



General Assembly

Sixty-fifth session

67th plenary meeting

Wednesday, 15 December 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Deiss (Switzerland)

In the absence of the President, Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 69 (continued)

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

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/344)

Draft resolution (A/65/L.31)

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

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/65/82, A/65/290 and A/65/356)

Draft resolutions (A/65/L.45, A/65/L.47 and A/65/L.48)

(b) Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/77)

Draft resolution (A/65/L.46)

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

Report of the Secretary-General (A/65/341)

Draft resolution (A/65/L.25)

(d) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/65/335 and A/65/357)

Mr. Rossi (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The year 2010 has been marked by two major humanitarian disasters: the earthquake in Haiti on 12 January and the floods during the summer in Pakistan. These two events highlighted both the work and limitations of the humanitarian system in general and the capacities of United Nations agencies to respond to humanitarian needs.

In this context, Switzerland welcomes the Secretary-General's report entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (A/65/82). That document shows that there has been considerable progress and that a great deal remains to be done.

With regard to the progress that has been made, Switzerland would like to make four observations. First, Switzerland welcomes the Secretary-General's conclusions and recommendations. In particular, we support the recommendations relating specifically to humanitarian principles, humanitarian access, efforts to combat sexual violence and the need for humanitarian actors to operate in line with accepted norms. We noted with concern that there is still no guarantee of swift, unobstructed access to victims in many cases. This is a major obstacle to the effectiveness of assistance and the protection of civilians. All parties concerned must respect international humanitarian law and humanitarian

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principles and ensure access to civilian populations in need.

Secondly, we underscore the need to harmonize needs assessments, as stated in paragraph 54 of the Secretary-General's report. That will be crucial for enabling United Nations humanitarian interventions to better focus on the specific needs of victims. Switzerland welcomes the fact that the United Nations and its partners continue to harmonize and integrate their respective needs assessments. We encourage United Nations agencies to continue their work in this area. There have even been instances of different reports and figures being issued for the same operations. In that regard, harmonization would improve the coherence and effectiveness of information management among agencies and, ultimately, the credibility of United Nations institutions in this area.

Our third observation concerns the recruitment of staff. Rapid recruitment and intervention are crucially important in urgent humanitarian situations. With regard to recruitment in the field, we are quite in favour of the idea contained in paragraph 62 of the report with regard to the establishment of an emergency response roster. Such an instrument could facilitate rapid recruitment on the ground by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). By allowing for the deployment of qualified staff familiar with the region, this measure would also enable us to speed up and improve the quality of the United Nations humanitarian response. In the same vein, Switzerland vigorously supports greater systematic cooperation between OCHA and the Department of Field Support.

Our fourth point relates to disaster prevention. The first half of 2010 was marked by several severe earthquakes, which affected millions of people and caused damage in the billions of dollars. The earthquake that struck Haiti on 12 January affected 3 million people; the consequences of the disaster in Pakistan were beyond measure.

My delegation is convinced that better advance planning based on clearly defined disaster-management plans at the local, regional and national levels could improve emergency response. In that context, Switzerland supports the Secretary-General's recommendation calling on Member States to consider adopting investment targets. We also encourage

Member States, together with the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, to define guiding principles for public development assistance to be invested in disaster risk reduction, including the drafting of the relevant reports. This recommendation was underscored by the Secretary-General in his report.

I would like to raise two further points with regard to the remaining challenges. First, the report makes several references to civil-military coordination. Discussions on the military role in humanitarian response have taken on greater importance this year. Civil-military coordination is of increasing interest in relation to humanitarian affairs, raising a number of questions such as the maintenance of humanitarian space, roles and responsibilities in the command structure and the role of the United Nations.

Another question that arises in this context is the issue of private military and security firms. It would be useful for the United Nations to take a position on this issue, which represents a major challenge in the implementation of international humanitarian law. In that regard, we welcome the encouraging progress represented by the signing of the International Code of Conduct for Private Security Service Providers in Geneva on 9 November 2010.

Finally, with regard to funding for humanitarian action, existing resources are not enough to meet growing humanitarian needs. While we recognize the significant efforts that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has made to improve effectiveness and transparency, Switzerland suggests that the United Nations further step up its efforts to secure funding and contributions from other sources, including the private sector and foundations.

Mr. Quinlan (Australia): Today's debate obviously provides an essential opportunity to review the challenges that the United Nations system has faced in responding to humanitarian crises over the past year and to reflect on how we need to work together to strengthen the international humanitarian system in 2011 and beyond.

Nineteen years ago, the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/182 on the coordination of humanitarian assistance. As we know, the resolution sets out vital principles and priorities that are as important today as they were in 1991, including the

principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Over the past two decades, we have worked together as the international community to improve the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian responses. Real progress has been made over the past few years. The cluster system is beginning to demonstrate its value, as highlighted by the cluster evaluation finalized earlier this year — although we have to recognize that we have not done enough in relation to clusters. We must continue our efforts to ensure that they actually work effectively on the ground.

The Central Emergency Response Fund is now well established as an essential mechanism to facilitate timely response. As announced yesterday, Australia will continue to increase our contributions to the Fund over the coming years.

We have also seen large investments in national disaster preparedness and coordination mechanisms, which enable more rapid and effective response, led by national Governments themselves. The international community and the United Nations need to take further steps to recognize and support those national capacities wherever possible.

Progress has been made, but the coordination of the humanitarian response continues to be one of the most challenging tasks facing the United Nations system and facing us as Member States. Globally, humanitarian needs continue to rise, as we are all aware. We are also all increasingly aware of the perilous linkages between climate change and more frequent and severe weather events.

The scale and magnitude of the crises this year in Pakistan and Haiti in particular have demonstrated the essential need to further strengthen the effectiveness and accountability of our humanitarian response. We must continue to take account of the lessons learned from Pakistan and Haiti in order to strengthen our response in the future.

Such crises also remind us that, while the immediate causes of humanitarian crises may be all too clear, more needs to be done to recognize and address the links between humanitarian crises and development. We must coordinate development efforts and humanitarian action to address the underlying

issues that fuel cycles of armed conflict and vulnerability to disasters.

We also need to increase our focus on disaster risk reduction and preparedness. This week, Australia and Mozambique chaired the launch of an important new United Nations-World Bank report entitled *Natural Hazards, UnNatural Disasters*, which analyses the economics of disaster risk reduction. The report outlines the results of accumulated and new research demonstrating that prevention pays dividends, if done right, and that prevention, in fact, need not cost more. It sets out a compelling case for action to manage the risks of the future and reduce the human and economic costs of disasters. It is a study I would recommend to Member States as being of great utility in enabling informed policy choices by Governments, humanitarian and development partners and the private sector.

The third session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, to be held in Geneva from 8 to 13 May 2011, will be an important opportunity for the international community to focus on strengthening disaster preparedness and risk reduction.

In times of crisis, people who live already precarious existences due to poverty and discrimination are easily pushed to the edge of survival by a humanitarian crisis. It is the most vulnerable in society who experience the greatest hardships and exclusion from humanitarian and development efforts. This includes, in particular, women and girls, who are very vulnerable in times of crisis. It also includes persons with disabilities, who make up to 20 per cent of the poorest individuals in developing countries and are the largest and most disadvantaged minority in the world. For every child killed in conflict, three are injured, resulting in permanent impairments that can lead to disability.

Women and girls with disabilities experience multiple forms of discrimination, which places them at higher risk of gender-based violence, sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment and exploitation than their counterparts and women without disabilities. This is unacceptable.

We take seriously our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular article 32, on international cooperation. We are working with humanitarian partners to ensure that persons with disabilities are included equally in, and benefit from, all aspects of humanitarian policy,

planning and response. We would urge all Member States, the humanitarian community and the United Nations system to align all aspects of humanitarian assistance with the principles and objectives of that Convention.

We are pleased to support the adoption today of a number of draft resolutions, including those on emergency and reconstruction assistance to Haiti, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and other countries affected by Hurricane Tomas, and on assistance to the Palestinian people. We are a sponsor of all those draft resolutions.

