

8. *Invites* the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office to continue to strengthen its co-operation with the States members of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and with the Committee itself, with a view to expediting implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region, and in particular to help those countries to formulate and implement national medium-term and long-term plans to combat desertification and drought, with a view to achieving food self-sufficiency;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to report to the General Assembly, through the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic and Social Council, on the implementation of the medium-term and long-term recovery and rehabilitation programme in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

103rd plenary meeting  
17 December 1984

### 39/207. Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator

*The General Assembly,*

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Recalling* the importance attached in the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries<sup>126</sup> to the reduction of losses caused by disasters of all kinds and the creation of infrastructures which would be beneficial in this regard,

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

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

1. *Takes note with satisfaction* of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator,<sup>127</sup> as well as his report on strengthening the capacity of the United Nations system to respond to natural disasters and other disaster situations,<sup>128</sup> called for in paragraph 12 of General Assembly resolution 38/202, and of the statement made by the Co-ordinator on 5 November 1984;<sup>129</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<sup>126</sup> Report of the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Paris, 1-14 September 1981 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.82.1.8), part one, sect. A.

<sup>127</sup> A/39/267-E/1984/96 and Corr.1.

<sup>128</sup> A/39/267-E/1984/96/Add.1 and 2.

<sup>129</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-ninth Session, Second Committee, 34th meeting, paras. 1-8.*

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

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

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

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

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

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

*103rd plenary meeting  
17 December 1984*

### **39/208. Countries stricken by desertification and drought**

*The General Assembly.*

*Deeply concerned* about the tragic consequences of the acceleration of desertification, combined with a persistent drought — the most serious recorded this century — which have been reflected in a substantial drop in agricultural production in many developing countries and which, in particular, have contributed to the worsening of Africa's current economic crisis,

*Noting* with great anxiety that desertification continues to spread and intensify in developing countries, particularly in Africa,

*Deeply alarmed* by recent trends indicating that far-reaching climatic changes have taken place in Africa and are making the current situation extremely critical, as demonstrated, in particular, by the disturbing outlook noted by the Scientific Round Table on the Climatic Situation and Drought in Africa held at Addis Ababa from 20 to 23 February 1984,<sup>130</sup>

*Recalling* its resolutions 32/172 of 19 December 1977, 35/73 of 5 December 1980, 38/163 and 38/164 of 19 December 1983 and 38/225 of 20 December 1983,

*Aware* that desertification and drought problems are increasingly assuming a structural and endemic character

and that real and permanent solutions must be found in increased global efforts based on concerted action by the stricken countries and the international community,

*Bearing in mind* that the majority of the countries affected by desertification and drought are low-income countries and, for the most part, belong to the group of the least developed countries, particularly those in Africa,

*Noting* the efforts made by the affected countries themselves and by the international community, including the organizations of the United Nations system, to combat desertification and drought, particularly in Africa,

*Bearing in mind* the results of the Ministerial Conference for a joint policy to combat desertification in the countries of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and the Economic Community of West African States, in the Maghreb countries and in Egypt and the Sudan, held at Dakar from 18 to 27 July 1984,<sup>131</sup>

*Aware* that the prime responsibility in the struggle against desertification and the effects of the drought rests with the countries concerned and that such action is an essential component of their development,

*Considering* the interdependence between developed countries and those affected by desertification and drought, and the negative impact of those phenomena on the economies of the countries concerned,

*Noting* the positive action taken by the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office as part of a joint effort by the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Environment Programme to help twenty-one African countries, on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme, in implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification,<sup>132</sup>

*Welcoming* the praiseworthy efforts of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel in fighting the drought in the Sahel region and its fruitful co-operation with Governments and with organizations and agencies of the United Nations system,

*Taking note* of the decision made by six East African countries — Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda — to set up an intergovernmental body in order to combat the effects of the drought in those countries,<sup>133</sup>

*Recognizing* that, given the scope and intensity of desertification, the attainment of the objectives of programmes to fight it requires financial and human resources beyond the means of the affected countries,

1. *Welcomes* the results of the Ministerial Conference for a joint policy to combat desertification in the countries of the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel and the Economic Community of West African States, in the Maghreb countries and in Egypt and the Sudan, convened at Dakar on the initiative of the President of Senegal, and notes with satisfaction the final resolution adopted by the Conference;<sup>131</sup>

2. *Recommends* that high priority should be given in the development plans and programmes of the affected countries themselves to the problem of desertification and to problems resulting from drought;

3. *Recognizes* that particular attention should be given to countries stricken by desertification and drought and that special efforts should be made by the international community, particularly the developed countries, in sup-

<sup>130</sup> See E/1984/109, annex.

<sup>131</sup> See A/39/530, annex.

<sup>132</sup> Report of the United Nations Conference on Desertification, Nairobi, 29 August–9 September 1977 (A/CONF.74/36), chap. I.

<sup>133</sup> See A/C.2/39/5, annex.