



General Assembly

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New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Jeremić (Serbia)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Kamau (Kenya),
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

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

Agenda item 70 (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/67/492)

Draft resolutions (A/67/L.32 and A/67/L.37)

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

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/67/89, A/67/361, A/67/363 and A/67/367)

Draft resolution (A/67/L.39)

(b) Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General (A/67/84)

Draft resolution (A/67/L.38)

(c) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

Mrs. Davidovich (Israel): The State of Israel has a long-standing tradition of providing humanitarian assistance to nations in need, and 2012 has been no exception.

Following the severe flooding in Fiji in January, the Israeli Government donated funds to support the

work of the Red Cross in providing assistance to the flood victims. A month later, when a fire engulfed the Comayagua prison in Honduras, leaving more than 300 inmates dead, Israel donated medical supplies to treat those who had been injured in the fire. In the wake of the devastating explosions in Brazzaville, Congo, in March, Israel sent medical equipment for the treatment of burns through our Agency for International Development Cooperation, MASHAV, in partnership with Magen David Adom South Africa. In response to the most recent food crisis to emerge across the Sahel region, Israel has remained engaged in supporting the work of the World Food Programme by donating \$200,000 to help the millions of people facing the combined threat of drought, high food prices, displacement and chronic poverty. Finally, the Israeli non-governmental organization IsraAID is working in both Haiti and Japan to assist with the ongoing rebuilding efforts in those countries. It has also mounted a multifaceted campaign to deliver aid to Hurricane Sandy's victims in New York. Its efforts are focused on two fronts: immediate on-site assistance and long-term aid for those most affected.

Israel's humanitarian assistance is guided by a comprehensive approach. We believe that preparedness must stand at the core of disaster response. The most valuable lesson we can learn in the wake of disasters is that investing in disaster risk reduction is critical. The costs of responding to disaster significantly outweigh the costs of preventing their impact through risk reduction.

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As a small but densely populated country, Israel is always looking to find new and innovative ways to reduce the risk of disasters. Addressing urban risk through public investment is an issue that Israel takes very seriously. In 2005, the Israeli Government initiated a nationwide programme called Tama 38, which offers tax and planning incentives to the private sector to reinforce buildings that do not comply with the earthquake-resistance provisions of the Israeli building code, which was standardized in 1980. The plan also grants renovation permits to Israeli homeowners living in pre-1980 buildings.

Israel strongly believes that the impact of natural disasters can be substantially reduced if people are well informed through a culture of disaster prevention and resilience promoted by their Governments. In that spirit, Israel has given great priority to public-awareness campaigns while holding national emergency drills every year. These nationwide drills emphasize coordination among Government agencies, emergency and medical response units, local municipalities and the media. This year's exercise, held in October, focused specifically on nationwide coordination in the event of an earthquake.

For decades, MASHAV has been working to strengthen countries' capacities to cope with disaster impacts by conducting courses on emergency and disaster medicine around the world. The courses train doctors, nurses, medical technicians and administrators to deal with mass-casualty events. MASHAV offers theoretical training and organizes practical simulation exercises relevant to the disaster scenarios that particular countries or regions are likely to face.

In the past few years, Israel's cooperation with the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC), has increased considerably. Israel is a member of UNDAC, and we are proud that the emergency response roster includes four Israeli experts. Our cooperation continued to grow this year, following UNDAC's participation in our national security exercise, which simulated an earthquake and the coordination of international assistance. Building resilient communities demands preparation at all levels. Coordination among the public, private and non-profit sectors, as well as at the national and international levels, is key.

Israel recognizes that coordination is vital to ensuring the most effective response to disasters. Yet the exploitation of humanitarian aid by certain

non-State actors as a tool for conflict remains a problem. As such, Israel emphasizes the crucial importance of coordinating the delivery of humanitarian assistance through legitimate and recognized channels.

Israel believes that humanitarian assistance is a vital aspect of the work of the United Nations in which each agency performs according to its mandate. We will continue to support its efforts and offer humanitarian assistance wherever and whenever it is needed.

Before I conclude, I would like to note that it is most unfortunate that the present debate has been used by certain delegations to attack my country with unfounded accusations. I do not intend to waste the Assembly's time by refuting every baseless claim uttered in this Hall, but would like to place my delegation's disappointment on record.

