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Official Records

President: Han Seung-soo (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Draft resolution (A/56/L.50)

Agenda item 20 (continued)

(e) Assistance to the Palestinian people

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Draft resolution (A/56/L.59)

(a) Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the United Republic of Tanzania to introduce draft resolutions A/56/L.39, A/56/L.56 and A/56/L.60.

Draft resolutions (A/56/L.14, A/56/L.51 and Corr.1, A/56/L.55)

Mr. Yussuf (United Republic of Tanzania): On behalf of the African Group, I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly the draft resolutions contained in documents A/56/L.39, A/56/L.56 and A/56/L.60, which cover the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti and the Sudan. The draft resolutions are submitted under agenda item 20 (b), concerning the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance to individual countries afflicted by disasters.

(b) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Draft resolutions (A/56/L.39, A/56/L.49, A/56/L.52, A/56/L.53, A/56/L.54, A/56/L.56, A/56/L.58 and A/56/L.60)

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

Draft resolution (A/56/L.57)

The present draft resolution does not depart significantly from previous resolutions. However, some editorial changes have been made to reflect the improvements that have been suggested during the negotiations. In that regard, I need to draw the attention of the Assembly to operative paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/56/L.39, regarding the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I wish to introduce a small change that we consider to be very important to the people of that particular country. I suggest we add the word "entire" immediately after the phrase "for the

(d) Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

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benefit of the". Consequently, the paragraph should now read as follows:

"Stresses the link between the peace process and economic recovery of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, welcomes economic reforms undertaken by its Government and encourages it to carry on with this process for the benefit of the entire Congolese people."

All three countries, namely, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti and the Sudan, belong to the group of least developed countries. They are afflicted by many problems of internal conflicts and, in the case of Djibouti, also by severe climatic conditions that affect not only water resources but agricultural potential as well. To compound all that, it hosts a huge refugee population from conflicts in neighbouring countries. Nevertheless, there is a silver lining as far as Djibouti's involvement in the peace and reconciliation efforts on behalf of Somalia and other countries in the region is concerned.

The reports of the Secretary General in respect of the three countries show clearly the enormity of human suffering and the urgent need for the support of the international community, not only in terms of humanitarian and relief activities but also, in deserving cases, for reconstruction. As the Secretary-General has observed, the people of these countries have suffered for too long and their yearning for peace and well-being need to be heard.

On behalf of the Member States of the African Group and, indeed, on behalf of the suffering peoples in the countries referred to in the draft resolutions, I am introducing this joint appeal mindful of the current international climate as well as the urgency of the matter. It is my hope that since the draft resolutions do not raise new issues or elements, the Assembly will adopt them by consensus. The minimum the General Assembly can do is to do just that. However, it is my hope that, after its passage, generous contributions of resources will be forthcoming, and in a timely manner.

In conclusion, I would like to appeal to all factions and parties in the countries concerned to give peace a chance and provide the much-needed respite for the people to rebuild their lives and join the mainstream of development.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Yugoslavia to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.49.

Mr. Šahović (Yugoslavia): I have the honour to introduce to the General Assembly the draft resolution on humanitarian assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on behalf of the 40 sponsors listed in document A/56/L.49. Allow me to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the delegations of Armenia, Bulgaria, France and the Republic of Moldova have become sponsors of the draft resolution.

Before I proceed, let me also express my sincere gratitude to all the sponsors and delegations whose constructive participation in the informal consultations resulted in the consensus text of the draft resolution. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his valuable report concerning humanitarian assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (A/56/361).

My delegation highly appreciates the humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation support that have been rendered to our country by a number of States — particularly by major contributors — international agencies and organizations and non-governmental organizations, as well as the humanitarian assistance provided through the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has already mobilized its internal resources to overcome the dire starting position and to reform rapidly. However, the scale of inherited problems is such that the process of reform and recovery will be very difficult, and will take time to show results. The humanitarian context includes one of the largest populations of refugees and displaced persons in Europe, widespread poverty and inadequate basic services. The severe decline in the economy and basic services is such that segments of the resident population, in addition to displaced persons and refugees, are identified as eligible for international humanitarian assistance.

We recognize the need to deeply restructure the economy of the country. However, in order to succeed in that undertaking, given the enormous weight of the past, my country still requires significant short-term backing from the international community, particularly from the European Union, other Governments and international financial organizations, including the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Accordingly, we attach great importance to the donors conference co-hosted by the World Bank and the European Commission in Brussels on 29 June 2001. In that context, let me point out that the programme for reform and development of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia received the strong support of donors and confirmed that basic needs of vulnerable groups within the refugee, displaced and resident populations remain a priority for humanitarian agencies.

