



UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY



Distr.
GENERAL

A/32/64 *of Gen. 1*
12 May 1977

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Thirty-second session
Item 66 of the preliminary list*

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/32/50/Rev.1.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The present report on the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) is made in accordance with General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971, which called for an annual report on the activities of UNDRO to be prepared by the Co-ordinator for the Secretary-General, and to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council and to the General Assembly. It covers the period from 1 April 1976 to 31 March 1977.
2. The report also forms that required by General Assembly resolution 3532 (XXX) of 17 December 1975, giving information about the two subaccounts within the voluntary Trust Fund established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 3243 (XXIX) of 29 November 1974.
3. Finally, the report describes in broad outline the proposals, as they stood at the time this report was written, for a continued sound financial basis for the core programme of UNDRO, including proposals for the transfer, over time, of appropriate costs from voluntary funding to the United Nations regular budget. These proposals were requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 31/173 of 21 December 1976.
4. During the year under review, the ability of UNDRO to respond to the needs of disaster-prone developing countries has improved very considerably, thanks to the extra staff and other resources made available as a result of contributions to the trust fund established under resolution 3243 (XXIX) and to the subaccount for technical assistance in disaster prevention and pre-disaster planning assistance to Governments, established under resolution 3532 (XXX). While the response of Governments to the General Assembly's appeal in resolution 3243 (XXIX) for contributions to the trust fund for the strengthening of UNDRO was encouraging, sufficient funds to allow recruitment to all the posts which were authorized in the manning table were received only at a late stage. For this reason, and because of the difficulty of finding fully qualified staff, it was not possible to complete recruitment for the majority of trust fund posts until the late summer of 1976.
5. Meetings arranged by UNDRO in May and June 1976 brought together government representatives and representatives of United Nations, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. They resulted in broad agreement on the ways in which UNDRO could better serve the requirements of donor and recipient countries alike, both in relief assessment and co-ordination after disasters (which continue to occupy the major proportion of the resources of the Office) and in disaster preparedness and prevention. A similar meeting was held in April 1977.
6. In October 1976 there took place the first meeting of the Co-ordinator's technical advisory panel, a group of five experts in disaster-related matters. Their advice covered a wide range of subjects and most of their recommendations have been taken into consideration. A second meeting was held in April 1977 immediately following the donor meeting mentioned above.
7. Two joint UNDRO/UNDP seminars were held in July and November 1976, for UNDP

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resident representatives in the Middle Eastern and Mediterranean, and Latin American regions, respectively. These seminars, in which representatives of other United Nations agencies also took part, were designed to allow an opportunity for UNDRO staff to explain to their UNDP counterparts more about the latter's duties in disaster-related matters, and to enable an exchange of views and experience between the resident representatives themselves. A seminar for the Asian and Pacific region was held in April, and another for the African region will be held at a later date.

8. Further progress has been made in completing memoranda of understanding with United Nations agencies which collaborate with UNDRO. Memoranda have been signed during the year with the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency. A number of others are in preparation.

9. By April 1977, three issues of the UNDRO Newsletter had been published. The Newsletter, which appears three times each year, contains articles on relief action undertaken in current disaster situations; special articles on aspects of natural disasters, including technical reports; information on scientific and technological developments, and on disaster prevention and related subjects. The Newsletter reflects the disaster activities of other units of the United Nations system as well as non-governmental organizations and voluntary agencies, such as the League of Red Cross Societies. The UNDRO Monthly, a bulletin started in March 1977, contains brief notes and details on the response of UNDRO, as well as other units of the United Nations system, to current disaster situations and on related items of interest, including preparedness and prevention. This publication is designed to inform Governments and organizations about the activities of UNDRO on a more frequent but less-detailed basis than the Newsletter.

Status of subaccounts

10. The subaccount for technical assistance to Governments in disaster prevention and pre-disaster planning, established by resolution 3532 (XXX) with a target figure of \$600,000 for the biennium 1976-1977, had, up to 31 March 1977, received contributions for the provision of technical co-operation services, totalling \$463,892 from the Governments of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Norway and Sweden. The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland had contributed \$11,955 for specific missions. The Government of Japan agreed to finance a technical co-operation project in Nepal.

11. Funds totalling \$10,700 for a special project of a technical assistance nature, but not forming part of the activities financed from the subaccount, were received from the Government of the Netherlands, which also made a contribution of \$50,000 for a preliminary study on the provision of emergency shelter and related services in disaster situations.

12. The subaccount designed to augment the funds available under the regular budget for emergency assistance, and which had a target figure of \$400,000 for the 1976-1977 biennium, had, up to 31 March 1977, received only one contribution, which

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came from the Government of Jamaica. The effect of this has been to limit progress towards the raising of the maximum assistance which may be authorized by the Co-ordinator for each disaster from \$20,000 to \$30,000. This proposed increase in no way implied that the Co-ordinator would become a prime source of relief funds. It was designed to allow for the decline in the purchasing power of money since the present limit was fixed in 1965, and to enable the United Nations to establish an early presence in a disaster area by meeting some of the most urgent relief needs pending the arrival of other, and larger, donations.

Proposals for the transfer of appropriate costs from voluntary funding to the United Nations regular budget

13. In its resolution 31/173, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly at its thirty-second session, through the Economic and Social Council, his proposals for a continued sound financial basis for the core programme of UNDR0, including proposals for the transfer, over time, of appropriate costs from voluntary funding to the United Nations regular budget. The resolution further requested the Secretary-General, in formulating his draft programme budget for the biennium 1978-1979, to include provision for the financing from the regular budget of a "substantial portion" of those core programme administrative activities currently financed from the trust fund established in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 3243 (XXIX), as an initial step in the process of ensuring a sound financial basis for UNDR0.

14. Some 34 per cent of the 1976 costs met from the trust fund are being proposed for transfer to the regular budget, in the 1978-1979 budget estimates, including 10 of the 34 posts so funded. The Assembly's decision in 1976 to extend the trust fund established pursuant to resolution 3243 (XXIX) until the end of 1979 will, provided that the necessary pledges are forthcoming from Member States at an early date, help to ensure the maintenance of the level of activities necessary to enable the Co-ordinator to discharge his mandate.

II. DISASTER PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS

A. General

15. UNDR0's activities in the fields of prevention and preparedness are based on three basic ideas, namely, (a) that disasters are not just a humanitarian and social problem but also a formidable obstacle to the economic and social development of many developing countries; (b) that most disasters, as distinct from the natural phenomena which may cause them, can be mitigated or even prevented; and (c) that, at least in the context of most developing countries, the most basic preventive measures are also the least expensive. These ideas have been developed at length in a number of UNDR0 publications and documents and are only mentioned here as an illustration of the basic philosophy of UNDR0 which led to its proposing an international strategy for disaster prevention which has been endorsed by the General Assembly.

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16. Work on the formulation of the international strategy for disaster prevention has continued, although not always at the desired rate because of financial difficulties with respect to the World Survey of Disaster Damage (see paras. 20 and 21 below). It is hoped, however, that if no further financial difficulties arise the first outline of the strategy will be ready for consideration by an ad hoc panel of experts in 1978 and for later submission to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

17. During the year under consideration, a much broader awareness of the impact of disasters on the development of the stricken countries and of possibilities for disaster prevention has developed. This has led, in turn, to an increase in the number of government requests for technical co-operation projects focusing on disaster prevention. It also enabled UNDR0, inter alia, to make a substantial contribution in devising a simple, pragmatic methodology for composite vulnerability analysis, which can serve as a guide for any type of locational decision in disaster-prone areas (see para. 30 below).