In respect of the Palestinian people, I am particularly pleased to note the announcement by our Foreign Minister in Ramallah yesterday that Australia will increase its assistance, providing three years of predictable funding totalling up to \$18 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). This investment builds on the \$90 million we have provided to UNRWA over the past few years. We will also provide up to 50 postgraduate scholarships over the next few years to meet Palestinian priorities. These scholarships are aimed at giving more Palestinians the skills needed to run an effective future Palestinian State — a State we expect to come into existence within the next year. We will also provide an extra \$20 million this year to help the Palestinian Authority through the World Bank.

In closing, Australia would like to acknowledge the courage and commitment of humanitarian aid workers, who work tirelessly and often fearlessly in some of the most remote and dangerous parts of the world to deliver humanitarian assistance. Their protection is of paramount concern and we express our great appreciation for their work in ever more challenging environments.

We also reaffirm our support to Under-Secretary-General Amos and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs team as they continue their vital work to build a more effective and accountable humanitarian system.

Australia itself lives in the midst of one of the most disaster-prone parts of the world. Disaster preparedness and humanitarian assistance have always been among the most compelling priorities for Australia's international assistance. That will be an even greater priority for us in the future; it has to be.

Mrs. Bruell-Melchior (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): The Principality of Monaco has a long-standing humanitarian commitment that stretches back more than 50 years. Its dedication to helping the most vulnerable and people in emergency situations has been seen throughout the years in policies making humanitarian assistance one of our priorities. We provide humanitarian assistance in response to natural or man-made disaster situations with the permission of the countries affected and guided by the principles and norms of international humanitarian and human rights law, on the one hand, and the basic principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence, as enshrined in resolution 46/182, on the other hand. It therefore falls to States whose populations require humanitarian assistance to ensure that such assistance can be provided in a timely manner, free from risks and obstacles, in order to minimize the impact of disasters on victims and to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel.

In that connection, my delegation shares the concern of the Secretary-General with regard to the alarming rise in threats and attacks against United Nations and related personnel, who have become political targets and subjects of crimes that far too often include terrorism, kidnapping, harassment or other forms of intimidation.

It is therefore imperative that the provisions of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies and the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and its Optional Protocol — whose entry into force on 19 August we welcome — be taken into consideration during negotiations on headquarters agreements and in defining mission mandates.

Although my delegation warmly welcomes the measures taken to improve the security management system — which are based in particular on the recommendations contained in the Brahimi report (see A/55/305) and include the adoption of a new system of security levels defined on the basis of a structured risk assessment of security on the ground as well as the drafting of guidelines on acceptable risk and the establishment of the Executive Group on Security — we are no less mindful of the fate of locally recruited staff.

The exposure of staff of non-governmental organizations to such security risks — people who are often responsible for providing humanitarian assistance on the ground — highlights the need to develop the “Saving Lives Together” strategy, whose objective is to enhance cooperation on security between United Nations entities and civil society, in particular through exchanges of information and the dissemination of best practices in that area.

My delegation supports all efforts to combat both acts of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence in emergency humanitarian situations, as well as to enhance coordination at all levels to achieve that goal.

In the light of humanitarian needs, which have continued to grow around the world this year and have left 48 million people in need of emergency assistance, there is also an increasing need to mobilize financial resources. Given the scope and the intensity of natural disasters in 2010, the international community has faced record levels of disbursements.

At the beginning of the week, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator reported on the historic funding provided by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to respond to climate emergencies, earthquakes and drought. The Principality of Monaco took part in the CERF pledging conference and has been honoured to contribute to the Fund since its inception. Furthermore, in the light of increasing needs, the Government of Monaco has decided that its budget for humanitarian assistance will increase by 250 per cent between now and 2012, accounting for almost 10 per cent of our official development assistance.

The emergency plan that the Principality intends to develop over the next few years will be based on the following three principles: the provision of financial support through general response funds as well as through the competent United Nations agencies, such as the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization and UNICEF; the gradual provision of assistance on the ground through qualified personnel and supplies to meet the needs of affected populations; and the establishment of reconstruction, rehabilitation or prevention programmes in the period following a crisis. This new vision seeks to make humanitarian assistance part of a long-term strategy and to meet

development objectives when the vulnerability threshold of some populations is crossed.

Allow me to conclude by expressing our Government’s gratitude to humanitarian personnel, who work under difficult and often perilous conditions to carry out their noble task. I assure the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of our full support.

Mrs. Morgan Sotomayor (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mexico welcomes the holding of this debate, which provides us an annual opportunity to consider the challenges in the humanitarian sphere and the role played by the United Nations in this area. My delegation would also like to express its gratitude for the leadership of the United Nations in coordinating emergency humanitarian assistance. We reiterate our commitment to strengthening the mechanisms available to the Organization for rapid and reliable aid response.

In previous debates, my delegation has expressed its concern over the complexity of humanitarian issues, which are exacerbated by numerous challenges and crises. Such a situation impedes safe access for humanitarian workers, thereby hampering the ability to reach those who require humanitarian assistance. It also has an impact on our preventive capacity, which we must strengthen in order to reduce the vulnerability of at-risk communities.

In the same vein, Mexico wishes to touch on two issues that it believes are crucial to the coordination of humanitarian assistance. First, allow me to refer to capacity-building for emergency response. For my country, building capacities for prevention, response and the transition to development is a key condition for effective and efficient coordination. We therefore welcome the prominence that this issue has gained in our dialogue, as reflected in today’s framework draft resolution, entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (A/65/L.45), which repeatedly refers to this issue.

Mexico recognizes that capacity-building must be undertaken in the interest of States, as they are responsible for organizing, coordinating and providing humanitarian assistance in emergencies. This is an ongoing opportunity in which we must all invest, because it does not matter when or where a human need arises: all needs are interdependent and, with

appropriate capacities, can become part of a virtuous circle.

Next year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 46/182, on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian assistance. That resolution is today both a cornerstone and an obligatory frame of reference for all of us. Mexico believes that, on the eve of that commemoration, we have an opportunity to reflect further on ways to strengthen the ambit for humanitarian work. My delegation believes that such a debate should serve to expand our assessment of preventive aspects, which is the second point to which I wish to refer.

We firmly believe in the cost-benefit advantage of prevention. We are therefore convinced that we must create the infrastructure and the tools that will contribute to reaching that goal. Mexico believes it is important to have a fund that will encourage, promote and finance projects to prevent humanitarian crises — one that gradually minimizes use of the Central Emergency Response Fund.

In conclusion, Mexico underscores its commitment to strengthening the scope for humanitarian efforts. We reiterate our support for the efforts of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and of Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos, whose leadership will help us to achieve the goals that unite us today.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): It is indeed an honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Governments of Sweden and India. At the outset, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for the reports that have been prepared for discussion under the agenda item we are debating.

Natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies disrupt progress and destroy the hard-earned fruits of painstaking development efforts, often pushing nations back by several decades in their quest for progress. In the context of human vulnerabilities to emergencies, the economically and socially weaker segments of the population are the ones that are most seriously affected.

The magnitude and scale of some of the unprecedented natural disasters that the world has witnessed this year, their catastrophic impact and the tragedy and trauma resulting from them have again underscored, as never before, the key role of the United

Nations to support the relief efforts of an affected country. Along with natural disasters, the vagaries of the financial and economic situation in many countries continue to exacerbate the vulnerabilities of millions of people. Therefore, the necessity for the coordination and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance can hardly be overemphasized.

Sweden and India reiterate the full commitment of their respective Governments to resolution 46/182. Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. It is relevant to recall here that the guiding principles enjoin that the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States must be fully respected and that humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country and, in principle, on the basis of an appeal by that country.

The core of resolution 46/182 is a call for international solidarity. India and Sweden believe that the capabilities and role of the United Nations are central in that regard, and that the coordination and delivery of international humanitarian assistance need to be further strengthened. Innovations such as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), the cluster system and stronger humanitarian coordinators have improved the effectiveness of international response, but much remains to be done to be able to meet increasing needs. That would mean an augmentation of the operational coordination capacities of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, improved delivery of humanitarian assistance by relevant United Nations funds and programmes and greater accountability to stakeholders.