Mr. Dos Santos (Brazil): Brazil welcomes the reports of the Secretary-General contained in documents A/67/89 and A/67/363, entitled, respectively, "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" and "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development". We commend in particular the focus on the need to deepen partnerships for humanitarian response among the United Nations system, Member States and other relevant actors.

Humanitarian assistance as it pertains to food security and disaster risk reduction is closely related to sustainable development. In that regard, we welcome the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want" (resolution 66/288, annex). By ensuring a mutually supportive relationship between humanitarian cooperation and sustainable development, we can achieve the two-fold objective of increasing resilience and providing a smoother transition from relief to recovery to development.

The global food crisis continues to require our careful attention, as it has not abated. Recent fluctuations in prices of food crops represent an added challenge. Durable and sustainable solutions are still to be adequately implemented. In that regard, we especially commend the Secretary-General's initiative to launch the Zero Hunger Challenge, which seeks to guarantee 100 per cent access to food for all, ensure sustainable food systems, double productivity and reduce food waste.

Now more than ever, it is imperative that the humanitarian community seek out and embrace new and cost-effective ways of mobilizing much-needed resources. We believe that it is of the utmost importance that Member States support humanitarian cooperation initiatives that allow access to food for people undergoing severe food insecurity, with the involvement of the beneficiary country and in partnership with international organizations, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme.

For the Brazilian Government, guaranteeing the right to adequate food is part of a three-pronged strategy consisting of access to food programmes, conditional cash transfer policies and incentives for family farming. Several initiatives that reflect that approach, such as the local procurement of food aid and cash-for-work schemes, are already being implemented.

On the issue of financing, we note with concern the potential impacts of the economic and financial crisis on the provision of United Nations humanitarian assistance. Brazil, as a developing country, is doing its part. In the past few years, we have significantly increased our contributions, both in cash and in kind. As announced at the pledging session of the High-level Conference on the Central Emergency Response Fund held this week, we have also been steadily increasing our contributions to the Fund. Recently, we donated \$1.2 million to fund UNICEF activities in Niger, Mauritania, Mali, Somalia and Haiti, among other countries. This year, Brazil has also made a contribution of \$7.5 million to the core programmes of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, covering areas such as health, education and food security.

By twinning operations with partners and United Nations agencies, Brazil has also been able to channel more than 160,000 tons of food aid to countries such as the Central African Republic, Chad, Cuba, Ethiopia, Haiti, Madagascar, Mozambique, Somalia, the Sudan and Zimbabwe. We call on donor countries to maintain and increase their level of financial support in order to enable the continued delivery of relief.

We believe that strengthening partnerships among all Member States and humanitarian actors will increase ownership and contribute to the effectiveness of United Nations humanitarian assistance. Brazil strongly believes that all countries can contribute in different ways to our collective efforts to save lives and

reduce the suffering of those affected by humanitarian emergencies. In that regard, I would like to recall the Dialogue on Humanitarian Partnership — an initiative launched by Sweden and Brazil with the participation and support of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) — that brought together 19 Member States, representing a wide range of interested countries, to consider key humanitarian issues. Our aim is to strengthen the United Nations capacity to address contemporary humanitarian challenges.

In the same vein, we very much welcome the dialogue and cooperation between OCHA and developing countries, which must be involved in discussions concerning humanitarian assistance and can provide specific expertise in responding to emergencies. That will certainly contribute to ensuring that United Nations humanitarian assistance is underpinned by the political support of the wider membership.

Mr. Rachmianto (Indonesia): First of all, we would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the progress of humanitarian activities around the world and for the recommendations contained therein.

The continuing impact of multiple crises and the rising occurrence of natural disasters have made the world population, from developed and developing countries alike, vulnerable and put them at constant risk. We welcome the significant progress made to date by all humanitarian actors and stakeholders in improving and strengthening coordination for emergency humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian actors should continue to improve their performance and to ensure accountability to the people, Member States and donors, including by increasing their effectiveness and transparency.

To further increase response effectiveness, humanitarian decision-making must be based on reliable data. We need to further improve the quality and reliability of data, facilitate appropriate channels for the exchange of information, and develop commonly acceptable standards for such exchange. We also need to improve capacities to collect, analyse and report disaggregated data in order to ensure the most effective use of resources and to maximize benefits for the affected population.

As the access and protection of humanitarian personnel continue to be matters of topical importance, we need to sustain and improve dialogue and mobilize

the support of all stakeholders in order to ensure safe and unhindered access by humanitarian personnel. We also need to ensure that the delivery of supplies and equipment is conducted in accordance with the relevant provisions of international and national law.