B. Research and development activities

18. During 1976 and the first quarter of 1977, the Office continued work on a series of monographs on disaster prevention and mitigation, in co-operation with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other United Nations bodies, and with the active support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). These monographs will provide some of the qualitative data needed for the formulation of the international strategy for disaster prevention, which will provide a conceptual framework for all national and international action in disaster prevention and mitigation. They constitute a compendium of current knowledge of disaster prevention and mitigation measures and also identify gaps in existing knowledge and, together with the conclusions of the survey of disaster damage, will form the basis for the formulation of the strategy.

19. Up to the present, the monographs on volcanological, hydrological, seismological and land-use aspects have been published; meteorological aspects will be published shortly. The eight remaining monographs in the series will deal with engineering, health, public information, economic, sociological and legal aspects, as well as preparedness and vulnerability analysis.

20. Work has also continued on the World Survey of Disaster Damage, which is not only intended to provide the quantitative data for the formulation of the strategy, but also to help in evaluating the effects of disasters on the economic development of the stricken countries, and to enable disaster-prone developing countries to formulate long-term prevention policies and carry out cost-benefit analyses of various preventive measures. Where difficulties have arisen in gathering the data, UNDR0 has, upon request, provided consultants to assist Governments to complete the questionnaire and to gather the data required. However, funding difficulties have led to a considerable slow down of the project.

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21. The initial analysis of the information and data collected to date has begun, however, and efforts are under way to obtain supplementary data from United Nations bodies and other national and international institutions. However, if current efforts to obtain additional funding from government and other sources are successful, it would be possible to extend rapidly the coverage of the Survey to most of the countries which, for various reasons, have been unable to reply to the questionnaire. UNDRO attaches all the more importance to the completion of the Survey because available data strongly suggest that what is generally known of the damage caused by disasters may be only the "tip of the iceberg". Indirect effects such as losses of production, forced unemployment, the increased incidence of certain diseases which are almost always ignored may in many cases be much higher than the direct effects of disasters, i.e. damage to fixed capital - which are virtually the only ones mentioned. It is felt that if the international community in general and disaster-prone developing countries in particular are to come to grips with the problem of disasters which, in many of them reaches staggering proportions - many, for instance, lose annually 3 per cent of their GNP or more to disasters 1/ - it is necessary to obtain a clear idea of the true impact of disasters both world-wide and country by country, in order to define the most appropriate prevention policies. For this reason UNDRO will continue to do the utmost to obtain meaningful data on disaster damage on a global basis.

22. During the past year, in co-operation with other units of the United Nations system, in particular the Outer Space Affairs Division of the United Nations, UNDRO has been exploring possibilities for the application of satellite remote-sensing technology to disaster damage assessment, preparedness and prevention. A paper on the potential applications of satellite remote sensing technology to natural disasters (A/AC.105/C.1/L.92), submitted by UNDRO to the fourteenth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, held in New York in February 1977, describes the present and potential applications of remote sensing in disaster prevention, preparedness and damage assessment. UNDRO is co-operating with other United Nations bodies concerned in preliminary steps to organize a series of training seminars in this area for experts and administrators from disaster-prone developing countries and, secondly, to develop practical recommendations for the broad application of satellite remote-sensing technology to natural disasters. The first such seminar on the applications of remote sensing to natural disaster matters is to be organized jointly with FAO in early 1978.

23. The first phase of the UNDRO project on the provision of emergency shelter and related facilities in disaster situations has been completed. Initial conclusions emerging from this phase have shown that traditional concepts of emergency shelter may have to change, bearing in mind the needs and resources of the disaster victims themselves and the social and cultural factors involved, and that planning emergency shelter and related facilities should be undertaken in the context of the over-all housing problem of any stricken country. The second phase of the project will develop strategies for pre-disaster planning related to shelter needs in diverse climates and for various types of hazards to be implemented at all levels by UNDRO, Governments and voluntary agencies.

1/ This figure is to be compared, for instance, to the fact that the total assistance of the United Nations system to developing countries does not reach 1 per cent of their GNP.

24. A background paper, entitled "Water: Resource and Hazard" (E/CONF.70/A.28) was prepared for the United Nations Water Conference, held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in March 1977. This document focuses on violent physical disasters caused by floods of all kinds (river floods, including those associated with tropical storms and coastal floods such as storm surges or tsunamis), water disasters resulting from induced seismicity, and sudden disasters usually associated with water such as landslides, mudflows and lahars (volcanic mudflows). The paper reviews preparedness and prevention measures and provides recommendations for Governments and the international community to promote the application of disaster prevention measures in the development and use of water resources.

25. Participation in specialized international meetings included the South Pacific Disaster Preparedness and Relief Seminar sponsored by the League of Red Cross Societies and the Commonwealth Secretariat; the International Society on Disaster Medicine; the WMO/ESCAP/LRCS Editorial Board on the Guidelines for Disaster Prevention and Preparedness in Tropical Cyclone Areas; Habitat: the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, and the non-governmental organizations Habitat Forum; the Sub-Committee on Outer Space Activities of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination; the Inter-governmental Meeting on the Blue Plan for the Mediterranean; the United Nations Water Conference; the fourth session of the ESCAP/WMO Panel on Tropical Cyclones; the Ninth Session of the WMO/ESCAP Typhoon Committee; the fourteenth session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space; the Meeting of Regional Association IV of the World Meteorological Association, and the First Asian Regional Red Cross Conference.

26. The nineteenth session of the General Conference of UNESCO approved the recommendation of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Conference on the Assessment and Mitigation of Earthquake Risk held in February 1976 to establish a Committee on the Assessment and Mitigation of Earthquake Risk to advise UNESCO and UNDRO on the preparation of a long-term interdisciplinary research programme for the promotion of international co-operation in this field. UNDRO has since co-operated with UNESCO on the definition of the terms of reference of the Committee, the selection of members and the preparation of the agenda of its first meeting scheduled to be held in late 1977.

27. UNDRO is encouraging increased protection of human settlements from natural disasters by promoting, through the media, a general awareness of the importance of disaster preparedness as well as disaster prevention, and stressing, in particular, the need to carry out vulnerability analyses of all risks in a given area before undertaking development or construction projects. Numerous articles on this subject and on UNDRO's activities have appeared in specialized publications and statements have been provided on various occasions.

C. Technical co-operation activities

28. UNDRO is continuing to provide advice and assistance to disaster-prone developing countries through its technical advisory missions. While disaster preparedness has so far carried the emphasis of UNDRO's technical co-operation

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programme, a more balanced distribution of projects between disaster preparedness and prevention is emerging. Since April 1976, technical assistance in the area of disaster preparedness and, to a lesser extent, disaster prevention, was provided to 10 additional countries, raising the number of those assisted thus far to 25.