An important element of the present draft resolution, which is based on the text of the consensus resolution adopted at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, is the appeal it makes to the international community to further support the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in its efforts to ensure the transition from emergency humanitarian assistance to the long-term rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of the country.

The role of the United Nations and the specialized agencies has also been emphasized, and the Organization has been requested to continue its efforts to assess the humanitarian needs in cooperation with our Government, relevant international and regional organizations and bodies and interested States, with a view to ensuring effective links between relief and long-term assistance.

Great attention has been given in the draft resolution to finding durable solutions to the problems of refugees, especially through voluntary repatriation and reintegration. In that context, the draft resolution stresses the importance of developing regional cooperation in the quest for solutions that will improve the difficult situation of refugees.

Finally, the Secretary-General is requested to prepare a report on humanitarian assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for submission to the next session of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, let me express my sincere hope that this draft resolution will gain the broadest possible support and, as last year, be adopted without a vote. That will help accelerate the coordination of humanitarian assistance and broader international cooperation for the recovery of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.50.

Mr. Ainchil (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have the honour to speak at this meeting to introduce, under sub-item (d) of agenda item 20 and on behalf of its sponsors, the draft resolution entitled "Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development", which is contained in document A/56/L.50.

The Republic of Argentina wishes to express its appreciation for the support of the countries that have become sponsors of the draft resolution. We would also like to inform the Assembly that, since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have joined the list of sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Georgia, Greece, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, Ireland, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, Poland, the Republic of Korea and Seychelles.

As in previous years, the draft resolution reflects the initiative's essential aspects and refers to the elements necessary to contribute to the White Helmets' work. The draft resolution also incorporates the perspective of our region when it refers to consideration given to the White Helmets initiative for the Southern Common Market, made up of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay and its associated countries, Bolivia and Chile. In that context, it encourages the member States of other regional associations to consider the implementation of the White Helmets concept in their cooperation activities in the humanitarian area.

Finally, it reflects the development of existing relationships between the White Helmets and United Nations agencies and recommends that the Secretary-General encourage the relevant agencies of the system to explore opportunities for cooperation with the White Helmets, taking into account the good results to date of coordinated action with various agencies.

As we noted in the debate on agenda item 20 in the Assembly, we are convinced that the White Helmets are a useful, effective and efficient mechanism available for actions undertaken by the United Nations in the humanitarian area. The Republic of Argentina

hopes that draft resolution A/56/L.50 can be adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.51 and Corr.1.

Mr. Kazemi Kamyab (Islamic Republic of Iran): On behalf of the Group of 77 and China and Mexico, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.51 and Corr.1.

As in previous years, the initiative for the draft resolution on this subject has been taken jointly by the Group of 77 and China and Mexico. I wish to thank all delegations that have participated in the informal discussions on the text of the draft resolution. We appreciate the positive and constructive atmosphere in which the discussions were held. We are also happy that the provenance of a number of paragraphs in the draft resolution can in fact be traced to our partners.

Given the length of the draft resolution, I will not go through it paragraph by paragraph. I will, however, flag a few of the issues mentioned in it. The preambular and the operative parts both, *inter alia*, reaffirm the guiding principles for humanitarian assistance, as contained in the annex to resolution 46/182. The draft resolution stresses the importance of strengthening cooperation in the provision of humanitarian assistance, including through the provision of adequate resources, and encourages the effective use of multilateral mechanisms. One of the new elements in the draft resolution is the request to the Secretary-General to continue progress on compiling the Directory of Advanced Technologies for Disaster Response as a new part of the Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities. This, along with the directory of disaster mitigation capacities, on which work is to commence soon, would be useful in raising awareness among developing countries of the capacities existing at the national, regional and international levels that could be deployed to assist them.

I should like to announce that since the publication of draft resolution A/56/L.51, the following countries have become sponsors: Belize, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Honduras, Indonesia, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Madagascar, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, Suriname, the Syrian Arab Republic and Uruguay.

It is our hope that the draft resolution can, like those of previous years, be adopted by consensus.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.52.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled "Assistance for humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and development for East Timor", on behalf of the sponsors listed in document A/56/L.52.