As incidents of gender-based violence and violence against children in humanitarian emergencies still occur at an alarming rate, we must continue to mainstream the gender perspective into humanitarian assistance in order to ensure that the specific needs of women, girls, boys and men in humanitarian emergencies are comprehensively addressed.

Indonesia would like to join others in calling for the strengthening of the capacity of humanitarian actors and their response systems with regard to humanitarian crises caused by natural disaster, including those related to the impact of climate change. We reaffirm the utmost importance of implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action and the need to include disaster risk reduction and preparedness in the framework of the post-2015 development agenda. In that regard, investment in disaster risk reduction and preparedness should be further increased and funding resources strengthened. In view of that, Indonesia is a sponsor of and fully supports draft resolution A/67/L.39, on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations.

My delegation is delighted to once again join the consensus on draft resolution A/67/L.38, on assistance to the Palestinian people, which inherently underscores the commitment of States to providing assistance to the Palestinian people. The sustained support of international donors, working in collaboration with the two parties, Israel and Palestine, is essential in order to improve Palestinian economic and social infrastructures and meet the humanitarian needs of the Palestinian people.

However, Indonesia remains deeply concerned about the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people, in particular in the Gaza Strip, especially after the destruction caused by the disproportionate use of force by the occupying Power, which has caused death and despair to the people in that area. The situation in the West Bank also gives cause for concern, as the numerous checkpoints and the route of the security fence are severely hindering efforts to maintain a viable economy, especially with regard to agriculture.

Nevertheless, Indonesia remains convinced of the viability of two States living side by side in peace within the framework of a comprehensive regional settlement under the terms of various resolutions, the Quartet road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace. To achieve that, however, demands that the parties sit at the negotiating table to hammer out an agreement, which, unfortunately, is where we continue to be stopped. The reports are categorically clear that forward movement is hampered by Israel's policy on settlements, particularly highlighted by Israel's plans to build more than 3,000 new settler homes, which constitutes a sign of bad faith and an obvious obstacle to the peace process.

On 29 November, the international community voted resoundingly in favour of endorsing the request of Palestine to become a non-member observer State (resolution 67/19). Although some 24 years ago the Assembly had acknowledged it as a State through its resolution 43/177, by according observer State status to the State of Palestine we are signaling the primacy of diplomacy and our rejection of violence. We are making a strong statement on the need for mutual respect among nations.

The Secretary-General has reiterated that peace and Palestinian statehood are long overdue. Indonesia agrees and would like to amplify that affirmation, because we fully believe that direct and meaningful negotiations are the main avenue towards a comprehensive, fair and lasting solution that fulfils the aspirations of Israelis and Palestinians, including an end to occupation and conflict and a just and agreed solution to the plight of Palestinian refugees. We again call on Israel to cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory and to avoid contravening its obligations under the road map to freeze all settlement construction, including natural growth.

Mr. Kodama (Japan): At the outset, I would like to commend Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos for her prominent leadership in coordinating the delivery of emergency humanitarian assistance by humanitarian agencies, as well as for the dedication she has shown by visiting wherever the humanitarian assistance of the United Nations was required. I would also like to express the appreciation of my Government for the tireless efforts of all United Nations staff engaged in emergency humanitarian assistance.

Indeed, in 2012 we have been confronted with many humanitarian crises all over the world, including in the

Sahel region, Syria, the Sudan, South Sudan, Haiti, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and Myanmar, to name but a few. Our challenge is to ensure that the United Nations continues to improve its response to humanitarian crises, including by strengthening its response capacities and humanitarian coordination and the accountability of all stakeholders, and by recognizing the importance of reinforcing its emergency administrative procedures, as rightly addressed in draft resolution A/67/L.39, to be adopted today.

Japan fully supports the continuous improvement in the United Nations system of humanitarian assistance through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Transformative Agenda. For our part, we have made contributions to various humanitarian emergencies and to individual United Nations humanitarian agencies.

One of the most important common themes of the draft resolutions before us today is the strengthening of partnerships between the United Nations humanitarian system and the growing number of humanitarian actors outside the United Nations. Japan highly appreciates the continued efforts of Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos, Assistant Secretary-General Catherine Bragg and all the staff of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs towards that end, including direct outreach to the capitals of particular countries.