29. A six-month mission in disaster preparedness and prevention and a one-month supplementary mission to Yemen to assess earthquake and volcanic risks have been completed. A six-month mission to Afghanistan on disaster preparedness and a short-term follow-up mission to Turkey, as well as a two-week mission to Bangladesh to determine needs for shallow-draught boats and helicopters for preparedness, have also been completed. Experts completed three-month missions to the Sudan and the Dominican Republic, and a five-month mission to Egypt to advise the respective Governments on strengthening their natural-disaster preparedness organizations, and to provide recommendations on disaster prevention and the improvement of relief co-ordination. A one-month mission in disaster preparedness was also carried out in Greece.

30. As a result of a pilot project in the Philippines a general methodology for composite vulnerability analysis in disaster-prone areas has been developed. In July 1976, the Government of the Philippines requested UNDR0 to assist the Human Settlements Commission in carrying out a systematic analysis of disaster risks in the Metro Manila Area, in order to include the disaster risk factor in the urban master planning process currently under way for that area. The project has provided the Commission with guidance on land-use and building practices which, if adopted, can substantially reduce the risk of disasters in Manila and its surrounding region. The mission to the Philippines was carried out by two experts over a period of five months beginning in October 1976. The simple pragmatic methodology - the first of its kind - which was developed as a result of the project is conceived as a simple guide for any type of locational decisions in disaster-prone areas. It has wide applicability in other areas of the Philippines and other countries and can be expanded to cover other types of risks than the two covered in Manila, i.e., floods and earthquakes. It complements to a large degree the land-use study just published by UNDR0, which is mentioned in paragraph 19.

31. A mission to Nepal is under way and other missions are in parparation for Costa Rica, Ecuador, Romania, Somalia and Venezuela. Requests for six additional missions to disaster-prone developing countries are currently being discussed. Three requests for fellowships for training of senior officials responsible for aspects of disaster preparedness were received and arrangements made with host institutions to provide training facilities. In co-operation with UNESCO, UNDR0 contributed to the cost of an international seminar on earthquake risk assessment and mitigation sponsored by the Government of Turkey.

32. UNDR0 provided financial support to two seminars in 1976 and is planning to participate in, or co-sponsor, other seminars or similar meetings on aspects of disaster preparedness and disaster prevention in Europe, Asia and the Pacific region in 1977 and 1978.

III. MOBILIZATION AND CO-ORDINATION OF RELIEF

A. General

33. During the year under review, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, at the request of the Governments of the countries concerned, took action in 20 disasters. Earthquake activity was particularly marked, and although the evidence shows that the number of earthquakes was no greater than average, nor were they reported to be stronger in terms of the total energy released, they did strike in densely populated areas. In July 1976 the Tangshan area of China suffered very great damage and casualties. No request for international assistance was made by the Government of China and no official figures of casualties were given. It would, however, appear that not for more than 400 years in the world as a whole have so many people been killed in a single year by earthquakes.

34. In addition to the many sudden disasters with which UNDRO was concerned, attention was given also to the more insidious "creeping disasters". Many countries face food shortages due to failure of the rains in 1976. For these and similar situations, wherever they may occur, FAO and WFP discharge the tasks of keeping donors informed of the problems and responding through their own machinery for emergency operations. UNDRO shares additional information it may receive with FAO and WFP, in accordance with the terms of the Memoranda of Understanding signed in 1976, and if necessary issues appeals to donors for relief supplies not available from FAO and WFP's resources.

35. Reports have been prepared on the relief operations in Guatemala, Indonesia and Ecuador. Other reports are being written. The lessons to be learnt from those operations are many and varied, but some lessons are common to them all, as they are to many other operations. Examples of these lessons include the widespread need for more effective preparedness, the vital necessity for donor sources to keep UNDRO and the Government of the stricken country informed of their responses, and the danger of expensive, unco-ordinated bilateral contributions which often turn out to be wasteful, unnecessary, or a duplication of the work of others. There have also been problems with ambiguous descriptions of items which are required, resulting in the sending of incorrect supplies in the belief that they were in fact suitable. The need is for a widely accepted standard nomenclature, and the task of preparing this is being undertaken by UNDRO, in co-operation with the League of Red Cross Societies and other agencies involved. It must be emphasized that, if the representatives of donor Governments and organizations in disaster-prone countries assist and co-operate, in advance of disasters, in the preparedness measures taken in these countries, actual relief operations will proceed more efficiently, and probably at less cost, than is unhappily sometimes the case. The fact that many donors prefer to provide aid on a bilateral basis is in itself no hindrance to effective co-ordination so long as those donors keep UNDRO informed of their actions. If they do not do so, they not only risk duplication and wastage of their own assistance, but also put at the same risks the contributions of other donors who are responding to the known needs as promulgated by UNDRO.

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36. In paragraph 8 (e) of resolution 2816 (XXVI), the General Assembly invited Governments which are potential recipients of disaster relief assistance to consider appropriate legislative or other measures to facilitate the receipt of aid, including overflight and landing rights and necessary privileges and immunities for relief units. A study of this matter has now been made jointly by UNDRO and the League of Red Cross Societies, and a report has been prepared, after consultation with a number of Governments, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with relief activities. The practical proposals on measures to expedite international relief thus represent the accumulated experience of a wide circle of those involved in this work. It is hoped that these proposals, the texts of which form annex II to this report, and which are being submitted also to the XXIIIrd International Conference of the Red Cross, scheduled to be held in Bucharest in October 1977, will find ready acceptance by Member States.

37. A notable addition to the facilities of the Office has been achieved by the completion in November 1976 of the UNDRO Co-ordination Centre at Geneva. This Centre possesses extensive communications capability, and it is also a central point for UNDRO's data bank and its processing of information about relief resources in general and the recording of contributions for particular disasters. Equally if not more important is its function of serving during disaster emergencies as a meeting point for all those organizations in Geneva, both within and outside the United Nations system, which are active in disaster relief, and for the permanent missions of both donor and recipient countries. Here information may be readily compared and checked, each source against others, so that a substantially accurate picture of an emergency situation is available to everyone concerned at any moment. Here too it is possible to verify more easily with the specialized agencies involved the validity of requests for particular types of supplies, to mobilize assistance and transport and, using computer-controlled telex, to communicate with more than 100 potential donors. The Centre was used for the first time in the relief operation following the earthquake in eastern Turkey in November 1976.

B. Disaster relief activities

Afghanistan

38. In late March 1976, part of the north of the country was affected by an earthquake and part of the west by floods. About 50 people were killed, and considerable material damage was done to buildings, roads and irrigation systems. Over 18,000 houses were destroyed or damaged. UNDRO responded with an immediate grant of \$20,000, and mobilized in-kind assistance from a donor Government. The League of Red Cross Societies reported assistance from national societies totalling \$563,716. The Government later estimated the total cost of reconstruction at \$2.25 million. UNDRO drew the attention of the international donor community to these reconstruction needs.

Comoros

39. As part of the United Nations response to General Assembly resolution 3421 (XXX) of 8 December 1975, the Co-ordinator had drawn attention to the immediate needs of the Comoros in food and medical supplies and an encouraging response had been given by the World Food Programme and some donor countries. In May 1976 an UNDRO mission, which was also visiting other countries in the region, went to the Comoros and as a result the Co-ordinator launched a further appeal for medicines, food, agricultural tools and road-building equipment. Emergency assistance channelled through UNDRO to a total value of \$736,057 has now been delivered by, or is en route from, WFP and WHO. Another donor gave \$300,000 through UNICEF for medical supplies and training, while other longer-term aid may be expected following the passing of General Assembly resolution 31/42 of 1 December 1976.