I am pleased to announce that since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Micronesia (Federated States of), Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

I would like to request that the following correction be made to document A/56/L.52 to reflect the agreed text that was submitted to the Secretariat. In operative paragraph 2, at the end of the fifth line, the words "including in regard to a" should be replaced by "including in the area of".

This draft resolution addresses the humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and development needs of East Timor. It emphasizes the need for continued international assistance to East Timor in the transition from relief and rehabilitation to development. In this regard, it recognizes the challenges that are to be faced in preparation for independence and in the post-independence period in areas such as public administration, education, health, agriculture and infrastructure.

While welcoming the passing of the immediate emergency and humanitarian phase in East Timor, this draft resolution encourages the United Nations, other intergovernmental organizations, Member States and non-governmental organizations, in close cooperation with the East Timorese people, to continue to collaborate to address the remaining longer-term vulnerabilities of East Timor. It puts strong emphasis on the need for enhanced ownership and participation for the East Timorese in all areas. In this context, it welcomes the successful holding, on 30 August 2001, of the elections for the East Timor Constituent Assembly and the appointment, on 20 September 2001, of the all-East Timorese second Transitional Government.

The draft resolution recognizes the central role that capacity-building must play in the establishment of favourable conditions for self-government and sustainable development and specific areas singled out as particularly important in capacity-building efforts, such as the training of civil servants, health-care professionals and teachers. The draft resolution also highlights the following areas that need particular attention: support for the establishment of an effective and functioning governmental administration, the development of agriculture and the challenges of food security, outstanding infrastructure needs, the challenges to public health posed by diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria and HIV/AIDS and the question of the rehabilitation of schools.

These challenges will not be adequately addressed without the necessary resources. This is why the draft resolution not only welcomes the convening of donor meetings for East Timor, but also urges the international community to fulfil its pledges to meet the external requirements for rehabilitation, reconstruction and development activities in East Timor. In addition, the draft resolution contains clear references to the need for sustained and enhanced efforts to resolve the question of East Timorese refugees, including their voluntary repatriation and resettlement, as well as to the need for a safe and secure working environment in and around the refugee camps.

Finally, the draft contains a recommendation that the United Nations continue to address the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development needs of East Timor and requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report on this issue for the consideration of the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

The draft resolution before us should not be seen as a mere automatic update of last year's resolution on this matter. The draft carries a political weight that must be stressed. It contains a clear political statement. It reaffirms, at a critical juncture, the commitment of the international community to continue to support East Timor now and after independence.

Furthermore, the draft is also a political compass, since it indicates the general direction in which we should proceed. It reflects the most important areas that the East Timorese themselves have identified as requiring assistance. Even without being exhaustive, these are basically the major areas in which

international support is deemed to be crucial to fostering a stable and secure social, economic and political environment in East Timor.

We would like to seize this opportunity to thank all delegations that contributed to this draft resolution with comments and inputs. We are convinced that the constructive spirit that prevailed in the negotiations is a sign of the high importance attached by the international community to the needs of East Timor and of its people.

It is therefore our hope and firm conviction that, as was the case last year, the draft resolution "Assistance for humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and development for East Timor" will be adopted by the General Assembly without a vote.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Panama to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.53.

Mrs. Morgan-Moss (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Panama has the honour to introduce, under item 20 (b) of the agenda of the General Assembly and on behalf of the representatives of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, draft resolution A/56/L.53, entitled "International assistance to and cooperation with the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America".

I am pleased to inform the Assembly that, since the draft resolution was issued, the following countries have also joined the list of sponsors: Colombia, Ireland, South Africa, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the United States of America.

In its preambular part, the draft resolution reaffirms prior resolutions that emphasize and acknowledge the importance of international, bilateral and multilateral economic, financial and technical support, cooperation and assistance for peacekeeping and peace-building in Central America following armed conflict and natural disasters.

The draft notes the important progress that the Central American countries have achieved towards the consolidation of democracy and good governance, the strengthening of civilian governments, respect for human rights and the rule of law and the promotion of State and economic reforms, sustainable development and regional integration, reflecting the desire of the Central American peoples to live and prosper in a

climate of peace and solidarity. It further stresses the consolidation of the Coordination Center for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America.

The draft recognizes the vulnerability of the poorest sectors of the population, in particular women and children, and the inadequacy of existing local and national institutions to deal with recurrent natural disasters.