India and Sweden are happy to note that the work of CERF in mobilizing resources and implementing its mandate continues to be very effective and more relevant five years after the establishment of the Fund. CERF has strengthened its operation and plays an important role in supporting relief operations. The fact that CERF disbursements for 2010 are likely to surpass the \$400 million mark this year again indicates the important role played by the Fund. We are also happy to see the Fund acquiring a greater profile and role in rapid response to humanitarian emergencies, as witnessed in particular in Haiti and Pakistan, which resulted in greatly minimizing the humanitarian disaster.

Disaster management has to be a holistic process to effectively handle all elements of the pre-disaster to post-disaster phases, from prevention, mitigation and preparedness to response, rehabilitation, reconstruction and recovery. India and Sweden believe that prevention is better than cure. We must therefore devote greater attention and resources to disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness, which need to be mainstreamed into development policies.

Sweden and India are gravely concerned about recent security incidents, and firmly and resolutely condemn the deliberate targeting of humanitarian and United Nations personnel.

Sweden and India also believe that emergency response must be an inclusive process. Communities, civil society and the private sector all have important roles to play. We must act in partnership to exploit and augment synergies. By supporting local and national recovery processes at an early stage, we should strive to close the gap between relief and development and to transform emergencies into opportunities for sustained development. India and Sweden are convinced of the need to continue international engagement in the post-disaster period, restore livelihoods, build resilience and reduce vulnerability. We hope that the international community will focus on meeting that need, even as we address emergency relief issues.

Cooperation to strengthen local, national and regional capacities in the areas of emergency response, disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness will benefit all. In a globalized world, each nation has capabilities, resources, experiences and knowledge that can be used in partnership by all nations and the international community for their mutual benefit. Mechanisms that tap those capacities and disseminate best practices and knowledge must therefore be given high priority by the United Nations.

International cooperation in disaster and humanitarian relief is the praxis of the ancient Indian belief that the world is one family. That is what breathes life into international solidarity and gives meaning to the idea of multilateralism in the lives of ordinary people.

Before I conclude, on behalf of the Governments and people of Sweden and India, allow me to wish to everyone present here the very best for the coming festival season and the new year.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): In recent years, the world has suffered natural disasters of unprecedented proportions, with a particular impact on the populations of developing countries. In the light of that situation, humanitarian assistance becomes extremely important.

The challenges we are facing are not limited solely to the economic, environment and social spheres, but increasingly require effective coordination, which must be consistent with patterns of cooperation that meet the needs identified by States and are developed in the context of the guiding principles contained in resolution 46/182, which the Assembly adopted in 1991.

Response and reaction to humanitarian emergencies can be summarized in three concepts, first, the central role of the affected State in initiating, organizing, coordinating and implementing humanitarian assistance; secondly, the necessary authorization and leadership in coordinating the actions of all humanitarian actors; and thirdly, the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence, which should be duly observed.

The delegation of Colombia supports all efforts to improve the coordination and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations system and other relevant actors of the international community, and is ready to actively participate in all discussions on the issue.

Colombia views humanitarian assistance from a comprehensive perspective that include efforts in support of the process of rebuilding the social fabric of affected populations that also help to develop a lasting physical and economic infrastructure once a crisis has been overcome.

In the context of response and assistance to natural disasters, Colombia believes that emergency humanitarian assistance must be temporary and should promote measures that go beyond relief and strengthen local prevention and disaster relief capacities. In that context, international cooperation must be strengthened so as to systematically integrate risk management and reduction measures into development and poverty reduction policies and strategies. In that context, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, Colombia is contributing to the preparation of the draft resolution entitled "International cooperation on humanitarian

assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development”.

Given that the devastating effects of Hurricane Tomas and a cholera epidemic are exacerbating the 12 January earthquake in Haiti, our actions and commitments on behalf of that country must be strengthened and must truly materialize. For Colombia, the United Nations operation in Haiti should become a real development operation that meets the country's needs and achieves concrete results.

Colombia has firmly supported Haiti with actions amounting to \$18 million. We have sent more than 650 experts and have provided logistical support for the benefit of more than 850,000 Haitians. In addition, we have made progress in meeting our financial commitments by allocating \$4 million to the Haiti Reconstruction Fund, which is administered by the World Bank.

My delegation warmly welcomes the initiative of Brazil to promote the draft resolution entitled “Humanitarian assistance, emergency relief, rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction in response to the humanitarian emergency in Haiti, including the devastating effects of the earthquake” (A/65/L.47), because that draft resolution reaffirms the commitment of all Member States and the international community to provide support and assistance for that country's recovery, reconstruction and transition to sustainable development.

Moreover, I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our sympathy and solidarity with all of the Caribbean countries that suffered the impact of Hurricane Tomas. It is for that reason that my delegation supports the adoption of draft resolution A/65/L.48, entitled “Emergency and reconstruction assistance to Haiti, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and other countries affected by Hurricane Tomas”.

In conclusion, climate change has proven to be the most relevant factor in natural disasters. That makes Colombia a particularly vulnerable country. My country has experienced the highest average number of natural disasters related to climate in Latin America over the past 30 years. We currently face an unparalleled emergency in the wake of such weather events as heavy rains, which have caused flooding and landslides that to date have affected nearly 2 million

people. Hundreds have lost their lives, while others have been injured and many are missing.

Despite all our national efforts and an investment of over \$530 million to date, we have been forced to declare — as our President has done — a state of economic, social and environmental emergency. We appeal for international solidarity to face the consequences of the atypical winter conditions that are affecting Colombia.

In that regard, I wish to thank the United Nations system and the international community for their solidarity and support, which we hope to be able to continue to count on.

Mr. McClay (New Zealand): The massive demands on the international humanitarian system over the past year have involved all of us — Governments, the United Nations, the Red Cross Movement, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society.

In 2010, the world has grappled with the immensity of the floods in Pakistan and the earthquake in Haiti — two of the most catastrophic natural disasters in recent years. However, there were many other smaller but still serious disasters, with severe consequences for countries and their populations, as well as a number of protracted, and often overlooked, crises that continue to require humanitarian support from the international community.

New Zealand supports the United Nations in its leadership and coordination of international humanitarian action in both preparedness and response. More specifically, we endorse the central role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). As Chair of the OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG), New Zealand looks forward to hosting the annual OCHA/ODSG high-level meeting in June next year and to welcoming Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos to New Zealand.

New Zealand is a strong supporter of the Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles and will continue to provide unearmarked, core funding to the United Nations and other agencies to provide predictable and flexible support. Even in the currently tight fiscal environment, with a range of competing priorities, for 2011 we have maintained last year's level of core funding to our United Nations partners and increased our contribution to the Central Emergency Response

Fund (CERF). New Zealand will continue to support CERF to assist in providing rapid, effective and equitable response to humanitarian crises, large and small, and will be as responsive as possible to specific humanitarian appeals.

New Zealand welcomes recent efforts to strengthen United Nations humanitarian leadership and coordination in-country. We encourage further work to ensure that clusters are put in place quickly and that they can communicate effectively with relevant players, including other clusters, local and international NGOs, national Governments and the military.

Against a background of shrinking humanitarian space and increasing security risks to humanitarian personnel, we endorse the work of the Department of Safety and Security and of individual agencies to strengthen security approaches and systems.

New Zealand supports moves to make the humanitarian system less driven by shocks and more by needs and vulnerability. As the international community becomes more effective in risk reduction and preparedness, we can better deal with complex situations where chronic and acute vulnerability already exist.

It remains critical for the international community to do much more — and urgently — in mitigation and adaption to deal with the effects of climate change. The small island nations of the Pacific and other regions are among the most vulnerable to those effects and to the potential impact of climate-driven disasters. The international community must invest more in early recovery to bridge the gap between life-saving humanitarian work and longer-term development.

At the same time, as many Member States confront acute fiscal constraints, the international humanitarian system faces record pressures and demands. Our elected legislators, taxpayers and other domestic stakeholders expect increased accountability and performance from all our development and humanitarian partners. It is therefore essential that the work of the United Nations, including its individual agencies, is relevant and effective, and that it demonstrates tangible results and value for money.

This work can only be carried out with local civil society, national and international NGOs, the Red

Cross and, in particular, the private sector, all of which have much to offer and all of which we welcome to the partnership. It is also essential that this work supports gender equality and the empowerment of women.