The importance of various partnerships was highlighted at the World Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction in Tohoku, held in Japan on 3 and 4 July. Conference participants agreed on the critical importance of operational coordination in response to disasters through broad-based partnerships among various stakeholders that transcend sectoral divides. Such partnerships include, inter alia, local Governments, the business community and non-governmental organizations.

Japan is also making efforts to build various partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region, especially in the field of disaster management. For example, in order to strengthen the Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Jakarta, Japan is providing communication equipment, dispatching a disaster-management expert and experts in information and communications technology, and supporting the creation of emergency reserve stocks against natural disasters. Through various additional efforts, Japan is supporting the establishment of the disaster-management network for the ASEAN region.

Strengthening resilience is another common theme of this year's draft resolutions. In efforts to establish more resilient communities, closer cooperation between national stakeholders and humanitarian and development actors is important. In that regard, we support the strong leadership of Under-Secretary-General Amos on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's Transformative Agenda, and we look forward to positive developments on disaster preparedness through that framework.

To conclude, let me reiterate Japan's commitment to enhancing the resilience of nations and communities in facing disasters. At the World Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction in Tohoku, Prime Minister Noda expressed Japan's determination to lead international efforts towards disaster risk reduction, as well as its commitment to providing \$3 billion to that end over three years, starting in 2013.

Japan welcomes the draft resolution on the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction adopted this month by the Second Committee (A/C.2/67/L.16), in which it was decided to convene the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Japan in early 2015. Let me assure the General Assembly that Japan will spare no effort towards the success of that conference.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): I have the honour to deliver a few remarks on behalf of the Governments of India and Sweden as a contribution to the debate under agenda item 70 (a), "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations". Our joint statement should be viewed as a reflection of our common recognition of the need to strengthen the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance by the United Nations.

At the outset, India and Sweden would like to thank the Secretary-General for the documentation presented under this item and for highlighting the need to build stronger humanitarian partnerships. Enhanced dialogue and stronger partnership at the global, regional, national and local levels are not ends in themselves; rather, they bring together relevant stakeholders, leading to improved communication and collaboration that in turn contribute to a more effective humanitarian response. Indeed, our joint statement symbolizes a common belief in strengthened humanitarian partnerships and dialogue.

India and Sweden reaffirm that humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law provide

the basis for humanitarian assistance. In that regard, I would like to underline that India and Sweden are committed to preserving the respect for and adherence to the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence reflected in the annex to resolution 46/182. We must at all times respect the primary role of the affected State in providing protection and humanitarian assistance, with due respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States.

Affected populations are at the centre of all humanitarian action. We encourage the international community and the United Nations to continue to enhance their accountability to and work closely with affected people in order to create an inclusive process and to bring out a sense of ownership. Lessons learned from recent disasters confirm the need for closer consultations and collaboration with beneficiaries. We welcome the efforts under way to develop internal accountability mechanisms within the United Nations system.

In addition to the acute humanitarian crises, of which there are unfortunately too many around the globe, India and Sweden commend the United Nations for its efforts to build resilience and disaster risk and reduction preparedness, as we believe that prevention is better than cure. The Sahel is an example of the coordinated engagement of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme in order to be more strategic and to minimize the gap between humanitarian relief and long-term development. India and Sweden are also concerned about the many humanitarian crises that receive little international attention yet pose significant threats to affected populations.

In order for the United Nations system and the international community to carry out their responsibilities in conflict areas, safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel is of critical importance. We are concerned that there continue to be security incidents involving the deliberate targeting of humanitarian and United Nations personnel, hindering them in their indispensable efforts to assist those in need.

Delivery on the ground saves lives, and coordination makes delivery more effective, especially at a time when new humanitarian actors are emerging. India and Sweden deeply value the coordinating capacities of the United Nations system through the

Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, and encourage all actors to continue enhancing their support of the Office. As strong supporters of the Central Emergency Relief Fund (CERF), India and Sweden welcome its continued achievements in providing a timely and predictable response to humanitarian emergencies. We are encouraged by the confidence reposed in CERF demonstrated by a commitment of \$384 million in pledges made by Member States at the high-level CERF meeting on Tuesday, 11 December.