The draft takes note of the approval of the strategic framework for the reduction of vulnerability and disasters in Central America, which contains guidelines for the elaboration, updating, improvement and development of regional plans for the integrated management and conservation of water resources and the prevention and control of forest fires.

The draft also takes due note of the important meeting of the Regional Consultative Group for the transformation and modernization of Central America, co-hosted by Government of Spain and the Inter-American Development Bank, held in March 2001, at which the main theme was the revision of the strategy for strengthening regional integration and cooperation and with a view to poverty reduction and the acceleration of sustainable growth.

It also notes the importance of achieving national priorities, as set out in the programme of the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America.

It recognizes the valuable and effective contribution made by the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system and by the various governmental and non-governmental mechanisms, the donor community and the Regional Consultative Group for the Transformation and Modernization of Central America, and the importance of the political dialogue and cooperation taking place between the European Union and Central America, as well as the joint initiative of the industrialized countries of the Group of Twenty-Four and the Group of Three — Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela — in the progress achieved to date.

The draft notes with satisfaction the report of the Secretary-General on international assistance to and cooperation with the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America. It notes also the efforts and achievements relating to mine clearance in Central America, and appeals to the organs of the United Nations system, the Organization of American

States and the international community to continue providing the material, technical and financial support needed by the Central American Governments to complete mine-clearance activities.

The document notes with satisfaction the progress achieved in the consolidation of the Meso-American Biological Corridor, which is being developed with assistance from the funds of various United Nations programmes and agencies, the German Agency for Technical Cooperation and the United States Agency for International Development.

Finally, it requests Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the draft resolution, and decides to consider, at its fifty-eighth session, the question of international assistance to and cooperation with the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America.

On behalf of the sponsors of this draft resolution, we wish to request the General Assembly to adopt this draft without a vote.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Egypt, who will speak on behalf of the Arab States, to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.54.

Mr. Aboul Gheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): It is my honour, as this month's Chairman of the Arab Group, to introduce, under agenda item 20 (b), a draft resolution entitled "Assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia", as contained in draft resolution A/56/L.54.

Somalia, which suffered a devastating civil war and an acute humanitarian crisis that has been exacerbated in recent days, for reasons of which we are all aware, is indeed, now more than ever, in dire need of the support of the international community. Somalia has, however, made some notable progress in achieving comprehensive national reconciliation between all its factions and diverse groupings and we wish especially to commend the sustained efforts being made by the Transitional National Government in that regard. The road ahead remains long and difficult, however, and all of us, by virtue of our joint responsibility, must stand in firm support of that country until it has established peace, security and stability and its people are able to enjoy the economic and social prosperity and decent life of which they have been deprived for over 10 years

and which they deserve, like all other peoples of the international family.

The preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution recall all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly on this issue, the most recent of which is 55/168 of 14 December 2000. It also recalls Security Council resolution 733 (1992) and all subsequent resolutions of the Council on the issue of Somalia. The draft recalls further the statement by the President of the Security Council of 31 October 2001, in which the Security Council reiterated its support for the outcome of the Arta peace conference, the establishment of the Transitional National Assembly and the Transitional National Government and encouraged the Transitional National Government to continue the process of engaging all groups in the country with the view to preparing for the installation of permanent governance arrangements through the democratic process.

At the same time, the draft resolution notes the cooperation between the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the League of Arab States, the European Union, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the countries members of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and its Partners Forum, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and others in their efforts to resolve the humanitarian, security and political crisis in Somalia, and bearing in mind the respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Somalia. The preambular part of the draft resolution also includes language welcoming the outcome of the Arta peace process and the efforts of the transitional Government of Somalia to promote national reconciliation within Somalia and of the United Nations system to provide humanitarian, economic and development assistance to the country.

The operative paragraphs of the draft resolution express the appreciation of the General Assembly to the Secretary-General for his continued and tireless efforts to mobilize assistance to the Somali people and welcome the strategy of the United Nations focusing on the implementation of community-based interventions aimed at rebuilding local infrastructures and increasing the self-reliance of the local population.

The draft resolution also urges all States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned to continue to implement further General Assembly resolution 47/160 in order to assist the

Somali people in embarking on the rehabilitation of basic social and economic services, as well as institution-building aimed at the restoration of civil administration at all levels in all parts of the country in which peace and security prevail. It calls upon the Secretary-General to continue to mobilize international humanitarian, rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance for Somalia and upon the international community to provide continuing and increased assistance in response to the United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance for Somalia.