We urge all Governments and other parties to ensure that the United Nations and other organizations involved with humanitarian assistance have full, unrestricted and timely access to the victims of crises and disasters and to those in need of humanitarian assistance.

In every situation where humanitarian assistance is provided, our collective and individual goal must be to prevent and alleviate human suffering, regardless of location — a goal that deserves our full support. New Zealand therefore joins those who declare today their full commitment to the international humanitarian system.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Chile associates itself with the statement made this morning by the Permanent Representative of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

The delegation of Chile would like to express its gratitude for the reports of the Secretary-General entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” (A/65/82), “International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development” (A/65/356), “Central Emergency Response Fund” (A/65/290) and “Humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation for selected countries and regions” (A/65/335).

We welcome the information provided in those reports and appreciate the fact that those documents are forward-looking and draw attention to the main trends and challenges faced in providing humanitarian assistance, which require our attention. We believe that, in particular, the report entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations” calls for us to reflect on how better to manage those challenges.

Emergency humanitarian assistance ultimately seeks to alleviate the suffering of those whose lives are threatened or have been affected by natural disasters or complex emergencies and their aftermath. The focus of our response is our concern for the individual and the individual’s rights; humanitarian action is therefore

based on the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

Certainly, States bear the primary responsibility for providing humanitarian assistance to populations on their territory; but it is a fact that some situations, given their frequency or magnitude or institutional limitations, require the support of the international community if the enormous challenges they pose are to be met. Preserving the apolitical and impartial nature of humanitarian work is not just one of the fundamental pillars of effective international action, but also an essential prerequisite for transparency in humanitarian response and international cooperation. There is no doubt that these elements are particularly important to maintaining the credibility and universal value of humanitarian action.

We welcome the growing multilateral response to humanitarian emergencies in which the United Nations — with its capacity, experience, legitimacy and presence on the ground — has a central role to play in coordinating international assistance in support of national authorities. The Central Emergency Response Fund has undoubtedly become a central tool in that system, allowing it to respond rapidly to sudden emergencies and to provide a sustained response in instances of underfunding. Given their understanding of local realities and proximity to affected countries, regional and subregional organizations also have a very significant role to play.

In the preparation of, response and follow-up to the subsequent phases of recovery and reconstruction, we must consider the special needs of the groups that are most vulnerable in these situations: women, children, persons with disabilities and the elderly. As a State party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and a sponsor of resolution 64/290 on the right to education in emergency situations, Chile reiterates that the 2010 “Minimum standards for education: preparedness, response, recovery” handbook of the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies is an important tool to assist in reconstruction efforts in countries affected by natural disasters. I underscore the priority it attaches to focusing on persons with disabilities — including the importance of considering the needs of individuals with physical, mental and visual disabilities — when designing educational centres, including water and sanitation facilities.

One of the main challenges to ensuring international aid effectiveness is to ensure the coherence and coordination of international efforts. Adequate coordination of the existing local capacities of organizations, communities and productive sectors should be at the heart of all of our efforts. Similarly, recent experience has highlighted the major role to be played by civil society and the private sector both in affected countries and in other nations. Civil society organizations are often the first to mobilize and come to the assistance of affected populations. Moreover, we have seen that many people will respond to the suffering of others and are able to mobilize considerable resources for communities within their own countries and in others affected by humanitarian emergencies.

Finally, we must not forget that local communities and organizations themselves provide support to individuals who have lost everything or have been displaced. Similarly, the private sector has great capacity to contribute and respond to emergencies by mobilizing resources, providing necessary services and materials in the response, recovery and rehabilitation phases, and by generating employment and reactivating the economy, which is essential to the subsequent reconstruction phase. Adequate attention to the capacity of these sectors will lead to a more sustainable and inclusive humanitarian response, which is essential to close coordination of all the sectors involved.

In conclusion, I cannot fail to mention the necessary interrelationship between humanitarian assistance, national capacity response and the development of the affected countries.

Mr. Wetland (Norway): The devastating earthquake in Haiti, the flood disaster in Pakistan and several other emergency crises have made 2010 a demanding year for the humanitarian response system. Together with the financial crisis, these emergencies have given the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, a most challenging start. After her first two months in office, Norway is confident that she is up to the task. We are committed to supporting the new Under-Secretary-General in her efforts to strengthen the international humanitarian system and in her role as spokesperson for principled humanitarian action.

We must use the experiences from Haiti and Pakistan to improve the international humanitarian

response system, take the lessons into account, and learn from them. Overall, the United Nations response to the earthquake in Haiti was acceptable, given the difficult circumstances. However, the leadership was too weak, inter-cluster coordination was fragile and support to the Government was generally insufficient. The recent outbreak of cholera shows that the need to deliver services will continue for months to come and that the cluster system needs to be gradually merged into broader sector coordination under the leadership of the Haitian Government.

The floods in Pakistan have been another major challenge. Although millions of people have been assisted, the relief effort has not been coordinated well enough, and the Pakistan Emergency Response Fund did not respond as quickly and flexibly as anticipated. Improved delivery and coordination of humanitarian assistance in the field will be a priority for Norway when we take on the role of Chair of the Donor Support Group of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) from July 2011. Norway aims to engage with a broad cross-regional group of Member States to seek advice on how to strengthen OCHA's effectiveness and field presence.

Recent devastating natural disasters have demonstrated the vulnerability of huge populations, especially in rural communities and informal urban settlements. Urgent and flexible responses to these disasters are crucial to saving lives and property, but such disasters also remind us of the need to focus on prevention, preparedness and the adaptation of policies and measures. These processes must be locally owned, the central role of the State recognized, and necessary tools must be in place. It is anticipated that the growing number and increasing severity of climate-related natural disasters will challenge current settlement patterns and lead to increased forced displacement. In June 2011, Norway will host the Nansen Conference on Climate Change and Displacement in the Twenty-first Century, which will explore some of these challenges and address possible future protection gaps.

As humanitarian needs continue to increase due to armed conflict, natural disasters and global structural challenges, it is crucial that we ensure a rapid, flexible and effective response to the affected populations, many of which are among the world's most poor and deprived. The full implementation of international humanitarian law, including access to

vulnerable groups and security for humanitarian personnel, is crucial.

To ensure that a timely and effective response reaches the victims of humanitarian crises, there is a need to further strengthen United Nations-led coordination and to hold the United Nations accountable. To this end, we must ensure adequate funding for OCHA. While we are pleased that contributions to the consolidated appeals have increased and that new countries have joined the ranks of the Central Emergency Response Fund donors, we strongly believe that more countries could and should contribute more, particularly in order to support OCHA's crucial role. Currently, 95 per cent of OCHA's funding is provided by voluntary contributions from 39 Member States. Only the remaining 5 per cent comes from the United Nations regular budget — a percentage that is dramatically lower than for other offices and departments in the Secretariat and by no means enough to cover even the most essential responsibilities mandated by Member States. This is neither acceptable nor sustainable. Consequently, contributions to OCHA from the regular budget need to be increased.

Finally, let me underscore that strengthened delivery systems in the field, better preparedness and recognition of the role of the State and increased and more predictable funding for OCHA will be key humanitarian priorities for Norway in 2011 and beyond. We look forward to cooperating closely with all Member States to achieve these goals.

Ms. Miguel (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Saint Vincent and the Grenadines aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Saint Lucia on behalf of the main sponsors of draft resolution A/65/L.48. We are deeply grateful to the sponsors for their solidarity with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the other States affected by Hurricane Tomas.

On 30 October, Hurricane Tomas made landfall in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. The brunt of the hurricane's impact was felt on the northern half of Saint Vincent — the largest island in our archipelagic State. The northern half of Saint Vincent is also our agricultural heartland and home to stubborn pockets of rural poverty. Over the space of a few short hours, more than 1,200 homes were severely damaged. Many of these homes were destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. Over 1,200 persons were evacuated to

hurricane shelters, where many remain more than six weeks later. Roads, bridges, schools, Government buildings and other infrastructure have been severely damaged.

