordinators to collaborate with host countries to establish baseline indicators to ensure that relief supplies reach the affected population, mobilize all necessary support for UN disaster management teams, build up country and regional assistance frameworks for disaster preparedness, relief and recovery, and update the common humanitarian action plans.

**Response to JIU report.** In a May note [A/61/699/Add.1-E/2007/8/Add.1], the Secretary-General transmitted his comments and those of CEB on the JIU report, in which he and UN system organizations concurred that the existing agreements, regulations, rules and guiding principles on international humanitarian and development assistance for disaster response and reduction needed to be rendered more effective, and that ongoing reform initiatives to tackle emerging global disaster threats needed to be vigorously promoted and implemented. However, he highlighted that since the review was conducted in mid-2005, it did not capture many actions undertaken by the system, in particular regarding the development and strengthening of institutional frameworks for disaster reduction and response. Several of the recommendations echoed key humanitarian reform issues and ongoing follow-up to the Hyogo Declaration and Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015. There was concern that some of the recommendations might undermine recent efforts to streamline the system and lead to the creation of duplicative new mechanisms. Organizations welcomed the fact that the JIU report covered the human rights dimension of natural disasters and agreed that overlaps and duplications in the mandates of various coordinating bodies and mechanisms, such as IASC, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction and international financial and development institutions needed to be addressed. There was a need for the institutional frameworks, tools and policies to be coordinated with the UN entities dealing with man-made disasters, post-conflict reconstruction, including disaster response and reduction, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, and overall preparedness issues. In that connection, the report did not sufficiently address the need for closer interface with existing developmental frameworks, such as UNDAF and the Common Country Assessment.

In specific comments on recommendations in the JIU report, the Secretary-General said that organizations believed that there was no need to revise the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement for the purpose of ensuring that disaster-affected populations had access to information-sharing and radio and telecommunication tools. Instead, more attention needed to be given to implementation of the June 2006 IASC operational guidelines on human rights and natural disasters. In addition, the United Nations should air radio programmes in emergency situations, with the support of Governments. Organizations also questioned the need to review and further develop the terms of reference for humanitarian coordinators, to establish an intergovernmental committee on disaster reduction and response and to strengthen national capacity for oversight of the consolidated appeals process, as UNDP had already successfully introduced the Donor Assistance Database in several countries as a tool for Governments to monitor assistance flows. The UN Secretariat disagreed with the recommendation to merge the various trust funds under OCHA, other than CERF, into one single trust fund, as each trust fund, although interrelated and complementary, had its own specific terms of reference. It added that adequate mechanisms were in place to ensure effective oversight and management of trust funds and that the UN financial regulations and rules were adequate to provide for sound and effective administration of trust funds managed by the United Nations. Organizations supported the JIU recommendations for establishing a victim identification system, proposing guidelines on the rapid start-up of a transboundary disaster management process, establishing baseline indicators to ensure that relief supplies effectively reached the affected population, reviewing the funds drawn from CERF and enhancing the effectiveness of disaster preparedness of the UN system in disaster-prone countries.
GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION

On 4 April [meeting 93], the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth (Administrative and Budgetary) Committee [A/61/667/Add.1], adopted resolution 61/265 without vote [agenda item 117].

Audit and investigative reviews of the tsunami relief operations conducted by the United Nations Secretariat, funds and programmes and the specialized agencies

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, 54/244 of 23 December 1999 and 59/272 of 23 December 2004,


Reaffirming its resolution 61/245 of 22 December 2006,

Having considered the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the audit and investigative reviews of the tsunami relief operations conducted by the United Nations Secretariat, funds and programmes and specialized agencies,

1. Notes the efforts of the Office of Internal Oversight Services to coordinate a consolidated report as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 60/259;

2. Takes note of the oversight activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services with regard to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Indonesia, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Indonesia and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Sri Lanka, and notes with appreciation that most of the recommendations made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services regarding the operations of those offices have been implemented;

3. Recalls paragraph 14 of its resolution 60/259, and, regretting the lack of cooperation with the Office of Internal Oversight Services in the preparation of the consolidated report on internal audits and investigative reviews of the tsunami relief operation, as requested in its resolution 60/259, again stresses the importance of full implementation of legislative decisions;

4. Recalls also paragraph 2 of its resolution 61/245, and decides to consider further the issue of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations funds and programmes and the specialized agencies, in particular relating to complex inter-agency programmes being implemented by a number of entities of the United Nations system;

5. Recalls further that the Board of Auditors conducted a horizontal review of the activities of the United Nations system in the aftermath of the tsunami, and looks forward to its consideration thereof at its sixty-second session.