Italy

40. A serious earthquake in May 1976 left some 970 dead and caused enormous material damage in the Friuli district of northern Italy and to some extent in neighbouring countries. The Italian Government did not request UNDRO's services in its mobilizing and co-ordinating role, but with the agreement of the authorities the Co-ordinator sent a personal representative to the area. UNDRO also made a grant of \$20,000 to the League of Red Cross Societies for the purchase of tents and sent private contributions of \$908 to the League for relief purposes. Aftershocks continued, culminating in new, serious tremors on 11 and 15 September 1976. These caused new damage but few casualties.

Ethiopia

41. During the second half of May 1976, heavy rains caused flooding along the Wabé Shebelle River between Kelafo and Sulsul in the South Ogaden. A number of villages were under water and others were cut off for long periods. UNDRO allocated \$10,000 towards the cost of fuel for the helicopters used to transport supplies to isolated villages and refugee camps. At the end of May an UNDRO assessment mission visited the flooded region.

42. Owing to rainfall deficiency in the 1976 growing season in Wollo, Tigre and the Rift Valley, the Ethiopian Government expects a serious crop shortfall for 1977. UNDRO issued an appeal on behalf of the Government for material to upgrade the logistics capability to import and distribute food and took part in a joint mission with FAO and WFP to assess the situation. At the invitation of the General Assembly, expressed in resolution 31/172 of 21 December 1976, a special report (E/5919) was submitted to the Economic and Social Council at its sixty-second session.

Philippines

43. The 1976 typhoon season in the Philippines began disastrously in May when Typhoon Olga brought torrential rains to the Island of Luzon. Six cities, including

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the capital Manila, and 87 towns were flooded; 215 people were killed and over 600,000 people were forced to evacuate their homes. Material damage was estimated at over \$34 million.

44. Massive rescue and relief operations were launched by the Philippines Armed Forces, acting in collaboration with other government agencies, and the Philippines Red Cross. On 28 May, the Secretary-General relayed to the Disaster Relief Co-ordinator the Government's official request for assistance and a special representative of the Co-ordinator was immediately sent to Manila. He found that, whilst most of the urgent needs had been met from resources made available by the Philippines authorities, local voluntary agencies, bilateral and private donors, the Philippines Red Cross still required external assistance, chiefly in the form of funds to permit local purchase of rice, fish and milk-powder for distribution to approximately 1 million flood victims. An UNDRO cash allocation of \$20,000 was given towards this emergency feeding programme and WFP contributed food to the value of \$1,080,900. The total value of bilateral assistance reported to UNDRO was \$747,794 and that of contributions through Red Cross Societies and other voluntary agencies was \$1,379,796.

45. The earthquake that shook Mindanao Island in the southern Philippines on 17 August 1976 caused a tidal wave (tsunami) which devastated fishing villages on off-shore islands and along the coast and left some 4,000 people dead and over 100,000 homeless.

46. The Co-ordinator sent his personal representative to the scene and made an immediate allocation of \$20,000 from his emergency funds. Minimal outside assistance proved to be necessary, as effective action was taken by the Philippine national relief organization, but United Nations agencies present in the country took action within their various fields. The World Food Programme launched food-for-work projects in the affected areas and FAO assisted in the rehabilitation of the fisheries sector. UNDRO's contribution was used to meet emergency shelter needs. The total value of emergency assistance provided by UNDRO, WFP and FAO was \$1,061,900.

47. Bilateral assistance to the value of \$199,567 was reported to UNDRO. Contributions made through Red Cross Societies and other voluntary agencies amounted to \$7,073,083.

Indonesia

48. In June and July 1976, within a period of three weeks, two severe earthquakes occurred in Indonesia. About 420 people were killed by landslides when a series of very strong tremors shook a remote mountain area of Irian Jaya Province. About half of the population of 15,000 lost the gardens on which they relied for food, and supplies had to be flown in to them for some months until crops could be grown. A less strong earthquake, but one which had more serious consequences, struck the Island of Bali in mid-July killing 573 persons and reducing a large area of the western side of the island to rubble. Emergency relief could be brought to the victims more readily than had been possible in Irian Jaya, but in contrast to the latter, the task of reconstruction was all the greater.

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49. Tragically, a further earthquake occurred in the same area of Irian Jaya in October 1976 and more casualties were caused. The relief system already put in train after the original earthquake was able to be extended to cope with the new situation.

50. An UNDRO allocation of \$20,000 was made to meet the immediate needs of the victims of both earthquakes, and a representative of UNDRO assisted in the emergency phase to co-ordinate the relief given from international sources. Additional contributions received by UNDRO totalled \$81,164; these were used to meet some of the costs of airlifting relief shipments to remote settlements in Irian Jaya.

51. The total value of emergency assistance provided by UNDRO and UNICEF to Irian Jaya and Bali was \$270,000. The value of bilateral assistance reported to UNDRO was \$885,354 and that of contributions through Red Cross Societies, other voluntary agencies and the private sector \$416,011.

Pakistan

52. As a result of heavy rains in July 1976 the Indus River and its tributaries were in a state of severe flood by the end of that month. Over 3 million acres of farmland were under water and many communities were either inundated or threatened in the North West Frontier Province, Punjab and Sind. About 350 persons lost their lives and about one and a half million people had to leave their homes and move to relief camps.

53. The Government of Pakistan mobilized all its resources to mount a relief and river control effort which successfully prevented a major calamity. UNDRO provided \$19,683 to the UNDP Resident Representative and UNICEF for emergency health assistance.

54. The total value of emergency assistance provided by UNDRO, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP, FAO and WHO was \$3,434,900. The value of bilateral assistance reported to UNDRO was \$1,077,000 and that of contributions through Red Cross, Red Crescent, Red Lion and Sun Societies and other voluntary agencies \$123,329.

Burma

55. Heavy rains in June and July 1976 left 200,000 persons homeless in the Arakan and Magwe Divisions of the country. The Government, assisted by the Burma Red Cross, carried out an effective relief operation. In September UNDRO made an allocation of \$20,000 for the provision of blankets, which were purchased by UNICEF. Other external assistance reported to UNDRO included \$35,714 from bilateral donors, and \$89,974 from Red Cross Societies.

Mexico

56. Hurricane Liza struck the western Mexican states of Baja California and Sonora with great ferocity early on 2 October 1976. The force of the hurricane and

resulting flash floods killed about 1,000 people and left up to 100,000 people without shelter. The Mexican Government utilized its defence forces and civil agencies in a major relief effort. Only limited outside assistance, principally in the medical field, was required. Medical supplies to the value of \$7,500 were channelled through UNDRO by a donor Government, and supplies worth \$9,300 were sent by WHO/PAHO.

Ecuador

57. A series of more than 70 seismic shocks occurred in the provinces of Pichincha and Cotopaxi, south of Quito, between 4 and 6 October 1976. Ten people were killed and about 20,000 were made homeless. Some 80 per cent of the houses in the area sustained damage. UNDRO allocated \$3,000 from its emergency funds to finance a survey of shelter needs and \$8,000 for the purchase of roofing materials. Total assistance from UNDRO, UNICEF and WFP amounted to \$335,000 and bilateral contributions to \$137,500.