According to our National Emergency Management Organisation, there is widespread devastation in the banana industry and the tree crop and vegetable sectors are badly affected. Independent assessors have determined that banana cultivation in the northern half of the State was 100 per cent destroyed. The banana industry is a vital pillar of our economy, and the hurricane has delivered a devastating blow to the national economy and the livelihoods of hundreds of farmers and their families. Estimates have placed the immediate cost of the damage to homes, infrastructure and agriculture in the hundreds of millions of dollars. The medium- and long-term costs of the hurricane are even greater.

The draft resolution correctly notes that the Caribbean region is extremely vulnerable to the physical and economic impacts of tropical storms and hurricanes. Unfortunately, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines fears that our vulnerability is steadily increasing. Our Atlantic hurricane season once lasted five months and ended on 31 October. Weather patterns have forced an extension of the hurricane season by a full month. Moreover, according to the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the hurricane season of 2010 was one of the busiest on record. This year has seen 19 storms, 12 of which became hurricanes. According to NOAA, 2010 was the eleventh above-normal Atlantic hurricane season in the past 15 years. It follows that our region's vulnerability to these events is similarly above normal. Clearly, with 73 per cent of recent Atlantic hurricane seasons being categorized as above normal, we may have to re-evaluate what constitutes a normal hurricane season.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines takes this opportunity to express its gratitude to the Governments, institutions and organizations that have assisted us in our time of extreme need. In particular, we wish to thank the Governments of Australia, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Brazil, the Cayman Islands, the Commonwealth of Dominica, the European Union, Guyana, Japan, Taiwan, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States, in addition to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Our Government's Operation Recovery and Reconstruction is under way. We are rebuilding homes. We are working with farmers to help them to replant and survive a season without a harvest. We are strengthening our social safety net to assist those who have been most affected by the hurricane. And we are rebuilding our basic infrastructure with an eye towards our increasing vulnerability to hurricanes and rising sea levels.

Even as we thank all those who have assisted us to date in our recovery, we continue to stress the importance of the draft resolution's call for "continued effective humanitarian, technical and financial assistance" to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and all of the other countries unfortunately affected by Hurricane Tomas. We hope that draft resolution A/65/L.48 will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Dornig (Liechtenstein): The coordination of humanitarian assistance is a core activity of the United Nations. Let me therefore join others in reiterating our full support for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the work of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos. We welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General (A/65/82), which highlights the current threats and challenges in this field and provides us with an overview of the progress made with regard to the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

The ability to deliver humanitarian assistance to populations in need is increasingly jeopardized by the growing number of deliberate attacks on humanitarian workers, facilities and vehicles. The changing nature of armed conflicts, which is often characterized by an increase in criminality and banditry, plays an important role in this regard. In addition, in many conflict situations around the world, humanitarian actors are no longer perceived as neutral and attacks on them are political in nature.

To increase the acceptance of humanitarian assistance in high-risk environments its delivery must be dissociated from political and military goals and underpinned by a constant outreach to community leaders and local authorities. In order to improve the safety and security of those delivering humanitarian assistance, any humanitarian response strategy should be complemented by appropriate and sufficiently funded security management. Liechtenstein therefore supports the new United Nations security management

approach, which is aimed at supporting humanitarian operations more effectively.

We welcome further efforts made to increase the security collaboration between the United Nations, international organizations and non-governmental organizations by enhancing the “Saving Lives Together” framework, which Liechtenstein has supported from the beginning. Furthermore, we call on all States to become parties to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and its Additional Protocol, which entered into force this year.

As a small country, Liechtenstein’s policy of humanitarian assistance is based on a niche approach, with an emphasis on underfunded appeals and specific topics. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) gives us the opportunity to implement this policy in a consistent manner. During these times of financial and economic constraints, Liechtenstein reiterates its commitment to adequate and predictable funding for humanitarian assistance. We agree with others that it is imperative for OCHA and the CERF secretariat to receive sufficient funds to fulfil their mandates, including from the regular United Nations budget.

The number of internally displaced persons has further increased this year to 27 million. The assistance they receive often fails to address the different vulnerabilities of women, girls, boys and men. Women are particularly vulnerable in situations of displacement, as they are often forced to adopt new strategies to provide for themselves and their families. As a result, they sometimes have no choice but to travel to unsafe areas to find work, trade sex for food or become sex workers. Greater efforts are needed to address the link between gender-based violence and livelihoods in displacement settings.

Access to fuel and firewood and their use in humanitarian settings pose a variety of serious risks. Women and girls are often raped and assaulted during the collection of firewood outside their camps. Cooking over indoor fires releases toxic smoke, causing respiratory infections that kill more people every year — especially babies and young children — than malaria. Furthermore, the collection of firewood exacerbates environmental degradation. We are pleased to see that this year’s draft resolution on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

(A/65/L.45) addresses these important issues more clearly than in the past, in particular by referring to relevant national and international initiatives. We particularly welcome the multisectoral guidance tools endorsed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in this regard. These instruments will help humanitarian actors to address the issue of safe access to cooking fuel from the start of every emergency.

Mr. McNee (Canada): The year 2010 has been one of significant challenges for the international humanitarian community. With the devastating earthquake in Haiti, extreme flooding in Pakistan and other serious disasters in Benin, Chile and Indonesia, our response capacity has at times been stretched to the limit. Working in collaboration with national and local Governments, the international community continues to deal with the aftermath of these disasters. The recent outbreak of cholera in Haiti further highlights the importance of sustained commitment to effective and coherent international humanitarian action.

These crises, combined with ongoing complex emergencies in Afghanistan, the Sudan, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, directly threaten and affect the lives of millions of people. And more challenges lie ahead. Migration, increasing levels of urbanization, the proliferation of humanitarian actors and increasing restrictions on humanitarian space make the task of responding to humanitarian needs even more complex.

All of this raises an important question. Are we, the international community, well prepared to address not only current humanitarian emergencies but also future trends and challenges? Five years after the implementation of the 2005 Humanitarian Response Review, and as we take stock of lessons learned from our responses to recent crises, the time is ripe for deeper reflection on this question.

Canada places high priority on efforts to strengthen the response capacity of the international humanitarian system. Canada continues to advocate for enhancing cluster coordination, developing flexible financing mechanisms and strengthening the role and capacities of resident and humanitarian coordinators. Canada has provided concrete political and financial support for all key elements of the humanitarian reform agenda. Clearly, thanks to the dedication of humanitarian actors globally, much progress has been achieved. However, the crises of the past year have

highlighted both strengths and areas where more work is required. It is essential that the international community continue to reinforce the capacity of the international humanitarian system, including by implementing lessons learned from recent crises. Allow me to highlight a number of areas where the Government of Canada believes our collective attention and support is required.

First, a well-coordinated approach is key to ensuring the delivery of timely and effective humanitarian response while avoiding the duplication of efforts. In this regard, Canada strongly supports the role of the cluster coordination system, but some challenges remain, particularly in the implementation of inter-cluster coordination. It will be important for cluster leads, working with resident and humanitarian coordinators and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), to identify current gaps in inter-cluster coordination and practical solutions to address this issue.

Secondly, recent large-scale disasters, as experienced in Haiti and Pakistan, have highlighted the importance of addressing the issue of surge capacity. The type, scale and frequency of natural disasters require that the international community be able to quickly deploy qualified staff as a means to bolstering capacities on the ground. Canada is encouraged by ongoing efforts within the United Nations to improve standby rosters, prioritize contingency planning, enhance training opportunities and better address duty-of-care issues, and urges the United Nations to continue to prioritize this work.

(spoke in French)

Thirdly, needs assessments are the foundation of our efforts to provide more appropriate and effective humanitarian responses, while ensuring that the allocation of resources is targeted. OCHA has made encouraging progress in recent years to develop the tools and to recruit and train the personnel required to conduct more coordinated and accurate needs assessments. Canada strongly supports efforts to facilitate evidence-based decision-making, and considers them to be a key step towards strengthening humanitarian responses.

Fourthly, Canada strongly encourages the United Nations to strengthen its partnerships with host Governments and local actors who are on the ground providing life-saving assistance from the moment a

crisis occurs. It is important to pursue this dialogue and to work closely with local communities, including them in all stages of planning and decision-making processes. This was a lesson learned from the Haiti earthquake. OCHA's continued outreach and advocacy activities will be instrumental in reinforcing partnerships between host Governments, local actors, the international humanitarian community and the private sector.