Other disaster assistance

Bolivia

On 18 January, extreme climatic events resulting from the El Niño phenomenon that had affected eight of Bolivia’s nine departments since November 2006 prompted the Government to declare a national emergency. As of 14 February, floods and landslides in the midlands and lowlands, as well as drought, hail and freezing temperatures in the highlands, had caused 34 deaths, affected 258,460 persons in 51,692 households, displaced 16,700 and damaged housing, infrastructure and agriculture. The most vulnerable communities lost their livelihoods and income. Heavy rainfall continued to cause damage. The initial UN Flash Appeal for Bolivia requested $9.2 million to cover requirements for up to six months to address issues such as shelter, food assistance, young children’s nutrition, water and sanitation, health, child protection, education, agriculture and livestock, income restoration, rehabilitation of minor infrastructure, and coordination and logistics. The revised amount totalled $14.3 million, of which 55 per cent ($7.9 million) was received.

Burkina Faso

In 2007, several West African countries were affected by torrential rains causing the loss of human lives and extensive destruction of infrastructure including dwellings and harvests. In Burkina Faso, the floods resulted from heavy rains which began in July and August and affected 12 of the country’s 13 administrative regions, with the west and the south particularly hard hit. Nearly 93,000 people were affected, including 28,000 displaced persons, with 51 recorded deaths and 76 wounded. Some 8,968 homes and 2,344 cereal stores were destroyed, and 50 bridges were damaged. Crops were flooded, with an estimated loss to the expected production of 13,268 metric tonnes. Although the Government, UN agencies and NGOs had launched emergency humanitarian operations, there were still additional humanitarian needs requiring an urgent response, such as food security and activities in support of agriculture and husbandry; health, including preventive medicine and basic care to address waterborne diseases; support to education for vulnerable households; improved access to safe water and sanitation; support to the rehabilitation of basic shelter; and provision of non-food items. The assessments ascertained that there was no need for large-scale food distribution, owing to the release of 1,300 metric tonnes of food from national stocks, and contributions from the private sector and civil society.

The UN Flash Appeal for Burkina Faso requested $6 million to cover 2007 requirements, of which 21 per cent ($1.3 million) was received.

Dominican Republic

In late October, heavy and prolonged rainfall in the Dominican Republic from tropical storm Noel resulted in rivers overflowing their banks and caused major flooding, landslides, the destruction of bridges
and the death of 84 people. Twenty-six of the 32 provinces and the capital province were affected, particularly in the south-west and centre. It was estimated that 80 per cent of the country’s territory had been affected by the storm and ensuing floods. Although some 3,436 people had been rescued as of 6 November, more than 137 communities remained inaccessible, with 48 people missing. Approximately 16,712 homes were partially destroyed and 35 bridges and highways were affected. Some 65,000 persons were displaced, including 23,336 residing in temporary shelters. The remaining 67 per cent were staying with relatives or friends. President Leonel Fernández declared a state of national emergency on 31 October. The UN system worked with the national authorities, NGOs and other organizations to promote coherence in information and coordination of activities. The international community mobilized technical teams and assistance in cash and kind to meet the most urgent needs. Priority needs included safe water and basic sanitation, especially hygiene. Due to the lack of access to communities, there was also an immediate need for food aid and distribution. Communities also required assistance in the restoration of livelihoods to ensure food security in the short and medium term, as 80 per cent of the harvest was damaged in the most adversely affected areas.

The initial UN Flash Appeal for the Dominican Republic requested $14 million for a six-month period of emergency action. However, in mid-December, tropical storm Olga brought heavy rains, which caused damage similar to that caused by Noel, particularly in the central and northern parts of the country, with major rivers bursting their banks, flash floods in gullies, landslides and flooding of low-lying areas. For the most part, the areas affected were different from those affected by Noel, and included the country’s second city of Santiago, which suffered from extensive flooding, as the River Yaque burst its banks. The new storm disrupted the relief and recovery efforts for Noel. Overall, the two storms killed over 160 people and caused more than 130,000, mostly through displacement caused by flooding and loss of shelter. The revised appeal sought $18.6 million, which included $4.1 million in new requirements, of which 41 per cent ($7.6 million) was received.

