

cerning further development of international co-operation in the humanitarian field;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue his contacts with Governments, agencies and programmes of the United Nations system and non-governmental organizations concerned, as well as with the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues and, taking into account information received, to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session a report on possible ways and means of strengthening international co-operation in the humanitarian field.

*75th plenary meeting  
8 December 1988*

#### 43/131. Humanitarian assistance to victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* that one of the purposes of the United Nations is to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion,

*Reaffirming* the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States, and recognizing that it is up to each State first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations occurring on its territory,

*Deeply concerned* about the suffering of the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, the loss in human lives, the destruction of property and the mass displacement of populations that result from them,

*Bearing in mind* that natural disasters and similar emergency situations have grave consequences for the economic and social plans of all countries concerned,

*Desiring* that the international community should respond speedily and effectively to appeals for emergency humanitarian assistance made in particular through the Secretary-General,

*Mindful* of the importance of humanitarian assistance for the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations,

*Recognizing* that the international community makes an important contribution to the sustenance and protection of such victims, whose health and life may be seriously endangered,

*Considering* that the abandonment of the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations without humanitarian assistance constitutes a threat to human life and an offence to human dignity,

*Concerned* about the difficulties that victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations may experience in receiving humanitarian assistance,

*Convinced* that, in providing humanitarian assistance, in particular the supply of food, medicines or health care, for which access to victims is essential, rapid relief will avoid a tragic increase in their number,

*Aware* that alongside the action of Governments and intergovernmental organizations, the speed and efficiency of this assistance often depends on the help and aid of local and non-governmental organizations working with strictly humanitarian motives,

*Recalling* that, in the event of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality must be given utmost consideration by all those involved in providing humanitarian assistance,

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of humanitarian assistance for the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations;

2. *Reaffirms also* the sovereignty of affected States and their primary role in the initiation, organization, co-ordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within their respective territories;

3. *Stresses* the important contribution made in providing humanitarian assistance by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations working with strictly humanitarian motives;

4. *Invites* all States in need of such assistance to facilitate the work of these organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance, in particular the supply of food, medicines and health care, for which access to victims is essential;

5. *Appeals*, therefore, to all States to give their support to these organizations working to provide humanitarian assistance, where needed, to the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations;

6. *Urges* States in proximity to areas of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, particularly in the case of regions that are difficult to reach, to participate closely with the affected countries in international efforts with a view to facilitating, to the extent possible, the transit of humanitarian assistance;

7. *Calls upon* all the intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations dealing with humanitarian assistance to co-operate as closely as possible with the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator or any other *ad hoc* mechanism set up by the Secretary-General in the co-ordination of aid;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to seek the views of Governments, intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations with regard to the possibility of enhancing the effectiveness of international mechanisms and increasing the speed of assistance in the best possible conditions for the victims of natural disasters and similar emergency situations, where needed, and to report his findings to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session;

9. *Decides* to consider this question at its forty-fifth session.

*75th plenary meeting  
8 December 1988*

#### 43/132. Status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

*The General Assembly,*

*Recalling* article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>2</sup> and article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,<sup>20</sup> both of which provide that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,

*Recalling also* the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, adopted by the General Assembly in its resolution 3452 (XXX) of 9 December 1975,

Recalling further its resolution 39/46 of 10 December 1984, by which it adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and called upon all Governments to consider signing and ratifying the Convention as a matter of priority, and its resolutions 40/128 of 13 December 1985, 41/134 of 4 December 1986 and 42/123 of 7 December 1987, as well as Commission on Human Rights resolutions 1987/30 of 10 March 1987,<sup>61</sup> 1988/31 and 1988/36 of 8 March 1988,<sup>27</sup>

Mindful of the relevance, for the eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, of the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials<sup>132</sup> and of the Principles of Medical Ethics relevant to the role of health personnel, particularly physicians, in the protection of prisoners and detainees against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,<sup>79</sup>

Convinced of the importance of the finalization of the draft Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment,<sup>133</sup>

Seriously concerned about the alarming number of reported cases of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment taking place in various parts of the world,

Determined to promote the full implementation of the prohibition, under international and national law, of the practice of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,

Welcoming the decision of the Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1988/32 of 8 March 1988,<sup>27</sup> to extend for two years the mandate of the Special Rapporteur to examine questions relevant to torture,

1. Welcomes the first report of the Committee against Torture,<sup>134</sup>

2. Takes note with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,<sup>135</sup>

3. Recognizes the importance of making appropriate administrative and financial arrangements to enable the Committee to carry out in an effective and efficient manner the functions entrusted to it under the Convention, and to ensure the long-term viability of the Committee as an essential mechanism for overseeing the effective implementation of the provisions of the Convention;

4. Appreciates the fact that the Committee has given early attention to the development of an effective reporting system on implementation by States parties to the Convention;

5. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure the provision of appropriate staff and facilities for the effective performance of the functions of the Committee;

6. Again requests all States to become parties to the Convention as a matter of priority;

7. Once again invites all States, upon ratification of or accession to the Convention, or subsequently, to consider the possibility of making the declarations provided for in articles 21 and 22 thereof;

8. Requests the Secretary-General to submit to the Commission on Human Rights at its forty-fifth session and to the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session a report on the status of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

9. Decides to consider the report of the Secretary-General at its forty-fourth session under the item entitled "Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

75th plenary meeting  
8 December 1988

#### 43/133. United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture

The General Assembly,

Recalling article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>2</sup> which states that no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,

Recalling also the Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Being Subjected to Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,<sup>136</sup>

Recalling with satisfaction the entry into force on 26 June 1987 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment,<sup>137</sup>

Recalling its resolution 36/151 of 16 December 1981, in which it noted with deep concern that acts of torture took place in various countries, recognized the need to provide assistance to the victims of torture in a purely humanitarian spirit and established the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture,

Convinced that the struggle to eliminate torture includes the provision of assistance in a humanitarian spirit to the victims and members of their families,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General,<sup>138</sup>

1. Expresses its gratitude and appreciation to the Governments, organizations and individuals that have already contributed to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture;

2. Calls upon all Governments, organizations and individuals in a position to do so to respond favourably to requests for initial as well as further contributions to the Fund;

3. Invites Governments to make contributions to the Fund, if possible on a regular basis, in order to enable the Fund to provide continuous support to projects that depend on recurrent grants;

4. Expresses its appreciation to the Board of Trustees of the Fund for the work it has carried out;

5. Expresses its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the support given to the Board of Trustees of the Fund;

6. Requests the Secretary-General to make use of all existing possibilities, including the preparation, production and dissemination of information materials, to assist the Board of Trustees of the Fund in its efforts to make the

<sup>132</sup> Resolution 34/169, annex.

<sup>133</sup> A/34/146, annex.

<sup>134</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 46 (A/43/46).

<sup>135</sup> A/43/519.

<sup>136</sup> Resolution 3452 (XXX), annex.

<sup>137</sup> Resolution 39/46, annex.

<sup>138</sup> A/43/779.