In closing, Madame, you can count on Canada's commitment to working in close collaboration with OCHA and other humanitarian partners, as well as with Member States, to strengthen the response capacity of the international humanitarian system. Our collective focus and commitment are needed to address the challenges that lie ahead. Together we must ensure that our actions are results-driven and lead to more effective international humanitarian action on behalf of those in need worldwide. It is with them in mind that we find the true meaning and purpose of our critical task.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/2 of 19 October 1994, I now give the floor to the Observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Jilani (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): Thank you, Madame President, for giving me the opportunity to address the General Assembly on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The scale and severity of some of the recent disasters, including the two major disasters that hit Haiti and Pakistan within the same year, have put a lot of strain on the global response capacity of the humanitarian system. Nevertheless, this was not the first time that the humanitarian community has had to face such a challenge. In 2004 and 2005, the humanitarian community had to respond to two major disasters within the span of less than 10 months. These were the Indian Ocean tsunami and the Pakistan earthquake. In both cases, some of the most critical constraints that faced the humanitarian system were the availability of adequate human resources and the timely deployment of teams and equipment.

For the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as demonstrated by our response operations

in Haiti and Pakistan, the investment in the preparedness and maintenance of a highly trained, qualified and committed national volunteer and staff base is a worthy one. In this context, some of our key messages to Member States and partners are the following.

First, overall investment in risk reduction and preparedness is essential and cost-effective in mitigating the human toll of disasters. At the same time, serious investment in the preparedness and maintenance of highly qualified and experienced human resources, staff and volunteers alike, as well as the maintenance of the specialized emergency response units, is a critical investment for effective response preparedness.

Secondly, supporting and strengthening the capacity of local actors on the ground as the first responders, which can be amplified by international response efforts, is the best and most effective model.

Thirdly, the availability of adequate, predictable and timely funding is critical to an effective humanitarian response, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report (A/65/82). The IFRC utilizes a reserve emergency fund known as the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund, which provides for immediate life-saving disaster response. In 2009, the Fund was utilized to respond to 96 disasters in every region of the world, benefiting over 20 million people — more than twice as many as in the previous year.

Fourthly, communicating with beneficiaries is another critical element of an effective disaster response mechanism, as we have learned from these disasters. In Haiti we have broken innovative new ground, in partnership with the private sector, through the use of short message service technology, local radios and social media. Such technologies make it easier to communicate with beneficiaries and engage them so they can fully participate in shaping our response.

While these large-scale disasters caused great losses and suffering and have rightfully captured the attention of the media and the public, many communities around the world are suffering the effects of small- and medium-scale disasters, including slow-onset disasters. These smaller-scale and more frequent disasters are often forgotten. They erode people's livelihoods, increase vulnerabilities and undermine

sustainable development and our collective efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Today, the IFRC has more than 52 active appeals, representing a need for more than 1.8 billion Swiss francs. These active appeals cover disasters of all scales and in all corners of the world, such as the West African floods, where heavy rains and flooding displaced hundreds of thousands of people, destroyed public infrastructure, washed away crops and drowned livestock. In the past two months alone, millions of people have been affected by floods, hurricanes and other climate-related disasters in all regions of the world.

Finally, we would like to reiterate our commitment to work and enhance coordination with other humanitarian actors, including the United Nations and other international organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society, while emphasizing that our commitment to our fundamental principles provides the best available means to gain the confidence of all in order to have access to those in need.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/6 of 16 October 1990, I now give the floor to the Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Füllemann (International Committee of the Red Cross): The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is pleased to address the Assembly on the subject of humanitarian coordination.

In 2010, without forgetting other humanitarian crises, the scale of the tragic disasters in Haiti and Pakistan and the enormous difficulties encountered in providing timely, quality assistance and protection once again reminded the international community and humanitarian actors of the challenges of humanitarian response and the constant need to improve humanitarian coordination. These improvements are owed to those affected by humanitarian crises.

The ICRC has adopted a pragmatic approach towards coordination and engages with mechanisms that recognize that coordination is not an end in itself, but is rather a means to providing better and more timely humanitarian services. Humanitarian coordination should take place first and foremost in the field. It should be reality-based and action-oriented. In other words, the ICRC remains committed to

coordination based on each organization's existing skills, available capabilities in the context concerned, access and funding, rather than on future probable ones.

Within the scope of the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement — in particular humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality — the ICRC has supported the existing coordination mechanisms and coordinated its operations with the various humanitarian actors — in particular its natural partners, the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies — in the countries where it works. The ICRC will, however, refrain from any coordination that would hamper its own capacity to be a credible, neutral and independent organization that carries out strictly humanitarian activities. In situations of armed conflict, the ICRC's capacity to access the people in need, as well as the security of its staff, depend on the various parties to the conflict accepting ICRC action.

Therefore, and in the light of those principles, the ICRC has to carefully consider the risks when deciding how to coordinate its activities outside the Movement with organizations that intend to integrate humanitarian operations with political and military objectives. Humanitarian action and political-military action should be kept separate, as the blurring of those lines puts the security of humanitarian personnel and the capacity to access people in need at risk.

The ICRC recognizes the role and responsibilities assumed by host States to provide protection and assistance to their own populations when affected by man-made or natural disasters. The ICRC tailors its response to humanitarian needs by taking into account the capacities of the authorities in control of the territory where it wants to operate and avoiding the substitution or duplication of their work. In a transparent and, when necessary, confidential manner, all necessary information is shared with the relevant actors, allowing them to have a clear understanding of the ICRC's findings and operations. However, because of its mandate and, consequently, its activities in situations of armed conflict and other situations of violence, the ICRC needs States and non-State actors to respect its neutrality, independence and impartiality to enable access to all persons affected by such situations.

Contemporary humanitarian action has to integrate local responsibilities and capacities in a more

decisive manner. Current humanitarian crises challenge the adequacy of humanitarian response based on the sole intervention of international organizations. Coordination efforts should ensure that humanitarian response is founded on existing private and public national capacities. The ICRC has learned that an effective humanitarian response depends on creating genuine partnerships between national and international efforts.

For the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, such partnerships are key to the effectiveness of its overall response. In emergencies, national societies remain the ICRC's primary partners in operation. The ICRC, in conjunction with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, builds upon the capacities of national societies, ensuring, as needed, financial support and/or the transfer of expertise and technologies to enable national societies to respond to emergencies, either alone or in partnership with the ICRC. If those partnerships are to be successful, they must be based on equality and mutual respect. Finally, the ICRC's partnership within the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is made possible only if national societies respect and are allowed to respect the fundamental principles of the Movement, in particular those of independence, neutrality and impartiality.

Because of the complexity of humanitarian action, the ICRC remains committed to coordinating its activities with all humanitarian actors in the United Nations coordination mechanism, with the aim of providing the best possible protection and assistance to people and ensuring that the humanitarian response supports the autonomous resilience and recovery capacities of the people affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence. Indeed, the limit of that commitment is the ICRC's capacity to access the people in need and to ensure the security of its staff. That commitment will be possible only with the support of States for the mandate and working modalities of the ICRC.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/4 of 16 October 1992, I now call on the observer for the International Organization for Migration.

Mrs. Klein Solomon (International Organization for Migration): The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is pleased to take the floor today with

reference to the report of the Secretary-General on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations (A/65/82).

The year 2010 has proved to be another year of great challenges for emergency humanitarian assistance due to crises in many countries demanding the collaboration and partnership of a broad and growing range of humanitarian actors. The report of the Secretary-General offers a valuable opportunity to take stock of progress made and to draw lessons for the future with respect to new means of working together.

Collaboration and coordination are most relevant to IOM's operational work in situations of population displacement and sudden population movements. The issue of internal displacement is multifaceted, requiring many organizations to work on different aspects and to collaborate to meet the protection, assistance and recovery needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Several years into the implementation of the cluster approach, including specifically its use in response to the earthquake in Haiti, we have been able to see tangible results in terms of collaboration and coordination.