**Ghana**

In August and early September, heavy rainfall led to severe flooding in several West African countries, affecting as many as 632,326 people and coinciding with the most critical time of the year, the lean season, when West African families, mostly in the Sahel region, faced food insecurity. In Ghana, excessive and persistent rainfall coupled with the spillage of excess water from the Bagre Reservoir in Burkina Faso resulted in extensive floods in the Northern, Upper East and Upper West regions and caused loss of livestock, destruction of farmlands, houses, bridges, schools and health facilities and damage to the water supply, irrigation systems, and food storage and processing facilities. There were also some small, yet badly affected areas in other regions of the country, particularly the Western region. Although floods were a common feature in Ghana and certain community coping mechanisms were in place, the combination of cumulative events—the prolonged dry spell, abnormal torrential rains and spillage of the Bagre Dam—overwhelmed those mechanisms. Many of the affected areas were already socio-economically vulnerable, thus the floods triggered a rapid deterioration of the humanitarian situation that required life-saving interventions. In view of the magnitude of floods, the Government declared a state of emergency in the three inundated regions. The Government, NGOs, the United Nations and other humanitarian actors provided much-needed life-saving assistance in the most devastated areas. A joint UN/NGO/Government assessment mission conducted from 17 to 20 September estimated that in the Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions, the floods affected some 260,000 people and killed 20. It also identified an urgent need to increase assistance to avoid further deterioration of the humanitarian situation; help normalize the food security situation; and complement efforts to restore livelihoods. A further assessment by the UN country team estimated that 75,000 people were particularly vulnerable and in need of assistance.

The UN Flash Appeal for Ghana focused on eight priority sectors: food security and nutrition; health; water, sanitation and hygiene; education; common services; shelter; sustainable livelihoods; and coordination and information management. It requested $12.4 million, of which 66 per cent ($8.2 million) was received.

**Democratic People’s Republic of Korea**

In 2007, torrential rains between 7 and 14 August caused severe flooding in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, killing 454 people, injuring 4,351 and affecting over 960,000, including some 170,000 people whose homes were completely destroyed and 156 who were missing. Nine central and northern provinces were severely affected, as well as the capital, Pyongyang. Preliminary assessments identified major damage to key transport and communications infrastructure, medical services and the power supply. Over 240,000 homes and 2,781 public buildings were destroyed, badly damaged or submerged. Damage to rice, maize, soya beans and other crops was estimated at 223,381 hectares, which accounted for more than 20 per cent of overall paddy cultivation and 15 per
cent of maize cultivation, exacerbating concerns regarding food insecurity. Priority needs included essential medicines, clean water and food for the worst-affected communities. There was also concern over supplies of potable water and preventing further cases of waterborne disease among the tens of thousands of people living in temporary shelters. Other urgent assistance needed included the repair of homes, roads and bridges, health facilities and schools, especially in view of the impending fall and winter seasons. Assistance was also required to ensure an early recovery of cereal production and farmers’ ability to supplement winter crops.

The Government responded swiftly, mobilizing civilian and military resources in rescue operations, road clearance and relief distribution. Flood recovery operations were led by the National Defence Committee. UN agencies were able to rely on pre-positioned stocks of essential medicine kits, family hygiene kits, food rations and schools-in-a-box, which were delivered to the most vulnerable in partnership with the Ministries of Public Health, Education and others. The revised UN Flash Appeal requested $14.5 million, of which 90 per cent ($13.1 million) was received.

Lesotho

In 2007, a combination of extremely high temperatures and low rainfall led to one of the worst droughts in 30 years in Lesotho, causing the Government to declare an emergency on 9 July. Production of maize, the country’s main staple, dropped by 51 per cent compared to 2006, causing a deficit that would be further aggravated by decreased cereal production in parts of South Africa, which also experienced below-average rainfall for much of the year and supplied approximately 70 per cent of Lesotho’s food requirements. As a result of reduced crop production, limited casual labour opportunities and an exceptionally high price of South African maize, it was estimated that 553,000 people would not be able to meet their annual food needs. While the immediate concern was food assistance to food-insecure households, there was also a need to restore the productive capacity for the upcoming agricultural season and provide assistance by October, as otherwise the planting season would be missed and food insecurity would extend another year. As part of its own national emergency response, the Government allocated $19 million, of which $12 million went to large cash-for-work projects through land reclamation and $6 million to agricultural activities. However, additional humanitarian assistance, both national and international, was needed to take the most vulnerable through to the next harvest, expected in late May 2008. The UN Flash Appeal for Lesotho requested $22.8 million for six months, of which 76 per cent ($17.3 million) was received.