Before closing, India and Sweden would like to thank the Secretary-General for bringing to our attention the issue of data collection in the report. Indeed, there is the need to improve the decision-making process with a view towards taking better informed decisions in times of humanitarian emergencies. The gathering of data is crucial to enhance this element in order to improve our collective efforts to help those in need. The number of people around the globe in need of humanitarian assistance is not shrinking. On the contrary, it is unfortunately on the rise. We recognize the challenges ahead, and we are confident that we will be able to tackle these challenges through enhanced cooperation and by fostering a broad consensus among Member States.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The delegation of Chile welcomes the introduction of draft resolution A/67/L.39 on the strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, prepared by the representatives of Sweden and India. My delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report on the issue (A/67/89) and agrees with the recommendations made therein. In particular, we recognize the need for inclusive humanitarian assistance with strengthened relations at the local, regional, national and international levels. Our country also considers it essential to promote and enhance resilience and to build support systems for data-based humanitarian decision-making in order to consolidate partnerships for effective humanitarian response.

In various forums of the multilateral system, Chile has emphasized the importance of a coordinated humanitarian response by the international community, as represented by the United Nations system, with the support of the affected communities and States. In that regard, the leadership of Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos and the

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) team has been critical, and we thank them for their efforts.

We reiterate our commitment to the various regional and subregional bodies that play an important role in humanitarian emergencies. They must act in a coordinated and cooperative manner and avoid duplication of efforts as they promote comprehensive recovery.

The draft resolution before us includes new elements that are worth highlighting. Chile welcomes the fact that the policy agreed upon in the recent humanitarian segment of the Economic and Social Council recognizes the endeavours of OCHA to strengthen the creation of alliances among the various sectors, especially regional organizations and the private sector, in addressing emergencies. Chile's recent experience following the earthquake and tsunami of 2010 made it clear to our authorities that such alliances need to be further explored, especially with respect to prevention, mitigation and reconstruction. We also believe it important to involve civil society in such processes.

My delegation wishes to underscore the fact that the draft resolution includes a condemnation by Member States of the threat of violent attack on medical personnel and facilities. The safety of humanitarian staff is fundamental in any situation. We consider it important to move forward in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law. It also deem it vital that the draft text refers to the need for States to consider the needs of persons with disabilities in the design and implementation of disaster risk reduction, humanitarian and recovery programming, and post-humanitarian emergency reconstruction — all of which also represents an opportunity to move towards the creation of an inclusive society.

The negative impact of the current economic and financial crisis has had repercussions on the funding of the international response to humanitarian emergencies. In that regard, it is important to appeal to the main contributors to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), whose contributions should be additional to current commitments to humanitarian programming and should not be to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development. In that regard, and given the need to enhance the effective use of resources, we also welcome the draft resolution's emphasis on the importance of the

accountability of humanitarian actors at all the stages of humanitarian assistance.

We reiterate that the United Nations system and its many entities are the main provider and coordinator of emergency relief and contribute to recovery throughout the world by supporting the activities of Governments and aid organizations. My delegation believes that humanitarian assistance should prioritize human security, human rights and the promotion of and respect for the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. It should also ensure the swift and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel and aid to affected communities.

I conclude by reiterating my delegation's belief that it is urgent to further enhance coordination among the various humanitarian actors and in the long term to create conditions conducive to transition from disaster relief to development. We believe that development will not only make it possible to eradicate poverty and hunger, but will also enhance the ability of States to ensure a stable environment and lasting peace.

Ms. Murillo (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): As noted in the Secretary-General's report (A/67/89), we have made progress in improving the efficiency, transparency, delivery and accountability of humanitarian assistance. But there remains much room for improvement. According to estimates, this year at least 51 million people will require some type of humanitarian assistance and we, as the international community, must protect our populations and improve our response to their needs.

Access continues to pose a significant problem for humanitarian operations on the ground. Moreover, the changing nature of new crises caused by human rights violations, political instability and armed conflicts confronts us with new challenges to humanitarian response and to the safety of emergency personnel. Meeting those challenges in a constructive way will require sustained dialogue and the commitment of all parties to distinguish humanitarian matters from actions motivated by political or security considerations.

As Costa Rica has pointed out on other occasions, while we must prevent abuses of the concept of timely and unhindered access, we must also recognize its importance to the effectiveness of humanitarian relief on the ground. In our view, political considerations must not be allowed to take precedence over the lives and well-being of people urgently in need of

humanitarian assistance in the field. Even here in the General Assembly, we can do a great deal by engaging in dialogue and seeking language we can agree on in order to take on the issue as it deserves.