Sudan/Zaire

58. In October 1976 a serious epidemic of viral haemorrhagic fever was reported in the border area between the Sudan and Zaire. The World Health Organization sent epidemiologists to the area to assist national authorities and also promoted an intensive research effort to identify an antidote to the disease. WHO's emergency operations cost about \$100,000, part of which was met by a government contribution of \$50,000 channelled through UNDRO.

Bolivia

59. A jet cargo aircraft crashed on take-off into a main street of the city of Santa Cruz on 13 October 1976, killing the crew and 102 people on the ground. Some 100 persons were injured, the majority of whom had serious burns. UNDRO allocated \$11,184 for the local purchase of urgently needed medical supplies. Prompt medical assistance was also rendered by the United States of America and other countries in the region and contributions to the value of \$81,000 were reported to UNDRO.

60. Torrential rains over eastern Bolivia on 3 and 4 January 1977 caused extensive flooding in Santa Cruz and Cochabamba provinces affecting 70,000 people. Ten people were killed and 900 families lost their homes. Damage was estimated by local authorities at \$19 million.

61. No general request was made by the Bolivian Government for outside assistance in the relief effort but an appeal was made for funds for materials to rebuild houses. UNDRO allocated \$5,000 for emergency needs, and other members of the international community reported contributions totalling \$35,083.

Honduras

62. In the first week of November 1976 very heavy rains caused extensive flooding in the north coast region of Honduras. Up to 20 lives may have been lost and some 15,000 people were forced to leave their homes. Great damage was caused to communications, crops and services. The Government of Honduras and the Honduran Red Cross, with financial support from the League of Red Cross Societies, brought emergency relief. Assistance in meeting the emergency health needs was provided partly from an UNDRO contribution of \$10,000 for medicines and a donor Government contribution of nearly \$8,000 through UNDRO.

Democratic Yemen

63. As a result of the driest year on record in the history of Democratic Yemen, severe damage has been suffered to crop and animal production which has had repercussions on the economy as a whole. The Government asked the Secretary-General for United Nations assistance. UNDRO consulted with FAO and WFP and FAO sent a mission to assess the situation and report on the needs. A specific request for food and other aid was received from the Government at the end of March 1977.

Turkey

64. A strong earthquake occurred in the Province of Van, 1,000 kilometres east of Ankara, on 24 November 1976. Approximately 3,800 persons died, 4,900 were injured and 50,000 made homeless. There was also widespread material damage. Following an appeal from the Turkish Government, UNDRO was able to distribute on the same day a preliminary list of emergency needs to the international community. Despite the difficulties caused by winter weather, the local authorities and the Turkish Red Crescent brought immediate relief and their resources were supplemented quickly by units of the Turkish Army and Air Force. The seriously injured were flown to hospitals in Ankara. UNDRO and the League of Red Cross Societies worked closely together to keep donor sources aware of the requirements as the situation developed. By mid-December 1976, the emergency needs had been met and the homeless survivors had been accommodated in winterized tents provided by international contributions.

65. The Co-ordinator sent personal representatives to Turkey during the emergency period and himself visited the area in January 1977.

66. The total value of emergency assistance provided by UNDRO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, WFP and WHO amounted to \$1,588,100. The value of bilateral assistance reported to UNDRO was \$12,601,975 and that of contributions through Red Cross Societies and other voluntary agencies \$5,100,676.

Madagascar

67. Three provinces of Madagascar were struck by Cyclone Emilie in the first week of February 1977. More than 30 people were killed and about 15,000 made homeless.

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There was also extensive damage to crops and to infrastructure. An UNDRO assessment mission found that, while only moderate emergency assistance was needed from international donor sources, the displaced people would need to be fed for some months and the Government of Madagascar would require considerable help with reconstruction. UNDRO communicated these findings to the international community, and UNDP made an emergency allocation of \$20,000. Bilateral and voluntary agencies' assistance reported to UNDRO totalled \$30,000.

Mozambique

68. The General Assembly, in resolution 31/43 of 1 December 1976, had already appealed for substantial economic and development assistance to Mozambique. It was therefore the more serious for the country when heavy rains during the first week of February raised the level of the Limpopo and other rivers in the south and destroyed thousands of hectares of rice, maize and wheat crops in an area which is the traditional granary of Mozambique. Losses to the value of about \$20 million were sustained in the agricultural sector and about \$15 million worth of damage was done to infrastructure, particularly roads and railways. Fifty people died and about 400,000 were affected in some way by the floods. Of these about 40,000 were in need of emergency relief.

69. The Government of Mozambique issued an appeal for international assistance and an UNDRO representative went to Maputo and, in consultation with the Government, assisted in providing an assessment of the relief needs. A number of traditional donors and African countries provided substantial assistance. Up to late March 1977, approximately \$4.8 million had been contributed in cash or in goods, including \$20,000 from UNDRO, and \$566,927 from UNICEF, UNDP, WFP and WHO, \$4,019,014 from bilateral donors, and \$192,562 through the Red Cross.

Romania

70. On 4 March 1977 an earthquake of strength 7.2 on the Richter scale struck the south-eastern part of Romania causing extensive material damage and leaving 1,541 people dead. Over 11,000 people were injured, many seriously. Heavy damage, and the greater proportion of the deaths, occurred in Bucharest. The Government estimated the cost of economic losses resulting from the earthquake at \$480 million.

71. Initial relief work was undertaken with speed and efficiency by the Romanian Government and Red Cross. It soon became clear that some external assistance would be needed, and UNDRO acted in concert with the League of Red Cross Societies to make these requirements widely known. The international response was extremely rapid and generous, and this coupled with the Government's own efforts enabled the relief phase to be considered as closed within 10 days after the disaster.

72. With the move into the reconstruction phase, the small UNDP Office in Bucharest was strengthened with additional UNDP staff, in order to assist in the co-ordination of international assistance.

73. UNDRO allocated \$20,000 immediately for medical relief supplies. The value of further aid given in the emergency phase was: United Nations system: UNICEF, UNDP,

WFP, UNHCR, UNESCO and WHO \$3,061,600 (including donor contributions through UNDRO totalling \$154,846), government (bilateral) donations known to UNDRO \$5,948,052, National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies \$1,103,521, and other voluntary agencies and private donors \$468,884.

Other disaster situations

74. Many other disasters occurred during the year, in which UNDRO monitored the situation in case help should be requested, and on some occasions issued information alert reports. Among these disasters were the following:

April 1976	Ecuador (earthquake), Colombia (oil pollution), Turkey (earthquake)
May 1976	South Pacific (typhoons), Colombia (earthquake), Kenya (epidemic)
June 1976	Mexico (earthquake), India (floods)
July 1976	Honduras (floods), Nicaragua (floods)
September 1976	Guadeloupe (volcanic eruption), India (floods), Thailand (floods), Indonesia (volcanic eruption)
October 1976	Greece (floods), Colombia (dam burst), Costa Rica (drought), Philippines (earthquake), Indonesia (earthquake Irian Jaya)
November 1976	India (food shortage), Papua New Guinea (earthquake), Iran (earthquake), Swaziland (tornado), Chile, Peru, Ecuador (earthquake)
December 1976	Philippines (tropical storm), Indonesia (floods), Comoros (food shortage), Africa (potential food shortages in a number of countries)
January 1977	Ecuador (epidemic), Greece (earth tremor), Papua New Guinea (earthquake), Zaire (volcanic eruption), Paraguay (floods), Argentina (floods), Brazil (floods), Indonesia (floods), Senegal (food shortage)
February 1977	Bolivia (drought), Philippines (floods), Morocco (floods)
March 1977	Indonesia (flood), Iran (earthquake), Philippines (earthquake), Turkey (earthquake).