Madagascar

In 2007, the humanitarian situation in Madagascar was adversely affected by a series of tropical storms and flooding. Between December 2006 and February 2007, tropical storms Bondo and Clovis, and the intense tropical storms Gamede and Favio, hit various regions of the country. In addition, the year’s rainy season, which brought exceptional rains to most parts of the island, exacerbated the situation, contributing to heavy flooding in largely populated and cultivated areas throughout the country, including the capital region, the north-west, the west and the south-east. As at 15 March, cyclones, floods and heavy rains had left seven people dead, displaced 33,000 people and damaged the upcoming harvest. Food security was a concern, and the risk of maternal and child mortality due to insufficient services and water-borne diseases, including cholera, increased. A preliminary appeal by the UN country team sought $9.6 million for six months to benefit 293,000 people affected by the cyclones, floods and heavy rains. Two more cyclones, Indlala and Jaya, struck Madagascar on 15 March and 3 April, respectively. In May, the revised UN Flash Appeal requested $19.4 million, of which 84 per cent ($16.4 million) was received. The revised appeal would benefit more than 450,000 people.

Mozambique

In February, the Instituto Nacional de Gestão de Calamidades, the National Disaster Management Institute of Mozambique, declared a “red alert” and called for the evacuation of communities along the Zambezi River Basin, as rising water levels threatened to flood low-lying areas. Heavy rains in Mozambique in January and the first half of February, as well as in neighbouring Zambia and Malawi, created the threat. National authorities managed to mitigate the potential flood damage by controlling the discharge rate from the Cahora Bassa Dam, which also had high water levels. However, on 22 February, Mozambique was struck by cyclone Favio, which made landfall in Vilanculos, in the coastal province of Inhambane, affecting some 150,000 people. Essential infrastructure, as well as health centres and educational facilities, in affected areas were severely damaged and crops were destroyed. By the end of February, flooding had destroyed 78,000 hectares of crops and displaced roughly 163,000 people, including 137,000 living in temporary accommodation centres. Dozens of primary and secondary roads were under water, isolating many communities, including the district capitals of Malara, Tumbara and Zumbo.

The Government led the emergency response process in both the flood and cyclone emergencies. Under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, the
United Nations and the international humanitarian community applied the cluster approach as a framework to complement Government efforts. Although the Government prioritized the allocation of funds for the emergency response, national resources were not sufficient to meet the needs of the affected populations. The revised Mozambique appeal sought $38.7 million, of which 69 per cent ($26.5 million) was received. Meanwhile, on 5 March, the Government launched a reconstruction plan to promote recovery in the disaster-affected areas.

**Nicaragua**

On 4 September, the category-5 hurricane Felix made landfall at Sandy Bay on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, which affected areas in the Northern Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN), mainly communities of the southern and northern coastlines of the town of Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas municipality), the communities of Lower Rio Coco (Waspa municipality) and the “Mining Triangle” (Bonanza, Rosita and Siuna municipalities). The departments of Jinotega and Nueva Segovia were also affected by intense rainfall and mudslides. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the affected population in the RAAN already had the worst health and nutrition indicators in the country and was highly vulnerable to any disruption of food production or crop destruction. Access to the area was difficult. President Daniel Ortega Saavedra declared a state of emergency in the RAAN and the National System for Disaster Prevention, Mitigation and Attention activated its working groups and commissions, which worked closely with UN agencies to provide food, water and sanitation, housing, shelter and logistics, and restore agricultural and fishery-based livelihoods. On 12 September, the number of disaster victims stood at 162,373, with 67 confirmed fatalities and 110 missing persons. In addition, some 9,948 houses were affected in RAAN municipalities, including 7,945 that were completely destroyed. Communications and power lines in the regional capital, Bilwi, collapsed, as well as many bridges, including the bridge over River Wawa, which cut off road access to the RAAN from the rest of the country. An inter-agency emergency response plan was implemented and sectoral meetings were activated for water and sanitation, shelter, health, telecommunications and logistics. During the first weeks, priority would be given to life-saving and life-sustaining activities including food assistance, emergency logistics, shelter, health, water and sanitation. Those efforts would subsequently lead to the progressive recovery of livelihoods and human settlements with activities such as food for work, the provision of seeds and tools, and housing recovery. The initial appeal sought $39.3 million. The revised UN Flash Appeal for Nicaragua requested $41.7 million, of which 44 per cent ($18.3 million) was received.