Finally, the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution strongly urge all political groups in Somalia, in particular those which have remained outside the Arta peace process, to participate in the ongoing peace process and to establish a constructive dialogue with the Transitional National Government in order to achieve national reconciliation that allows for transition from relief to reconstruction and development.

This year, 49 countries have sponsored the draft resolution before the General Assembly. They are Algeria, Angola, Austria, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Chad, China, the Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, France, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, India, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, the Sudan, Swaziland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

On behalf of the Arab Group and all the sponsors of the draft resolution, I call on the General Assembly to continue its support for Somalia and its people and to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

The President: I call on the representative of Sweden to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.55.

Ms. Fogh (Sweden): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the sponsors, a draft resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, contained in document A/56/L.55.

I should like to announce that, since the publication of the draft resolution before the Assembly, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Belize, Colombia, Croatia, Guinea, Honduras, Lebanon, Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal and Slovenia.

The draft resolution begins by recalling, in the preambular section, the landmark resolution 46/182, which, of course, still guides the work of the United Nations in the humanitarian field. It goes on to take note of the reports of the Secretary-General and it recognizes the importance of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund as well as the need to ensure that the Fund is used where the needs are greatest.

In its operative part, the draft resolution, among other things, welcomes the holding of the fourth humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council last summer. It also invites the Economic and Social Council to further enhance the segment for future sessions.

The draft resolution expresses the Assembly's deepest appreciation to Governments that have contributed to the Central Emergency Revolving Fund. It also encourages better use of the Fund and endorses its expanded use to include natural disasters, protracted emergencies and emergency staff safety arrangements. It is made clear in the text that the expanded use of the Fund is subject to previously established procedures for advances and reimbursement.

The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to inform Governments regularly about the use of the Fund. It also requests the Secretary-General to report to the next session of the General Assembly on further possible improvements that can be made in order to enhance the utilization of the Fund in relation to, inter alia, the great need for urgent assistance in many underfunded, so-called forgotten emergencies. Finally, the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to report to the next session of the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on progress made in strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.

The text was discussed during two informal consultations. Valuable proposals were made for the improvement of the text, and agreement was reached on all paragraphs. My delegation is grateful for the contributions made by other delegations and would like

to thank the sponsors and other delegations for the good spirit of cooperation and partnership in which the consultations were held.

My delegation and the other sponsors hope that the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.55 can be adopted by consensus.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine to introduce draft resolutions A/56/L.57 and A/56/L.58.

Mr. Kulyk (Ukraine): I have the honour to introduce a draft resolution that is of special significance for my country, as well as for Belarus and the Russian Federation. Entitled "Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster", it is contained in document A/56/L.57.

We would like to thank all delegations for their cooperative approach, demonstrated in the course of consultations, which has made possible a consensus draft resolution. We are grateful to delegations for supporting the three most affected countries by co-sponsoring the draft resolution. I have the pleasure to inform the General Assembly that since the draft resolution was issued, the following countries have joined the list of sponsors: Armenia, China, Ecuador, Greece, Latvia, Poland, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino and Turkmenistan.

Fifteen years have passed since the Chernobyl catastrophe, whose long-lasting consequences have severely affected Ukraine as well as Belarus and the Russian Federation. Last April marked the sad fifteenth anniversary of the worst man-made disaster in the history of humanity, but unfortunately we must stress that assistance to the affected States is no less important today than it was 15 years ago. The need for such assistance is underlined by the Secretary-General in his report, which contains deep analyses and concrete recommendations for further actions at all levels to mitigate the long-lasting consequences of the disaster.

The provisions of the draft resolution before us reflect steps undertaken to optimize the effectiveness of the international community's response to the aftermath of the catastrophe. In particular, the draft resolution welcomes the increased role played by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the

United Nations resident coordinators and the United Nations country teams in affected States in helping to address both the developmental and humanitarian consequences of the catastrophe, as well as the appointment of the UNDP's Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States as Deputy Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl.

The draft resolution notes the visit of the United Nations needs assessment mission to the affected areas of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine in July and August 2001, as well as the visit to these countries of the Deputy United Nations Coordinator of International Cooperation on Chernobyl in October 2001, and emphasizes the need to consider incorporation of their findings and outcomes into the new United Nations strategy to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

The draft resolution acknowledges difficulties faced by the most affected countries in minimizing the disaster's consequences. It invites States and all relevant agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as non-governmental organizations, to continue to provide support to the ongoing efforts of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine to mitigate these consequences, including through the allocation of additional funds to support medical, social, economic and ecological programmes.