ANNEX I

Relief directly mobilized by the Office of the United Nations
Disaster Relief Co-ordinator a/

Number	Country or area	Date	UNDRO allocation from	Contributions channelled through UNDRO	Air freight savings obtained by UNDRO
			United Nations funds		
			(in United States dollars)		
(Disasters numbered 1-71 are reported in the annexes to documents A/10079 of 6 May 1975 and A/31/88 of 12 May 1976)			832 120	26 598 328	1 405 237
Additional donations, 1 April 1976 to 31 March 1977 in respect of disaster situations reported earlier					
70	Comoros (famine risk)	December 1975		622 115 <u>b/</u>	
71	Guatemala (earthquake)	February 1976		88 901 <u>c/</u>	
72	Afghanistan (earthquake and floods)	March 1976	20 000	15 961	610
73	Italy (earthquake)	May 1976	20 000	908	
74	Ethiopia (floods)	May 1976	10 000		
75	Philippines (typhoon)	May 1976	20 000		
76	Indonesia (earthquake)	June/July 1976	20 000	81 164	
77	Pakistan (floods)	August 1976	19 683		
78	Philippines (earthquake)	August 1976	20 000	500	
79	Burma (floods)	September 1976	20 000		
80	Mexico (hurricane)	October 1976		7 500	
81	Ecuador (earthquake)	October 1976	11 000		
82	Sudan/Zaire (epidemic)	October 1976		50 000	
83	Bolivia (aircraft accident)	October 1976	11 184		
84	Honduras (floods)	November 1976	10 000	7 953	
85	Democratic Yemen (drought)	November 1976			
86	Turkey (earthquake)	November 1976		233 722	68 000
87	Bolivia (floods)	January 1977	5 000		
88	Ethiopia (drought)	January 1977			
89	Madagascar (cyclones)	February 1977			
90	Mozambique (cyclones)	February 1977	20 000	11 017	
91	Romania (earthquake)	March 1977	20 000	154 846	
TOTALS 1 March 1972 to 31 March 1977			1 055 987	27 872 915	1 473 847

a/ Excluding multilateral and bilateral assistance furnished in response to emergency requests, but not channelled through UNDRO.

b/ Total cash contributions for Comoros now \$736,057.

c/ Total cash contributions for Guatemala now \$899,972.

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ANNEX II

Measures to expedite international relief

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The following proposals have been prepared jointly by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) and the League of Red Cross, Red Crescent, and Red Lion and Sun Societies (LICROSS). In October 1976 both bodies decided to undertake a joint survey of measures that might be taken to expedite international relief assistance. It was felt that the most fruitful way to approach these problems would be to circulate a draft working paper which would seek to identify obstacles and impediments to delivery of emergency relief to consignees within disaster-stricken countries; make recommendations on measures for surmounting these obstacles; and suggest means of facilitating relief consignments and the movement of relief personnel.

2. A first working paper was submitted to those organizations involved in disaster relief who participate in the monthly information meetings convened by the League of Red Cross Societies. Comments made on this working paper were then incorporated in a revised draft which was sent to a wider circle, including a number of Governments and National Red Cross Societies. The comments subsequently received proved most helpful in the revision of the earlier drafts and have led to the preparation of the present paper which is submitted for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

3. The proposals made here thus represent the accumulated experience of a number of Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental agencies concerned with relief activities. They are jointly sponsored by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and by the League of Red Cross Societies and the same proposals will be submitted by the Red Cross to the participants at the XXIIIrd International Conference of the Red Cross in October 1977. It is hoped that from consideration at the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on the one hand, and at the Red Cross Conference on the other, resolutions will emerge in each body concerned which will gain sufficient endorsement to constitute useful guidance for both Governments and other agencies in their future relief operations, will help to surmount certain obstacles to relief which are here identified, and will expedite the provision of international relief to the victims of disasters.

II. DEFINITION OF INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

4. For the purpose of this paper, the term "international relief" is intended to include urgently-required supplies, personnel and other services provided from external sources, which have been requested and recognized by appropriate relief authorities to be of prime necessity, and which are destined for relief of the victims of natural and other disasters, and not intended for resale or other commercial purposes.

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5. The Annex to the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures concerning "Urgent Consignments", as adopted by the Customs Co-operation Council in June 1976, recognizes that:

"Certain goods ... need to be conveyed rapidly from one country to another and cleared through Customs with a minimum of delay. This applies, for example, to relief consignments sent in the event of disasters ..."

As examples of relief consignments, the Annex mentions:

"goods, such as vehicles and other means of transport, foodstuffs, medicaments, clothing, blankets, tents, pre-fabricated houses or other goods of prime necessity, forwarded as aid to those affected by natural disasters and similar catastrophes ..." a/

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

6. It is believed that in order to facilitate relief, Governments may wish to consider adopting, where required, the following specific measures set forth below.

National relief authority

7. The first and general proposal is the following:

Recommendation A: It is recommended in accordance with paragraph 8 (b) of General Assembly resolution 2816 (XXVI) that potential recipient Governments, if they have not already done so, designate one single national relief authority to co-ordinate all domestic relief activities; this authority will collaborate with appropriate government departments and with domestic and international relief agencies in defining and quantifying those relief items required from abroad.

Consular certificates of origin

8. Some Governments require the issuance of such certificates by their consulates within sending countries, presumably to attest to the identity of the consignor, the manufacturer, or the country of origin. The necessity of obtaining these certificates sometimes delays dispatch of urgently-needed relief consignments, and it is doubtful whether such certificates serve any useful purpose when applied to emergency relief for humanitarian purposes.

a/ See extracts from the Customs Co-operation Council's Annex (F.5) concerning Urgent Consignments, reproduced at the end of this paper.

Consular invoices

9. These too are required by some Governments and entail translation into the language of the receiving country of packing lists, bills of lading, and completion of sometimes lengthy questionnaires which are rarely relevant to relief shipments. It is doubtful whether such papers are necessary in cases of relief assistance as distinct from normal commercial transactions.

Recommendation B: It is recommended that potential recipient Governments waive requirements for consular certificates of origin and invoices, with respect to relief consignments (as distinct from normal commercial imports), on condition that adequate documentation from recognized relief agencies accompany such consignments. Examples of such documentation are provided in the LICROSS Recommended Procedures for Packaging and Labelling, or Marking Consignments of Supplies for International Disaster Relief Operations, b/ UNICEF shipping lists, and similar documents from other recognized relief agencies.

Customs documentation

10. Provisions 17 to 27 of the Customs Co-operation Council's Annex concerning Urgent Consignments (which are attached), illustrate the problems encountered under this heading and propose remedies.

Recommendation C: It is recommended that potential recipient Governments waive requirements for import and/or export licences, possibly through extending the scope of the Annex to the Convention of the Customs Co-operation Council (Provisions 3 to 28) to apply to relief shipments destined for any kind of disaster.

Fumigation certificates

11. These are required by some Governments as a condition prior to importation of clothing, blankets and shelter materials. The need for such certificates in emergency situations has been questioned where health hazards from exposure may be greater than those arising from any other possible risk.