**Communications.** In letters dated 5 [A/62/371] and 26 September [A/62/372], Nicaragua transmitted to the General Assembly, respectively, the 4 September presidential decree declaring a state of disaster in the RAAN and the 23 September appeal to the international community, which contained the final evaluation of damage and requirements for the revitalization of communities and families affected by hurricane Felix. On 22 October [A/62/501], Nicaragua informed the Assembly that following 50 consecutive days of heavy rains, entire villages were at risk of being swept away by currents or buried by landslides. Some 800 kilometres of country roads were impassable, isolating dozens of communities and preventing agricultural produce from being planted, which threatened to cause a famine the following year. The authorities requested that thousands of people be moved to temporary shelters. As Nicaragua still had not recovered from hurricane Felix, President Saavedra on 18 October declared a national state of disaster throughout the country by a presidential decree that was transmitted to the General Assembly. On 25 October [A/62/504], Nicaragua transmitted to the Assembly the latest data on the disaster situation.

**Pakistan**

In 2007, intense storms and a major cyclone at the end of June and early July caused severe flooding in Pakistan, displacing over 300,000 people and affecting more than 2.5 million. The Balochistan and Sindh provinces in the south were particularly affected, with flooding in 18 and 5 districts, respectively, as well as 280 confirmed deaths and 188 missing persons. The displaced population was living in makeshift spontaneous settlements, camps and public buildings, and there was an urgent need for tents and emergency shelter materials for the reconstruction of homes. Damage to, and contamination of, water systems and wells caused an acute shortage of safe drinking water, while damage to crops, food stocks and livestock caused food insecurity. There was a need to ensure access to sanitation and hygiene to prevent outbreaks of water-borne diseases; provide primary health care, especially essential medicines; and provide other services for the most vulnerable. Early recovery activities were needed to help communities restore their livelihoods, as most of the population relied on farming for food and livelihoods, as well as to regain normal living conditions. The initial appeal sought $38.3 million for 83 projects in 12 clusters, which would address the urgent humanitarian needs of the affected populations for three months. The revised appeal requested $42.9 million, of which 49 per cent ($20.9 million) was received.
Peru

On 15 August, an earthquake off the Peruvian coast registering 7.9 on the Richter scale struck Peru, severely affecting a large part of the country’s coastal region. The department of Ica was heavily affected by both the earthquake and aftershocks, which destroyed homes, hospitals, schools, churches, Government buildings and infrastructure in the city of Pisco and seriously affected the cities of Chinchá Alta, Ica and Cañete. Hospitals were overwhelmed with the injured, mainly in Chinchá Alta and Pisco, where the earthquake struck hardest. By late August, the official death toll stood at 514, with some 1,090 injured, approximately 40,035 families rendered homeless and an additional 30,542 families affected. There was widespread damage to infrastructure, including roads and bridges, and to power and water utilities. Food security was also a concern as supplies had been disrupted.

The Government declared a state of emergency across the affected regions, requested international support and accepted the deployment of a United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team to the disaster area, which coordinated the requests for help that UN agencies were receiving independently. Initial international effort focused on improving logistics and increasing the provision of aid, as well as the facilitation of medical assistance and evacuation, and the provision of water, food, tents and blankets to some 200,000 people directly affected. The UN Flash Appeal sought $37.8 million, of which 56 per cent ($21.2 million) was received.

Sudan

In 2007, the rainy season in the Sudan, which normally lasts from August to September, began in early July, with flooding that killed 64 persons and affected an estimated 410,785 people (over 82,157 households). By 7 August, floods had affected a number of states in northern Sudan, including Al Gazira, Al Gedaref, Blue Nile, Southern, Western and Northern Darfur, Kassala, Khartoum, Northern and Southern Kordofan, Red Sea, River Nile, Sinnar and White Nile. The Sudanese Government issued flash-flood warnings for several states, and on 21 July, the Government of Southern Sudan issued a flood disaster declaration in six states.