A comprehensive assessment of the implementation of all aspects of the draft resolution, and proposals for innovative measures to optimize the effectiveness of the international community's response to this disaster, are envisaged for the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly.

Allow me to express our sincere hope that this draft resolution, as well as the new United Nations strategy to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, will gain the broadest possible support and will be adopted by consensus.

I would also like to take this opportunity to introduce another draft resolution, "Economic assistance to the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans", contained in document A/56/L.58. I am pleased to announce that since the publication of the draft resolution, the following countries have become sponsors: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Japan, the Republic of

Moldova and Slovakia. Let me express our sincere appreciation to the sponsors and all delegations whose constructive participation in the informal consultations resulted in the consensus text.

The purpose of this draft resolution is clear: to help the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkan region to solve their special economic problems, particularly with regard to regional trade, economic cooperation and navigation on the Danube River. The need for such assistance to these States is underlined in the Secretary-General's report.

The draft resolution is based mainly on the text of the resolution on this subject that was adopted unanimously at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. It expresses concern at the persistence of special economic problems confronting the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans, in particular their impact on regional trade and economic cooperation and on the navigation along the Danube River and on the Adriatic Sea. It invites all States and the relevant international organizations to continue to take into account the special needs and situations of the affected States in providing support and assistance to their efforts for economic recovery, structural adjustment and development.

The draft resolution welcomes the support that the international community has already provided to the affected States to assist them in coping with their special economic problems. It stresses the importance of the established regional cooperation initiatives and arrangements aimed at, *inter alia*, economic reconstruction, development and cooperation, including economic cooperation within the region and with the rest of Europe.

The draft resolution emphasizes the importance of a well coordinated and timely donor response to the external funding requirements of the process for economic reconstruction, reform and development in the Balkans and financial support for other affected countries of Eastern Europe. It notes the leading role played by the European Commission and the World Bank in this sphere as well as the progress achieved in mobilizing and coordinating the support of the donor community and international financial institutions. The draft resolution also encourages the affected States to enhance the process of multilateral regional cooperation in the fields of transport and infrastructure

development, including the resumption of full navigation on the Danube.

In conclusion, allow me to express my sincere hope that draft resolution A/56/L.58 will receive the broadest possible support and will be adopted by consensus.

The President: I give the floor the representative of Belgium to introduce draft resolution A/56/L.59.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of the European Union and other sponsors, draft resolution A/56/L.59, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people". I am pleased to tell the Assembly that since the draft was circulated, the following countries have joined in sponsoring the draft resolution: Belarus, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Guinea, Japan, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey.

The European Union attaches great importance to the issues addressed in this draft resolution. We hope that, as in years past, the Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

The situation in the Middle East is extremely grave, and under those circumstances, it is with increasing urgency that the question of assistance to the Palestinian people arises.

In the draft resolution, the General Assembly expresses its appreciation for the efforts to provide assistance to the Palestinian people. Furthermore, it expresses its gratitude to the Secretary-General and to the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, for their efforts and achievements.

The General Assembly urges all the actors involved to extend, as generously and as rapidly as possible, financial and social assistance to the Palestinian people. Furthermore, the Assembly calls for the intensification of assistance in response to the urgent needs of the Palestinian people in accordance with the priorities set forth by the Palestinian Authority, with emphasis on setting up institutions and capacity-building. It calls upon donors to expedite the delivery of pledged assistance to the Palestinian people in order to meet their most urgent needs.

The draft resolution urges Member States to open their markets to exports of Palestinian products on the most favourable terms, consistent with appropriate

trading rules, and to fully implement existing trade and cooperation agreements.

The draft resolution stresses the need to ensure the free passage of aid to the Palestinian people and the free movement of persons and goods. It should, however, be noted that Israel's policy of blockade over the past year, and its measures to restrict freedom of movement, have led to a very serious deterioration in the economic, social and humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories. That policy constitutes a serious impediment to the provision and the functioning of social and economic development assistance programmes and continues to be an obstacle to humanitarian agencies and their ability to provide assistance. Security measures must not prevent the daily management of assistance projects. Nor should they unduly restrict the deployment or access of staff who provide such humanitarian assistance. The European Union calls on the Israeli Government to facilitate the access of such staff and of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian population.