Prohibitions on food imports

12. Restrictions on importation of certain food items based on protection of human and animal health are common to the domestic legislation of most countries. However, some relief agencies have reported hold-ups and even rejection of vital emergency food shipments in circumstances where it was felt that undue adherence was being paid to the strict letter of the law, at the expense of overriding relief needs. Without wishing to question the general justification for such

b/ "Conclusions of the Working Group on Standardisation of Packaging and Labelling of Relief Supplies" (Geneva, 1973) adopted by the LICROSS Disaster Relief Advisory Committee, Teheran, 1973.

restrictions, it is nevertheless felt that some flexibility should be permitted in cases of prime necessity.

Recommendation D: It is recommended that potential recipient Governments waive - to the extent compatible with minimum standards of hygiene and animal protection - normal requirements regarding fumigation certificates and restrictions on food imports where these would impede the admission of relief items essential for the protection of disaster victims.

Visas for relief personnel

13. Resolution No. 13 adopted at the 33rd Session of the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies, states:

"The Board of Governors ... regretting that experience indicates that the obtaining of visas for disaster relief delegates and teams remains a time-consuming procedure which often delays the despatch of such delegates and teams and, in too many cases, is the limiting factor when 'fire-brigade' members are called for;

"Urges National Societies to make representations to their Governments with a view to achieving an easing of governmental formalities for the entry of official League delegates or official national teams provided by other Societies in response to a League appeal;

"Recommends that, when appealing for assistance in time of disaster, the appealing National Society obtain assurances from its Government and so advise the League that, in the case of official League delegates or national Red Cross teams despatched on request from the League every consideration will be given by the Government of the recipient country, to easing the problem of entry by waiving the need for visas for the League delegate(s) or members of national teams, by agreeing to the provision of visas at the point of entry, or by the institution of such other procedures as will permit the League delegate(s) or national teams to commence operation without delay and consistent with local legislation." c/

Recommendation E: It is recommended that all Governments waive requirements for transit, entry and exit visas for relief personnel acting in their official capacity as representatives of internationally-recognized relief agencies. In this connexion, attention is drawn to resolution No. 13 adopted by the Board of Governors of the League of Red Cross Societies at their 33rd Session, and Governments are urged to approve its adoption at the forthcoming

c/ Resolution of the LICROSS Board of Governors, adopted at the 33rd Session, Geneva, 28 October-1 November 1975.

23rd International Red Cross Conference as well as to generalize its provisions so as to apply them to all relief personnel representing internationally-recognized relief agencies.

Irrelevant goods shipped as relief

14. Often at considerable expense but with subsequent disillusionment, well-intentioned relief agencies have shipped many tons of unnecessary goods to disaster-stricken countries. Such consignments overtax customs and relief authorities and create congestion. Vital manpower resources often have to be diverted within the receiving countries to sort, identify and otherwise handle such shipments, and entry of high priority relief shipments is inevitably impeded. Notwithstanding the best of intentions on the part of donors, many additional problems can be created through their disregarding indications from competent national and international relief authorities as to the kinds of material required for emergency relief.

Recommendation F: It is recommended that all donors restrict their relief contributions to those high-priority relief needs identified by appropriate relief authorities and agencies, with a view to more efficient utilization of resources and more rapid fulfilment of essential relief needs.

Recommendation G: It is recommended that all Governments, intergovernmental agencies and non-governmental organizations concerned with relief operations undertake programmes to educate donors on the importance of avoiding contributions of non-essential items for relief purposes.

Failure to notify consignees

15. Lengthy delays often occur after arrival of relief consignments in ports of entry. This is sometimes due to failure on the part of donors to notify consignees in time.

Recommendation H: It is recommended that all donors ensure that prompt notification is given to consignees of impending relief shipments; that they review procedures for consigning relief shipments; that they include detailed manifests with each consignment; and that they seek to secure prompt acknowledgement of arrival by the consignee. In this connexion, donors are encouraged to refer to the Recommended Procedures for Packaging and Labelling, or Marking Consignments of Supplies for International Disaster Relief Operations, prepared by the League of Red Cross Societies.

Customs delays

16. In some cases, a serious cause of delay in the delivery of urgently-required relief supplies is failure on the part of customs authorities in transit countries

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as well as in recipient countries to take prompt action to release emergency consignments from their custody.

Recommendation I: It is recommended that Governments of transit and recipient countries ensure that their customs authorities receive standing instructions to expedite processing of relief shipments in their custody. In this connexion, Governments are urged to consider acceding to Annex F.5 concerning Urgent Consignments adopted in Brussels in 1976 as an annex to the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures adopted by the Customs Co-operation Council at Kyoto (1973).

17. The following facilities, when granted to relief consignments and personnel, can significantly increase the capacity of relief agencies to respond to emergency needs.

Free or concessional air freight

18. Resolution 200 of the International Air Transport Association, paragraph 2 (b), provides that transportation free or at reduced rates may be granted to:

"... any person or supplies to provide relief in case of general epidemic, disaster or other calamitous visitation but not transportation to or from zones of military operation".

This authorization for IATA members to depart from agreed tariff schedules is discretionary. In the experience of UNDRO and LICROSS, most IATA air carriers have shown great consideration towards emergency requests, although capacity has often been limited to space available after commercial air cargo has been loaded.

Recommendation J: It is recommended that all Governments authorize their national airlines - whether members of IATA or not - to accord free transportation or, if this is not possible, transportation at minimal rates to relief consignments and relief personnel wherever reasonably possible. Potential recipient Governments in particular should instruct their national airlines to accord such treatment to incoming relief personnel and relief shipments, even to the extent of deferring transport of regular passengers and commercial cargo.

Non-traffic rights

19. The Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago 1944) and subsequent bilateral agreements limit the capacity of third-country carriers not possessing traffic rights to take on passengers and cargo. Relief personnel have lost time through not being able to board flights of these carriers during their transit or refuelling stops.

Recommendation K: It is recommended that all Governments relax limitations imposed on carriers not possessing traffic rights where this action would facilitate the travel of relief personnel or the transport of relief equipment and supplies.

Overflight authorization and landing rights

20. Governments normally require advance requests before considering whether or not to give permission for non-scheduled aircraft to overfly or to land in their territory whilst in transit to a disaster-stricken country. Considerable delay can sometimes occur for relief consignments while aircraft await permission of this nature; and failure to authorize overflight or transit landing facilities often necessitates time-consuming alternative arrangements for re-routing and/or refuelling. In this connexion, it is recalled that Annex 9 (seventh edition, April 1974), to the Convention on International Civil Aviation states that:

"D. - Natural Disaster Relief Flights

8.10 Contracting States shall facilitate the entry into and departure from their territories of aircraft engaged in natural disaster relief flights when performed by recognized international organizations or by States themselves. Such flights shall be commenced after obtaining agreement with the recipient State as quickly as possible.

8.11 Contracting States shall ensure that personnel and articles arriving on the relief flights referred to in 8.10 are cleared without unnecessary delay."

Recommendation L: It is recommended that all Governments explore the possibility of according overflight permission and landing rights for aircraft transporting international relief at the outset of disaster emergency operations. It would be desirable for such authorizations to be valid for the duration of the emergency relief phase, thereby obviating the need for subsequent time-consuming ad hoc overflight and landing requests.