The immediate humanitarian response focused on four sectors: food security and livelihood; health and nutrition; non-food items and emergency shelter; and water and sanitation. The United Nations and partners provided food for 40,000 people; plastic sheeting to use as shelter, blankets, cooking sets and sleeping mats for more than 200,000 people; and emergency veterinary interventions in the form of animal feed, vaccination and treatment for livestock owned by 7,000 families in Kassala State. Despite close cooperation with the Government to provide water purification and hygiene education to approximately 500,000 people and substantial chlorination material and clean water to some 10,000 people, 600 cases of acute watery diarrhoea were reported, leading to 39 confirmed deaths. Early recovery activities, in both education and basic infrastructure, were initiated to help affected communities return to normal, including the rehabilitation of schools, as more than 190 had been destroyed or damaged by the floods.

The UN Flash Appeal requested $34.7 million to address the urgent humanitarian and some limited early recovery needs of the affected population for six months, of which 52 per cent ($18 million) was received.

Swaziland

In 2007, a severe drought affected all four regions of Swaziland, prompting the Government to declare a national disaster in early June. Assessments estimated that the maize harvest was 61 per cent less than that of 2006, and that some 410,000 people would require varying levels of humanitarian assistance, including food, agricultural inputs, water and sanitation, health and nutrition services, and early livelihood recovery. The drought was exacerbated by a lack of funding over previous years for long-term programmes aimed at increasing preparedness and strengthening the coping mechanisms of vulnerable populations. Poor and vulnerable subsistence farmers would need assistance to produce an adequate amount of food for the next season. Meanwhile, prices of agricultural inputs had increased beyond the reach of those households most at risk. The drought was also likely to indirectly impact the HIV/AIDS situation as patients on antiretroviral drugs were expected to discontinue taking drugs in the absence of food. In some of the most affected areas, an increase in cases of gender-based violence, school drop-outs, skin diseases, diarrhoea and child abuse, particularly of orphans and vulnerable children, was also a concern. The UN Flash Appeal for emergency-related activities for six months addressed priority needs such as food, agriculture, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, protection and early recovery. The appeal also included cross-cutting issues such as gender and HIV/AIDS. The appeal sought $18.7 million, of which 77 per cent ($14.3 million) was received.

Uganda

In 2007, unusually heavy rainfall between July and September led to severe flooding and water-logging across many parts of eastern, central and northern
Uganda, which affected a highly vulnerable area where most households were dependent on subsistence agriculture and the basic services were already severely overstretched. An estimated 300,000 people (50,000 households) required humanitarian assistance. Most people faced food insecurity due to the loss of their first season harvest (due in July/August) and the delay in second season planting. A two-month “hunger gap”, therefore, was the norm. However, the gap in 2007 was expected to extend up to 10 months, as the next harvest was not expected before February 2008. Moreover, it would take at least two harvests for affected households to fully recover their losses. In addition to damaged homes and health facilities, as the traditional mud-brick architecture of the region was particularly susceptible to the wet conditions, water and sanitation facilities were impacted by the flooding and a large percentage of water sources were contaminated. Another immediate threat was the increased likelihood of waterborne disease outbreaks. The incidence of malaria, diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections had already increased, reportedly by as much as 30 per cent. Many roads and bridges were damaged and washed away by the floodwaters, which made access to affected populations increasingly difficult and hampered humanitarian efforts. Most affected communities were inaccessible by land and could only be reached by air and boat for aid deliveries and assessments. Consequently, affected people in several areas were cut off from accessing health and other social services, putting at risk all displaced persons, most acutely women and children. The flooding had a critical impact in the Teso subregion due to its severity and the limited capacity amongst Government and humanitarian actors to respond to needs. In that connection, the humanitarian response would focus primarily on aid delivery and assistance activities in the Teso districts.

The UN Flash Appeal requested $41.5 million to address urgent humanitarian and some limited early recovery needs for 300,000 people over a six-month period, of which 49 per cent ($20.4 million) was received.

Zambia

In 2007, excessive rainfall that persisted since December 2006 caused widespread flooding in Zambia, which displaced people and destroyed crops, houses and public infrastructure. The situation became critical in mid-February 2007, when the Zambezi, Kafue and Luangwa Rivers started bursting their banks. On 21 February, the Zambezi River, running through the North-Western and Western Provinces, read 6.9 metres, the highest reading since river-level monitoring started in 1957. By that time, the river had been overflowing its banks for nearly a month, slowly forcing more and more people to higher ground. The water levels remained high and in many areas floodwaters had not yet receded. Meanwhile, flash floods were recorded in a number of areas. The worst affected areas were Chavuma, Kalabo, Lukulu, Mongu, Senanga and Zambezi. While some of the affected populations had traditional coping mechanisms for dealing with floods, the 2007 floods came much earlier than normal, disrupting their livelihood patterns. In addition, the floods were more widespread than usual, affecting people that did not have traditional coping mechanisms. As at 15 March, it was estimated that the lives and livelihoods of some 295,148 people were directly threatened by the floods and required urgent assistance, while an additional 1.4 million people were indirectly affected and required assistance in rehabilitating their houses, latrines, water wells, schools, clinics, roads and other infrastructure over the next year.