The draft resolution also stresses the need to implement the Paris Protocol of 1994, in particular with regard to the full and prompt clearance of Palestinian indirect tax revenues. That should make it possible effectively to prevent any worsening of the current economic and humanitarian crisis and guarantee conditions necessary for the proper functioning of the Palestinian economy.

Finally, the draft resolution includes this item on the agenda of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and requests the Secretary-General to submit an ad hoc report assessing the implementation of the draft resolution.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/56/L.14, L.39 as orally revised, L.49, L.50, L.51 and Corr.1, L.52, as orally corrected, and L.53 through L.60.

Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote or position before action is taken on the draft resolutions, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. De Loecker (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union with regard to draft resolution in A/56/L.60, entitled "Emergency assistance to the Sudan".

The visit of the European Union troika to Khartoum last week provided an opportunity for a constructive and open dialogue. Furthermore, the Sudanese welcomed the approach of the European Union and were of the opinion that its positive commitment would facilitate the acceleration of the process towards democratization that is under way and the implementation of international human rights standards.

That is why the European Union regrets that the consultations and the process of negotiation, led by the Sudanese delegation, did not develop in New York in the same positive spirit. The European Union regrets that several of its amendments — amendments that were constructive — were rejected out of hand without a genuine discussion having taken place.

First and foremost, however, the European Union believes that the text before the Assembly does not reflect the gravity of the situation in the Sudan, as described in the report of the Secretary-General. The humanitarian situation did, indeed, deteriorate during the period covered by that report.

Despite the inadequacies of the text and the way in which negotiations developed, given the importance that we attach to our humanitarian commitment to the Sudan and in the spirit of the joint communiqué of the European Union and the Sudan, issued on 9 December, the European Union finally decided to join in the consensus.

Mr. Von Kaufmann (Canada): Canada will join the consensus on the draft resolution contained in document A/56/L.60 because of our continuing commitment to supporting humanitarian assistance for the people of the Sudan. However, we continue to have misgivings about some of the language contained in the text and its potential effect both on a coordinated international effort to effectively deliver humanitarian assistance to all affected populations in the Sudan and on the pursuit of peace.

Canada fully supports the goal of achieving a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire in the Sudan. We continue to believe, however, that the parties should work within the framework of the InterGovernmental Authority on Development peace process and should adhere to and implement the Declaration of Principles, in particular item 6, which states that the parties shall negotiate a ceasefire

agreement to enter into force as part of the overall settlement of the conflict in Sudan.

Canada calls on the parties to the conflict to come together for negotiations leading to a comprehensive ceasefire. Any temporary ceasefire aimed at facilitating humanitarian access would, hopefully, contribute to such a serious negotiation between the parties, and should not be used as a substitute for it.

The reference in the ninth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution (A/56/L.60) notes that humanitarian assistance should be channelled solely through Operation Lifeline Sudan. Canada continues to fully support and fund the vital work of Operation Lifeline Sudan, and we applaud its efforts to act with transparency, imagination and humanity in extremely difficult circumstances. However, support should also be given to agencies, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, which work independently of, but in concert with, the basic spirit of Operation Lifeline Sudan.

In closing, while we are very pleased by the references to the recent visit of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Internally Displaced Persons, Mr. Francis Deng, and the emphasis on the safety of humanitarian personnel and access, we would like to note our disappointment that there was no mention of the challenges associated with child soldiers in the final text. Canada remains deeply concerned by the abduction, recruitment or use of child soldiers, and by the humanitarian effect that armed conflict has on children in the Sudan.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote or position before action is taken.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the 14 draft resolutions before it.

The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.14, entitled “Emergency response to disasters”.

Before proceeding to take action on draft resolution A/56/L.14, I should like to announce that since its introduction the following countries have become sponsors: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, the Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia,

Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Seychelles, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela and Yugoslavia.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.14?

Draft resolution A/56/L.14 was adopted (resolution 56/99).

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.39, entitled “Special assistance for the economic recovery and reconstruction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo”, as orally revised.

I should like to announce that, since the publication of draft resolution A/56/L.39, the following countries have become sponsors: Antigua and Barbuda, Ethiopia, Honduras, Senegal and South Africa.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.39, as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/56/L.39, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 56/100).

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.49, entitled “Humanitarian assistance to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia”.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/56/L.49, Lithuania has become a sponsor.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.49?

Draft resolution A/56/L.49 was adopted (resolution 56/101).