Regrettably, humanitarian assistance workers, especially those recruited locally, fell victim to violence at a much higher rate in the first half of 2012 than in 2011, according to the Secretary-General's report (A/67/492). It is particularly worrying that most victims have been the targets of extremist acts. Such attacks, intentionally directed against workers who dedicate their lives to helping others, are unacceptable. We must condemn them in the strongest possible terms, even as we continue working to improve security for United Nations compounds. As the Secretary-General points out in that regard, the support and acceptance of host Governments, local authorities and the population remain the first line of defence.

Another significant challenge we face, given climate change and the increased frequency of natural disasters, is the need for a more integrated response and for tighter cooperation among all agencies, especially humanitarian and development entities. Recent experience in the Horn of Africa and in the path of Hurricane Sandy through the Caribbean, as well as other disasters in our region, show the importance of support when emergencies strike; however, it must strike a balance between short-term needs and the promotion of community resilience and long-term development processes. The correct approach involves programmes for prevention, preparedness, rescue, recovery and development, and, as the Secretary-General points out in his report in A/67/363, it should focus on building the resilience of the most vulnerable groups, in particular children, women and disabled people. That is the only way to prevent crises from recurring or becoming endemic.

We clearly recognize the primary responsibility of national Governments in building resilience. Still, as the most environmentally vulnerable region of Latin America and the Caribbean, Central America calls for an increase in investment at all levels in disaster risk reduction, in the conservation and protection of ecological balance, and in safeguarding the sustainable development of our peoples.

The Secretary-General's report on strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance (A/67/89) calls attention to two additional challenges. One is the need for decisions to be based on up-to-

date and trustworthy data that is readily available to emergency responders; the other is the need to strengthen cooperation among various responders, in particular new stakeholders. The Secretary-General's suggestions in this and other matters should form the basis for shaping our humanitarian responses.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): Let me begin by offering New Zealand's sympathy to the families and colleagues of the United Nations humanitarian personnel who have lost their lives or been injured in the course of their duties this year. We applaud the dedication of all United Nations staff who work in dangerous and difficult circumstances in support of those who are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Over the past year, progress overall has been made in addressing the challenges facing the humanitarian community. However, the need for us all to work together to help those caught up in humanitarian situations remains as urgent as ever. Indeed, right now, more than 60 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance globally. The economic cost of disasters continues to increase, even though the actual number of disasters fell in 2012. The impact of climate change and the increased frequency of natural disasters highlight the need for closer coordination and collaboration among those working in the humanitarian, development, political and security spheres.

New Zealand recognizes that, as a cost-cutting strategy, disaster risk reduction provides the best value for money in reducing the impact of humanitarian crises, with \$1 invested in prevention estimated to save up to \$7 in future humanitarian response. That is a good investment. We also recognize the importance of implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015, and in particular of strengthening the effectiveness of national and local preparedness and building the resilience of nations and communities in line with the Framework.

Like others, New Zealand is committed to the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. We believe that as partnerships are formed with new actors we must be vigilant in adhering to those principles. They are essential to ensuring timely, secure and unimpeded access to the people who need humanitarian assistance the most. In that respect, New Zealand strongly holds to the view that inclusiveness should apply not only to humanitarian assistance and development actors but also to those affected by emergencies. The General

Assembly recently adopted resolutions acknowledging that we must give appropriate consideration to gender, age and disability as part of joint needs assessments and effective humanitarian response.

We also believe that, in addition to the United Nations system, we as Member States must address gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies, and we must ensure that measures are in place to investigate such incidents and that, where required, appropriate prosecutions are undertaken.

New Zealand joins others in expressing support for the efforts of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee through the Transformative Agenda to strengthen coordination, leadership and accountability. We commend Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos and her staff for their impressive efforts to promote a more efficient, faster and better coordinated humanitarian response, and we particularly commend her leadership of and improvements to the Central Emergency Response Fund. She has taken up a great task, and we support her in that.

Ms. Williams (Grenada): We congratulate the Member States already using best practices to monitor disaster risk management and implement disaster-response plans that preserve, first and foremost, the lives of populations, the livelihoods of those countries and particular sectors such as food and food security, agriculture and infrastructure. They are to be commended for identifying the need to strategically respond in the areas of food, water, sanitation, shelter, recovery, health and education.

Member States have recognized the importance of coordination at all levels — local, national, regional and global. Only through collaboration can we achieve effective disaster risk management, which is of the utmost importance if the quality of life of those persons affected by disasters is to be protected and improved.