In that regard, inter-cluster coordination and strong humanitarian leadership are key areas where improvements are necessary for the cluster system to achieve its full potential. One of IOM's chief responsibilities in emergency efforts around the world is as the global cluster lead for camp coordination and camp management in natural disasters. IOM recognizes that camps should be established during a humanitarian emergency only as a last resort and that IDPs should be encouraged to stay with host families and to return home when it is safe and feasible.

Nevertheless, ensuring that IDP sites have adequate camp management support in those situations where camps are needed is a key priority for IOM. The cluster continues to work towards increasing its capacity to support camp management agencies and to expand coverage into IDP sites that do not have dedicated camp management agencies. IOM's camp coordination and camp management initiatives work to actualize such cluster strategies in various responses around the world, including in the Philippines, Ethiopia, Nepal, Timor-Leste and, as mentioned earlier, Haiti. Areas of focus are strengthening community resilience, facilitating accurate information

dissemination regarding the sites and the affected populations, addressing gender-based violence, supporting partners carrying out camp coordination and camp management responsibilities in IDP sites, including national civil society and local authorities, ensuring that uniform standards are met and liaising and working with local governments and affected populations.

However, humanitarian response is not limited to humanitarian actors. It must be led by and coordinated with the full engagement of Governments. Because of the multidimensional and cross-cutting issues in humanitarian response, such as those relating to gender, land ownership, rubble removal and urban planning, national Governments are critical and necessary stakeholders in that response. Without their direction and leadership on key issues, the humanitarian system may be hampered in delivering its most effective response in support of Governments.

Search capacity is a particular challenge in emergency response and the coordination of humanitarian assistance, as evidenced this year in Haiti and Pakistan. Although all agencies provided outstanding search support in response to those emergencies, the scale of the disasters tested even those surge limits. Standard procedures for the rapid recruitment of staff for emergency response and administrative procedures for procurement and logistical support have to be further improved to increase the effectiveness and timeliness of humanitarian response. Equally important, beyond the emergency response, all organizations need to provide long-term dedicated engagement with the proper, experienced and adequately supported staff.

Finally, the Secretary-General's report touches on another topic of great concern — climate change and environmental degradation. This year, both have had serious consequences for millions of people and their countries and will continue to do so for communities in the near and distant future. In that respect, IOM would like to echo the Secretary-General's call for a shift from a shock-driven towards a more needs-based and vulnerability-led response. In particular, we would like to highlight that gradual environmental changes, such as drought and desertification, appear to be a less obvious push factor for migration than extreme environmental events.

However, those gradual processes are expected to trigger most environmental migration in the longer term. While all countries are at risk, developing countries are more vulnerable given that they have far fewer resources and capacities at their disposal to cope with and adapt to climate change and environmental degradation. Overall, environmental migration is likely to be mainly internal, with a smaller proportion taking place between neighbouring countries and even smaller numbers migrating long distances. It is essential that relevant national and regional policies and strategies, including humanitarian, development and adaptation ones, factor in environmental migration.

To conclude, IOM is committed to those most vulnerable in times of crisis and remains dedicated to working resourcefully and proficiently with its Inter-Agency Standing Committee partners. We would also like to take this opportunity to offer our support to the Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Baroness Valerie Amos, as well as our appreciation to our partners and supporters, in particular the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for their unwavering commitment to the improvement of humanitarian response capacities.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/65/L.25, A/65/L.31, A/65/L.45, A/65/L.46, A/65/L.47 and A/65/L.48.

One representative has asked to speak in explanation of position. I would remind him that explanations are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Weissbrod (Israel): I wish to announce that Israel will join the consensus on draft resolution A/65/L.46, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people".

In contrast to too many resolutions of the General Assembly regarding our region, the draft resolution before us is basically constructive in its approach. It seeks to assist the Palestinian people in increasing their economic and development capacity, a goal to which Israel remains dedicated and has supported for many years.

Israel's commitment to that objective can be seen through the significant measures that we have taken over the course of the past year to improve life in the West Bank. Despite continued security risks, we have removed hundreds of roadblocks and checkpoints. During the first nine months of 2010, the Allenby Bridge, which has extended its hours of operation until midnight, saw passenger traffic increase by 13 per cent and vehicular traffic by 16 per cent compared to the same period in 2009.

Such measures are showing clear results, which is clearly illustrated by the figures provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. In the first six months of 2010 alone, real gross domestic product growth amounted to 9 per cent in the West Bank and 16 per cent in Gaza, and continues at an exceptional pace.

The Palestinian population recognizes that improvement in their situation. According to the most recent survey of the International Peace Institute, 57 per cent of Palestinians in the West Bank believe that matters in their community are headed in the right direction. That is more than double the number of Palestinians who answered that way in the same poll last year.

In Gaza, Israel has taken significant steps to improve the situation of the Palestinian population, which remains captive to the Hamas terrorist organization. Despite continued terrorist attacks emanating from the Gaza Strip, Israel's Government took the significant decision on 17 June to liberalize the system by which civilian goods enter the area and to expand the inflow of materials for projects under the supervision of international organizations. As a result, the number of truckloads entering the Gaza Strip has increased by 92 per cent since June. Also, Israel has so far approved 78 international projects, including new schools of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and various other projects. The Israeli Cabinet took further measures on 8 December, allowing for an expedited flow of exports out of the Gaza Strip.

Today's discussion on humanitarian assistance to the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank should not occur in a vacuum. We must not forget that Gaza continues to be an area from which rockets are daily fired at Israeli towns and civilians. It is a place where terrorists launch attacks at border crossings and

continue to stockpile arms and munitions in violation of international law. On the very same day that Israel took measures to increase the flow of exports from the Gaza Strip, rockets and mortars were fired on Israeli towns, causing injury to a civilian.

Thus, any discussion of humanitarian assistance in our region must address the critical issue of security, which is integral to the well-being of Palestinians and Israelis alike. As such, Israel welcomes the ninth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, which reads:

“Emphasizing the importance of the safety and well-being of all people, in particular women and children, in the whole Middle East region, the promotion of which is facilitated, inter alia, in a stable and secure environment.” (A/65/L.46, p. 2)

That paragraph represents a modest start to delineating the integral relationship between security on the ground and the welfare of the people in our region.

However, Israel still has reservations regarding certain aspects of the draft resolution, in particular its discussion of the policy of assistance to the Gaza Strip, which does not reflect Israel’s security needs with regard to delivering assistance and other issues. Any resolution on the region should be very clear about the security risks inherent to Gaza that Israel continues to face on a daily basis. In addition, the draft resolution’s description of the humanitarian situation facing the Palestinians does not reflect the facts on the ground or the growth figures measured by the IMF, the World Bank and numerous other organizations. We should not take that growth for granted or dismiss the significant measures taken by Israel to improve the Palestinian economy, but rather give it the appropriate credit, especially if we consider the security challenges that Israel faces.

Despite such concerns and others, Israel joins the consensus on the draft resolution in support of the broadest principles of assistance to and the development of the Palestinian people. Israel calls on the Palestinians to return to negotiations in order to reach a peace agreement. Achieving peace is a two-way, not a one-way, street. We stress that only through bilateral negotiations that address the concerns of both sides can we achieve the vision of two States living side by side in peace and security.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/65/L.25.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/65/L.25, entitled “Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster”, I wish to put on record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

Pursuant to paragraph 19 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would request the President of the General Assembly to convene, on 26 April 2011, a special commemorative meeting of the Assembly in observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe. It is understood that the special commemorative meeting of the Assembly in observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Chernobyl catastrophe on 26 April 2011, referred to in paragraph 19, would be part of the programme of the General Assembly, using its entitlements to meet within normal working hours, that is, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Furthermore, as there is no indication of new documentation requirements for the event in 2011, it is assumed that additional document services are not required. Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/65/L.25, no additional requirements would arise under the programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011.

The attention of delegations is drawn to the provisions of section VI of resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, in which the Assembly reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters, and reaffirmed also the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The Assembly will now take decision on draft resolution A/65/L.25, entitled “Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): Since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.25, the following countries have become sponsors: Andorra, Australia, China, Ecuador, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, India, Israel, Malta, Monaco, the Netherlands, Saint Lucia, San Marino, Serbia, Thailand and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.25?