The UN Flash Appeal sought $8.9 million, of which 12 per cent ($1.1 million) was received.

Chernobyl aftermath

In response to General Assembly resolution 60/14 [YUN 2005, p. 1036], the Secretary-General, in October, submitted a report [A/62/467] on international efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear accident [YUN 1986, p. 584]. The report chronicled UN system activities to promote recovery from the disaster, including participation in commemorations of the twentieth anniversary of the accident in 2006 [YUN 2006, p. 1107]. Reports describing the recovery efforts of the three most affected countries—Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine—were included in the annex. In 2007, the UNDP Office of Coordination of International Cooperation on Chernobyl continued to manage the coordination of Chernobyl issues across the UN system. A subregional conference of all UNDP Chernobyl teams was held (Ukraine, 16-18 January), and on 24 January, UNDP organized a meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl, with more than 50 people participating via videoconference from eight locations. In other developments, on 14 February, Russian tennis player Maria Sharapova, whose family had roots in Gomel, Belarus, was appointed as a UNDP Goodwill Ambassador. Ms. Sharapova aimed to use her role to convey a message of self-reliance and responsible choices, in particular to young people in Chernobyl-affected regions.

The report concluded that UN system entities were united in pursuing a development approach to the Chernobyl legacy. The UN system and the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine recognized that a return to normal life was a realistic prospect for most people living in the affected regions. However, to make that aim a reality, what was needed
most was sustainable social and economic development, including new jobs, fresh investment and the restoration of a sense of community self-reliance. Recommendations were made for further recovery and development, including proposals to designate the third decade after Chernobyl as the decade of sustainable development and for the drafting of a UN action plan for recovery up to the year 2016. The provision of scientifically sound and accurate information to Chernobyl-affected communities in accessible, non-technical language was also recommended.

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY ACTION**

On 20 November [meeting 55], the General Assembly adopted resolution 62/9 [draft: A/62/L.12 & Add.1] without vote [agenda item 71 (d)].

**Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster**

The General Assembly,


Conscious of the long-term nature of the consequences of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant, which was a major technological catastrophe in terms of its scope and complexity and created humanitarian, environmental, social, economic and health consequences and problems of common concern, requiring for their solution wide and active international cooperation and coordination of efforts in this field at the international and national levels,

Expressing profound concern at the ongoing effects of the consequences of the accident on the lives and health of people, in particular children, in the affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, as well as in other affected countries,

Noting the consensus reached among members of the Chernobyl Forum on the environmental, health and socio-economic effects of the Chernobyl disaster, in particular, the Forum’s message of reassurance and practical advice to communities living in territories affected by the Chernobyl disaster,

Acknowledging the importance of the national efforts being undertaken by the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster,

Recognizing the contribution of civil society organizations, including the national Red Cross Societies of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, in response to the Chernobyl disaster and in support of the efforts of the affected countries,

Welcoming with appreciation the developmental approach to tackling the problems caused by the Chernobyl disaster aimed at normalizing the situation of the individuals and communities concerned in the medium and long term,

Stressing the exceptional Chernobyl-related needs, in particular in the areas of health, environment and research, in the context of the transition from the emergency to the recovery phase of mitigation of the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster,

Noting the completion in 2006 of the transfer of responsibility for the coordination of Chernobyl efforts from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat to the United Nations Development Programme,

Stressing the need for further coordination by the United Nations Development Programme and improved resource mobilization by the United Nations system to support activities aimed at the recovery of Chernobyl-affected territories, inter alia, community-based development projects, the promotion of investment and the creation of new jobs and small businesses, advocacy work and the provision of relevant policy advice on request and the widest possible dissemination of the findings of the Chernobyl Forum through the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General concerning the implementation of resolution 60/14, as well as relevant parts of the reports of the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system,