In that context, climate change as a driver of disaster is pertinent. More and more effective responses to climate change events are needed in adaptation, mitigation, financing and other means of implementation. That is particularly true for small island developing States. Such responses can reduce climate disasters in the first instance, allowing societies to keep more resources at home to respond to other disasters and, more broadly, to pursue sustainable development.

There is not a single Government that is capable of managing a twenty-first century disaster on its

own. Therefore, international programmes, such as the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, are turning the momentum garnered into a durable and sustainable effort to share responsibilities in reducing risks and reinforcing resilience in our communities. That must continue to come from all involved sectors and all stakeholders, including Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society, international agencies and organizations, academic and technical institutions, and the private sector. Such broad stakeholder collaboration must continue, and all Member States must partake fully in the development and continuation of the process.

Transparency in reporting is also paramount, for we need sharper indicators for progress that will provide the ability to measure achievements we make and enlighten us on what we have already accomplished. In my own region, we have initiated the Caribbean Hazard Mitigation Capacity Building Programme (CHAMP). It is a three-year project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, implemented by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency and executed by the Organization of American States. It is intended to mitigate and manage disasters. CHAMP seeks to enhance regional capacity to reduce vulnerability to the effects of natural hazards. That will be done through the development of national hazard-mitigation policies and implementation programmes, the promotion of the wider use of hazard information in development decisions and the strengthening of safe building practices, training and certification. CHAMP activities will be carried out in the four pilot States of Belize, the British Virgin Islands, Saint Lucia and my own country, Grenada. We look forward to building resilience, including national capacity-building, and Grenada again expresses its thanks to Canada for the programme. We invite other partners to the project.

Grenada wishes to thank all our partners who supported us through our last major disaster in 2004-2005, when we lost 204 per cent of our national gross domestic product. We assure the Assembly that amid a global economic and financial crisis, climate change destruction and other challenges, our people's resilience continues to grow.

We urge continuing support for the pursuit of policies and practices of gender equality and women's leadership in all humanitarian work. Grenada expresses its full solidarity with the people of Palestine still in need of humanitarian relief, and we congratulate the

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East on its work.

The outstanding leadership of Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos is making an effective Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs even more so. We congratulate her on her leadership and her achievements. We look forward to increased capacity-building and partnership for managing national, regional and global disasters. We thank all United Nations workers who are engaged in the Organization's great humanitarian work.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/6 of 16 October 1990, I now call on 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 General Assembly on the important subject of humanitarian coordination.

The global context in which humanitarian action takes place has evolved significantly over the years and will continue to do so as it faces new challenges in the years ahead. The scope of the label "humanitarian" has expanded, and today the word refers to everything from emergency relief to disaster preparedness, early recovery, capacity-building, judicial action, restoring the rule of law and institutional reconstruction. Increasingly, humanitarian action is moving beyond immediate response and placing more emphasis on the causes and consequences of crises, as demonstrated by current initiatives to enhance the resilience of vulnerable populations. The way in which we work is also changing, thanks in part to new technologies that enable a greater scope of action and shape the way in which humanitarian actors engage with vulnerable populations. The ICRC has always striven to adapt continuously to the changing realities confronting it, while scrupulously adhering to its fundamental principles. It will continue to do so in the future.

Partnership is a key aspect of the ICRC's activity. The organization works with a wide variety of partners, as demonstrated by the support it provides to Government and public programmes, public facilities, including hospitals and places of detention, and public services. Many of its activities involve joint action with various components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, reflecting the ICRC's belief

that strong partnerships at the local level are vital to acquiring a thorough understanding of the situation on the ground and the needs of various communities.

In all, the ICRC has active partnerships with 107 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. Those partnerships take different forms; some are primarily operational and concentrate on emergency response, while others focus on capacity-building in specific areas such as conflict preparedness. Examples of the first type of partnership can be found in the close cooperation forged during major operations this past year with the national societies of Syria, Mali, Afghanistan, Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to cite just a few.

An important related topic is coordination with various actors involved in contexts where humanitarian action takes place. The growing number and diversity of those actors are making it ever harder to ensure a consistent, coordinated and effective humanitarian response, and thus to meet the needs of the people affected. It is of paramount importance that such diversity does not lead to any confusion that would ultimately harm the people we have a duty to help.

The ICRC is committed to reaching out and engaging with everyone involved in the provision of humanitarian aid on the ground. It strives to do this in a spirit of aid effectiveness and pragmatism in terms of coordination. A successful approach must be action-oriented and reflect reality in the field. This was reaffirmed during the meeting of all the Movement's components prior to the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in 2011.