Draft resolution A/65/L.25 was adopted (resolution 65/131).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.31, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel".

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): Since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.31, the following countries have become sponsors: Bangladesh, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and the United States of America.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.31?

Draft resolution A/65/L.31 was adopted (resolution 65/132).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.45, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): Since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.45, the following countries have become sponsors: Bangladesh, Belize, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Georgia, Haiti, Honduras, India, Israel, Kenya, Latvia, Lithuania,

Montenegro, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Thailand and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.45?

Draft resolution A/65/L.45 was adopted (resolution 65/133).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.46, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people".

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): Since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.46, the following countries have become sponsors: Andorra, Bangladesh, Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cape Verde, Chile, Georgia, Guinea, Honduras, Lichtenstein, Mali, Namibia, New Zealand, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that is the decision of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.46?

Draft resolution A/65/L.46 was adopted (resolution 65/134).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.47, entitled "Humanitarian assistance, emergency relief, rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction in response to the humanitarian emergency in Haiti, including the devastating effects of the earthquake".

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): Since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.47, the following countries have become sponsors: Algeria, Australia, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, the Central African Republic, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, France, Georgia, Greece, Guyana, Honduras, India,

Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mongolia, Montenegro, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Rwanda, San Marino, Serbia, Seychelles, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Yemen.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that the General Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.47?

Draft resolution A/65/L.47 was adopted (resolution 65/135).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/65/L.48, entitled “Emergency and reconstruction assistance to Haiti, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and other countries affected by Hurricane Tomas”.

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): Since the introduction of draft resolution A/65/L.48, the following countries have become sponsors: Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Lithuania, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia, Togo, Turkey and the United States of America.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/65/L.48?

Draft resolution A/65/L.48 was adopted (resolution 65/136).

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of position on the resolutions just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Vermaerke (Belgium): Allow me to thank you at this stage of the proceedings, Madame President, for your efficient conduct of this meeting of the General Assembly on humanitarian issues.

The European Union (EU) welcomes the adoption by consensus of resolution 65/135 on humanitarian assistance, emergency relief, rehabilitation, recovery and reconstruction in response to the humanitarian emergency in Haiti, including the devastating effects of the earthquake. We thank Brazil for its initiative. Eleven months after the earthquake, the situation on the ground is still very concerning, particularly since the country was hit by Hurricane Tomas on 5 and 6 November and is now experiencing a cholera outbreak that has already claimed more than 2,000 lives.

Today’s resolution demonstrates the close attention that the General Assembly is paying to the situation in Haiti. We welcome the elements included in the text on the efforts made by all actors to take part in the humanitarian response under the Government’s leadership and the overall coordinating role of the United Nations, in particular the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The resolution acknowledges the contribution of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as well as of civil society organizations. The European Union understands that the General Assembly, in adopting the resolution, acknowledges the valuable work of all non-governmental organizations, and that the reference to faith-based organizations is specific to the context of the humanitarian response in Haiti.

The European Union also appreciates the elements of the resolution relating to the vulnerable situation of internally displaced persons who have now lived in camps for nearly a year, and for whom a durable and sustainable solution must be found. In this regard, we were glad to hear last week from the International Organization for Migration that some 500,000 internally displaced people, out of a peak population of 1.5 million over the summer months, have now left the camps. We also welcome the attention brought by the resolution to the need to address the issue of sexual and gender-based violence, and the invitation to humanitarian and development actors to promote gender mainstreaming in all assistance and recovery processes for Haiti.

The continued solidarity of the international community with the Haitian people remains absolutely essential for the continuation of both the humanitarian response and the reconstruction efforts. The EU stands ready to further support Haiti in this critical and difficult moment.

Mr. Takashima (Japan): I take the floor in connection with resolution 65/131. Japan welcomes its adoption and applauds Belarus, Russia and Ukraine for their efforts to promote its adoption. As one of the principal contributors to the efforts of the international community to minimize and mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, Japan was pleased to join the consensus and to co-sponsor the resolution once again.

Japan would also like to express the hope that this ongoing work, including the reconstruction of a shelter facility and related safety projects at Chernobyl described in paragraph 6 of the resolution, which is funded by voluntary contributions, will continue to receive sufficient assistance from the international community. Japan takes this opportunity to stress the need for the main actors to strengthen their efforts to complete such projects, and for the international community to provide broader support for this important work.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Hijazi (Palestine): Allow me to begin by thanking Member States for supporting resolution 65/134, on assistance to the Palestinian people, which the Assembly just adopted by consensus. The resolution comes at a particularly important time for the Palestinian people, who are preparing for the inevitable end to the 43 years of illegitimate occupation. It comes at a time when the Palestinian Authority is taking the final, critical steps towards realizing the Palestinian people's legitimate rights and building the institutions of a sovereign, independent State of Palestine.

We call once again on all Member States to step up their valuable support and to be true to the principles this Organization stands for. We also call on them to protect their investment in peace by exercising their moral and legal authority, and by compelling the occupying Power to heed the international consensus, cease its colonization and end its occupation of Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the only impediment to peace in our region

and obstructs Palestinian development and self-determination.

It would be a very positive demonstration of genuine goodwill and intentions if the occupying Power were to cease its systematic aggression, its illegal exploitation of the Palestinian people's natural resources and its destruction of their livelihoods and development projects. Here I wish to recall that Israel, as an occupying Power, has an obligation under international humanitarian law to attend to the needs of the population under its occupation, and that international humanitarian law also prohibits collective punishment and considers it a war crime.

While the Israeli representative tried to paint a rosy picture of the situation in the West Bank, in the occupied Palestinian territory, allow me to point out that what is happening is completely the opposite. Currently, Israel's actions in Jerusalem and its siege of 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza, as well as its crippling of the Palestinian economy's potential in the West Bank with its siege and roadblocks, to which all international reports attest, compound the fact that the West Bank growth to which the Israeli representative referred would have been much better had the illegal Israeli actions and the reckless violence of settlers who terrorize the civilians and farmers in the West Bank ended. These are the realities in the occupied Palestinian territory, and once again I remind the Assembly of the sobering conclusion of the latest report of the World Bank in this regard:

“Unless action is taken in the near future to address the remaining obstacles to private sector development and sustainable growth, the Palestinian Authority will remain donor-dependent and its institutions, no matter how robust, will not be able to underpin a viable State.”

It is customary for the Israeli delegation to bring up the issue of terrorism because it assumes that allegations of terrorism will be treated as sacrosanct. In this case in particular, the crushing actions of terror that the Israeli occupation and illegal settlers have committed against the Palestinian people are far too evident to be in dispute or allow such inaccurate arguments to be accepted.

Israel, the occupying Power, translates this policy of terror into the destruction of Palestinian property, infrastructure, public buildings and economic

institutions, as well as the wilful killing of scores of civilians, thus causing the Palestinian people to suffer and requiring the urgent disbursement of international assistance. Just last month, the occupying Power razed a road that was recently built with international assistance.

As for the so-called security needs of the State of Israel, it is quite surprising to see those needs used once more as justification for war crimes and gross violations of international law, when such attempts have failed in the past. Additionally, it is counter-intuitive to accept this argument, given the Israeli actions on the ground. For how does Peace Street in the village of Qarawat Bani Hassan threaten Israeli security if destroying it is justified under this pretext? How could water and sewage networks possibly threaten the security of Israel and thereby justify their destruction and the refusal to allow them to be rebuilt? Exactly how does power supply, which is a lifeline for Gaza's hospitals, water wells and other vital infrastructure, pose a threat to the security of Israel?

Obviously, none of these objects of Israeli aggression could possibly pose a threat to the security of any State, let alone that of a State armed to the teeth like Israel. Indeed, it is these acts of sabotage and destruction with extremely devastating repercussions that counter the argument of Israel's security needs.

Finally, once again, Palestine expresses its gratitude for the principled assistance of countries and international organizations. We call on them to step up their valuable support for the Palestinian people in its homestretch to freedom, which is nearing its victorious end.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank Mr. Herman Schaper, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands, for coordinating the consultations and negotiations on the resolutions adopted under agenda item 69.

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of sub-items (a) to (d) of agenda item 69.

The meeting rose at 5.25 p.m.