The President: Draft resolution A/56/L.50 is entitled “Participation of volunteers, White Helmets, in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development”.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution A/56/L.50, Ukraine has become a sponsor.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.50?

Draft resolution A/56/L.50 was adopted (resolution 56/102).

The President: Draft resolution A/56/L.51 and Corr.1 is entitled “International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development”.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.51 and Corr.1?

Draft resolution A/56/L.51 and Corr.1 were adopted (resolution 56/103).

The President: As orally corrected, draft resolution A/56/L.52 is entitled “Assistance for humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and development for East Timor”.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution of draft resolution A/56/L.52, Ukraine has become a sponsor.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.52, as orally corrected?

Draft resolution A/56/L.52, as orally corrected, was adopted (resolution 56/104).

The President: Draft resolution A/56/L.53 is entitled “International assistance to and cooperation with the Alliance for the Sustainable Development of Central America”.

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution of draft resolution A/56/L.53, the Dominican Republic has become a sponsor.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.53?

Draft resolution A/56/L.53 was adopted (resolution 56/105).

The President: Draft resolution A/56/L.54 is entitled "Assistance for humanitarian relief and the economic and social rehabilitation of Somalia".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.54?

Draft resolution A/56/L.54 was adopted (resolution 56/106).

The President: Draft resolution A/56/L.55 is entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".

I should like to announce that, since the introduction of draft resolution of draft resolution A/56/L.55, the following countries have become sponsors: Liechtenstein and Ethiopia.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.55?

Draft resolution A/56/L.55 was adopted (resolution 56/107).

The President: Draft resolution A/56/L.56 is entitled "Economic assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti".

I should like to announce that, since the publication of draft resolution of draft resolution A/56/L.56, the following countries have become sponsors: Eritrea, Italy, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.56?

Draft resolution A/56/L.56 was adopted (resolution 56/108).

The President: Draft resolution A/56/L.57 is entitled "Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.57?

Draft resolution A/56/L.57 was adopted (resolution 56/109).

The President: Draft resolution A/56/L.58 is entitled "Economic assistance to the Eastern European States affected by the developments in the Balkans".

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.58?

Draft resolution A/56/L.58 was adopted (resolution 56/110).

The President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.59, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people".

I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/56/L.59 Slovenia has become a sponsor of the draft resolution.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.59?

Draft resolution A/56/L.59 was adopted (resolution 56/111).

The President: The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/56/L.60, entitled "Emergency assistance to the Sudan".

I should like to announce that since the publication of draft resolution A/56/L.60 the following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Burkina Faso, Guinea, India, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/56/L.60?

Draft resolution A/56/L.60 was adopted (resolution 56/112).

The President: Before giving the floor to the representative who wishes to speak in explanation of position, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote or position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Govrin (Israel) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to convey my country's appreciation to the delegation of Belgium, which holds the current presidency of the European Union, for having introduced draft resolution A/56/L.59 on behalf of the Union. Israel joined the consensus on that draft resolution, and I should like to reiterate our position on this issue.

The provision of assistance to the Palestinian people is an essential element of Israeli policy based on our conviction that enhancing Palestinian economic growth and well-being is essential for the future of the region. Despite the security disturbance increasingly bedeviling Israel, we have consistently tried as far as possible to permit the flow of food, medicine, humanitarian assistance and other necessities. We have taken special precautions to facilitate the performance of Ramadan rites. We have made every effort to ensure that legitimate security precautions on our part are as light as possible and cause the least possible harm to daily life and economic activities.

Moreover, we welcome the efforts of Member States and of international agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the United Nations Children's Fund intended to improve the living conditions of Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Israel has ensured that those agencies enjoy complete freedom in carrying out their humanitarian and development activities.

I wish to emphasize once again that our having joined the consensus on draft resolution A/56/L.59 should not be interpreted as implicit evidence of any

position with respect to the present or future status of occupied Palestinian areas. We stress that a final decision on those areas will be reached through direct bilateral negotiations between the parties. Despite the fact that tension persists in the region, we hope we will be able to return to those negotiations at the earliest possible date. That is the only way to ensure peace and prosperity for the peoples of the region.

The Israeli people yearns for a time when violence will cease and when we will be able once again to engage seriously in negotiations with a view to achieving genuine, permanent peace between our two peoples.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position after the adoption of these draft resolutions.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of sub-items (a), (c), (d) and (e) of agenda item 20?

It was so decided.

The President: Further, the Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-item (b) of agenda item 20.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.