Access to communications facilities

21. The ability of relief personnel to send and receive messages is often hampered by problems of access to communications facilities.

Recommendation M: It is recommended that potential recipient Governments take advance measures to authorize recognized relief agency personnel to have access to all available telex, cable, wire, telephone and radio facilities, as disaster relief circumstances require, for their internal and external communications.

/...

APPENDIX

(The following provisions, which have a particular bearing on emergency relief consignments, have been extracted from the Annex concerning Urgent Consignments (Annex F.5), adopted by the Customs Co-operation Council in June 1976, to the International Convention on the Simplification and Harmonization of Customs Procedures (Kyoto Convention).)

ANNEX F.5

ANNEX CONCERNING URGENT CONSIGNMENTS

INTRODUCTION

Certain goods, either because of their nature or because of the special circumstances surrounding their shipment, need to be conveyed rapidly from one country to another and cleared through customs with a minimum of delay. This applies, for example, to relief consignments sent in the event of disasters ...

While, in principle, customs controls and formalities apply equally to urgent consignments and to ordinary shipments of goods, many customs administrations have provided greater facilities in connexion with the clearance of urgent consignments, subject to the necessary revenue safeguards and any prohibitions and restrictions.

The provisions of this Annex apply to the customs formalities involved in the clearance of urgent consignments, at any stage of their transportation, be it at exportation, during transit or at importation. Generally, however, the Annex deals only with greater facilities provided for urgent consignments as compared with the provisions relating to the customs treatment of other goods where no urgency is involved.

The Annex contains a number of special provisions concerning relief consignments forwarded as aid to those affected by natural disasters (e.g. earthquakes) and similar catastrophes (e.g. dam failures). However, these provisions do not apply to consignments forwarded in the event of catastrophes resulting from wars and similar conflicts ...

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Annex:

(a) the term "urgent consignments" means goods which require rapid clearance as a matter of priority due to:

- their nature;
- their being relief consignments;
- their meeting a fully justified urgent need;

/...

(b) the term "relief consignments" means goods, such as vehicles and other means of transport, food-stuffs, medicaments, clothing, blankets, tents, prefabricated houses or other goods of prime necessity, forwarded as aid to those affected by natural disaster and similar catastrophes ...

3. FIELD OF APPLICATION ... Standard

Clearance of urgent consignments shall be carried out rapidly as a matter of priority, and customs control shall be restricted to the minimum necessary to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations which the customs are responsible for enforcing.

4. Standard

When clearing urgent consignments customs authorities shall take into account such factors as the degree of urgency with which a consignment is needed, the nature and value of the consignment, and the particular circumstances relating to it. In any event absolute priority shall be granted to relief consignments.

5. Standard

The provisions relating to the clearance of urgent consignments shall also be applicable where such consignments consist of goods ex customs transit, ex customs warehouse or from a free zone.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

(a) Time for lodgement of the goods declaration

6. Standard

At the request of the declarant, and for reasons deemed valid by the customs authorities, the latter shall, in so far as their administrative organization permits, allow the goods declaration to be lodged outside the business hours of customs offices ... In the case of relief consignments or consignments of a humanitarian nature the customs authorities shall always endeavour to grant this facility.

(b) Lodgement of the goods declaration before the arrival of urgent consignments

7. Standard

The declarant shall be authorized to lodge the goods declaration before the arrival of urgent consignments at the customs office.

/...

(c) Periodic lodgement of goods declaration

8. Standard

Where urgent consignments are cleared frequently by the same person, the customs authorities shall allow a single goods declaration to cover all such consignments cleared by that person in a given period ...

(d) Requirements concerning the goods declaration

9. Standard

Provision shall be made for a simplified goods declaration procedure for the clearance of urgent consignments ...

(e) Clearance of urgent consignments outside the business hours of the customs office

10. Standard

At the request of the declarant, and for reasons deemed valid by the customs authorities, the latter shall, in so far as their administrative organization permits, allow urgent consignments to be cleared outside the business hours of customs offices ... In the case of relief consignments or consignments of a humanitarian nature the customs authorities shall always endeavour to grant these facilities.

(f) Examination of urgent consignments

11. Standard

Where the customs authorities exercise their right to examine urgent consignments, they shall limit the extent of the examination to that deemed necessary to ensure compliance with the laws and regulations which the customs are responsible for enforcing ...

(g) Release of urgent consignments

12. Standard

If the customs authorities are satisfied that the declarant will subsequently accomplish all the formalities in respect of the clearance of urgent consignments they shall release such consignments prior to the lodgement of the goods declaration, provided that the declarant produces a commercial or official document giving the main particulars of the consignment concerned and acceptable to the customs ...

/...

(h) Examination and release of urgent consignments at a place other than the customs office

13. Standard

At the request of the declarant, and for reasons deemed valid by the customs authorities, the latter shall, in so far as their administrative organization permits, allow urgent consignments to be examined and released at a place other than the customs office ... In the case of relief consignments or consignments of a humanitarian nature the customs authorities shall always endeavour to grant these facilities ...

SPECIAL PROVISIONS CONCERNING RELIEF CONSIGNMENTS

(a) Clearance

17. Standard

When clearing relief consignments regard shall not be had to the country of origin of the goods, the country whence they arrived or their country of destination.

(b) Exportation

18. Standard

Where an export declaration is required for a relief consignment the customs shall, as a general rule, accept that declaration as evidence of the contents and intended use of the consignment.

19. Recommended practice

In the case of relief consignments any economic export prohibitions or restrictions and any export duties or taxes otherwise payable should be waived.

20. Standard

In order to avoid delays in the forwarding of relief consignments at later stages in their journey, the customs authorities of the exporting country shall, on application being made by the person concerned:

(a) examine, where appropriate by random checks, the contents of relief consignments against a detailed list and certify the results of this examination on that list; and

(b) where possible and appropriate, place such consignments under customs seal.

/...

(c) Transit

21. Standard

The customs transit of relief consignments shall, as far as possible, be authorized without the requirement of security in respect of duties and taxes and take place under cover of minimum documentation.

22. Standard

Relief consignments under customs transit shall not be examined by the customs authorities except where there are exceptional circumstances in which examination is deemed indispensable.

(d) Importation

23. Standard

Relief consignments shall be released prior to the lodgement of the goods declaration where the customs authorities are satisfied that the declarant will subsequently accomplish all the formalities in respect of clearance of the goods.

24. Standard

The customs authorities of the importing country shall, as a rule, accept as evidence of the contents of a relief consignment, a detailed list certified by the customs authorities of the exporting country as provided for in standard 20 above.

25. Recommended practice

Relief consignments received as gifts by approved organizations for use by or under the control of such organizations or for distribution free of charge by them or under their control should be admitted free of import duties and taxes and free of economic import prohibitions or restrictions ...

26. Standard

Relief consignments consisting of equipment loaned free of charge to approved organizations shall be granted temporary admission without the requirement of security and with minimum documentation ...

27. Standard

Any charges which would normally be made by the customs authorities in respect of expenses entailed by clearance outside the business hours of the customs office or examination and release at a place other than the customs office shall, as far as possible, be waived in the case of relief consignments.

INFORMATION CONCERNING URGENT CONSIGNMENTS

28.

Standard

The customs authorities shall ensure that all relevant information concerning facilities related to urgent consignments is readily available to any person interested.