1. Welcomes the contribution made by States and by organizations of the United Nations system to the development of cooperation to mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, the activities of regional and other organizations and those of non-governmental organizations, as well as bilateral activities;

2. Notes with appreciation the efforts undertaken by the agencies of the United Nations system and other international organizations that are members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl to continue implementing a developmental approach to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, in particular through the development of specific projects, and stresses the need for the Inter-Agency Task Force to continue its activities to that end, including through coordinating efforts in the field of resource mobilization;

3. Acknowledges the difficulties faced by the most affected countries in minimizing the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and invites States, in particular donor States and all relevant agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, in particular the Bretton Woods institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations, to continue to provide support to the ongoing efforts of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, includ-
ing through the allocation of adequate funds to support medical, social, economic and environmental programmes related to the disaster;

4. **Reaffirms** that the United Nations should continue to play an important catalytic and coordinating role in the strengthening of international cooperation to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster;

5. **Requests** the Secretary-General and the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl, in his capacity as Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and as Chairperson of the United Nations Development Group, to continue to take appropriate practical measures to strengthen coordination of the international efforts in that area;

6. **Welcomes** the efforts of the Government of Ukraine and the international donor community to complete construction of the Shelter facility and related nuclear safety projects at Chernobyl, in accordance with international standards, so as to transform the site into a stable and environmentally safe state, recognizes and welcomes the recent contract signatures under the Shelter Implementation Plan as important milestones, and urges all parties to ensure that a strong, long-standing, high-level commitment remains in place to ensure the successful completion of this vital work;

7. **Also welcomes** the recent appointment as a United Nations Development Programme Goodwill Ambassador of star tennis player, Maria Sharapova, who will serve as an advocate for post-Chernobyl recovery efforts, and praises her personal commitment in supporting a number of recovery projects that aid local communities in Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine;

8. **Notes with satisfaction** the realization of the Cooperation for Rehabilitation Programme in Belarus and the Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme in Ukraine, aimed at promoting better living conditions in and the sustainable development of the affected territories;

9. **Also notes with satisfaction** assistance rendered by the International Atomic Energy Agency to Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine on remediation of agricultural and urban environments, cost-effective agricultural countermeasures and the monitoring of human exposure in areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster;

10. **Takes note with satisfaction** of the progress made by the Governments of the affected countries in implementing national strategies to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, and calls upon United Nations agencies and multilateral and bilateral donors to continue to align their assistance with the priorities of the national strategies of the affected States, and stresses the importance of working together on their implementation in a common effort in the spirit of cooperation;

11. **Notes** the necessity of further measures to ensure the integration of the assessment by the Chernobyl Forum of the environmental, health and socio-economic consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident into the International Chernobyl nuclear accident into the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network process through dissemination of the findings of the Forum, including by providing accurate information on the impact of radiation in accessible, non-technical language in the form of practical messages on healthy and productive lifestyles, to the populations affected by the accident in order to empower them to maximize social and economic recovery and sustainable development in all its aspects;

12. **Proclaims** the third decade after the Chernobyl disaster, 2006-2016, the Decade of Recovery and Sustainable Development of the Affected Regions, to be focused on achieving the goal of a return to normal life for the affected communities as far as is possible within that time frame;

13. **Welcomes**, in this regard, the proposal by the United Nations Development Programme to coordinate the drafting of a United Nations action plan for Chernobyl recovery up to 2016 in order to implement the Decade, in support of national strategies of the affected countries, with the aim of maximizing limited resources, avoiding duplication of effort and building on recognized agency mandates and competencies, and requests the United Nations Development Programme to present a draft plan for review by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl by 26 April 2008, the twenty-second anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster;

14. **Requests** the United Nations Development Programme to coordinate, within existing resources, the efforts of the United Nations system and with other relevant actors on the implementation of the Decade;

15. **Requests** the Secretary-General to continue his efforts in the implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions and, through existing coordination mechanisms, in particular the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl, to continue to maintain close cooperation with the agencies of the United Nations system, as well as with regional and other relevant organizations, while implementing specific Chernobyl-related programmes and projects;

16. **Requests** the United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl to continue his work in organizing, in collaboration with the Governments of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, a further study of the health, environmental and socio-economic consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, consistent with the recommendations of the Chernobyl Forum, and to improve the provision of information to local populations;

17. **Requests** the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, under a separate sub-item, a report containing a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of all aspects of the present resolution.