The ICRC's determination to work closely with and learn from our partners and with newly emerging actors cannot, however, be allowed to conflict with our adherence to core principles. These principles constitute the framework within which any interaction between our organization and others must occur. The ICRC's humanitarian work is exclusively civilian in nature and guided solely by humanitarian considerations. It is founded primarily on the principles of humanity and impartiality and is carried out according to the most urgent needs and without discrimination. The principles of neutrality and independence are also key elements of the ICRC approach, helping the organization to gain access to people in need and to carry out assistance and protection activities.

The ICRC strives for constant dialogue with the authorities and with all the parties concerned. It is completely transparent about this. However, while taking into consideration the positions and concerns of all parties, we nevertheless formulate and implement our policies independently. Neutrality means that the ICRC focuses on its exclusively humanitarian mission and is careful to abstain from any action or statement that could be interpreted as siding with one party or the other, or perceived as a political stance. The ICRC operational experience has demonstrated repeatedly that in order to ensure access and acceptance, the goals of humanitarian action in response to armed conflicts and other situations of violence should remain distinct from goals of a military or political nature.

Of fundamental concern to the ICRC today are the threats affecting the delivery of health care and the safety of those who deliver it. Violence against health-care workers, facilities and beneficiaries is one of the most serious yet neglected humanitarian concerns today. Such violence is impeding access to health care in many countries. The shelling of hospitals, attacks on ambulances and the fact that wounded people can remain in agony for hours in vehicles held up at checkpoints all demonstrate a blatant disrespect for the neutral status of health-care facilities, transport and personnel. This disrespect is being shown in many countries throughout the world.

In response to this reality, in 2011 the ICRC launched a four-year initiative entitled "Health Care in Danger". The idea is to work together with States and other stakeholders to take practical steps to improve security for and guarantee access to health care in armed conflicts and other emergencies.

This issue was raised at the thirty-first International Conference, held in Geneva in 2011. The Conference brought together the various components of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, as well as States. It adopted a far-reaching resolution on health care in danger, which demanded an effective response from States, national societies and the health-care community at large. The ICRC welcomes the substantial discussions among States on the protection of medical personnel and medical units in the framework of the negotiation of draft resolution A/67/L.39, entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations". The Health Care in Danger initiative being a dynamic process, the ICRC trusts that, during upcoming sessions of the General

Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, this critical topic will enjoy the States' continuous interest and support.

Another challenge for the ICRC lies in the growing gap between the need for protection and assistance in today's most acute crises and what seems to be diminishing access by humanitarian organizations to vulnerable groups of people. The ICRC is involved in various initiatives to narrow this gap. For example, last year States joined the Red Cross and Red Crescent at the International Conference in adopting a four-year action plan for the implementation of international humanitarian law. The action plan read, in part, as follows:

"Components of the Movement must be able to deliver humanitarian assistance at all times in conformity with the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. States will respect the adherence by all components of the Movement to these fundamental principles ... The ICRC and the host national society concerned will establish and maintain a constructive dialogue with all parties to armed conflicts in order to obtain access to victims and the necessary security guarantees for its staff. States respect the need for such dialogue and reaffirm the unique position and contribution of the ICRC and national societies in this regard."

Looking ahead, the ICRC shares the goal of bolstering the effectiveness and efficiency of the work carried out by all international, regional, national and local entities engaged in humanitarian action. Anyone involved in such action should naturally aspire to accommodate and facilitate wider efforts aimed at reducing vulnerability and promoting sustainable recovery and development. However, wider action is not always feasible. Any action must always be realistic when weighed against the circumstances, the needs and the capacity for effective action.

The ICRC seeks to meet the needs and lessen the vulnerability of people affected by crisis, regardless of the scale. It keeps those people firmly at the forefront of its work, striving to strengthen their resilience and to facilitate their involvement in identifying both the needs and the action required to meet those needs. We welcome initiatives to bolster the accountability of humanitarian agencies towards their beneficiaries. They complement the accountability of humanitarian

organizations vis-à-vis the authorities of the States on whose territories they work.

Lastly, in the complex and highly unpredictable environment in which it works, the ICRC will continue to hone its ability to carry out assistance- and protection-based activities that are strictly humanitarian in nature. Those efforts will focus on the speed and quality of its operational response, promoting suitable laws and regulations, and monitoring their implementation. The ICRC will also continue its contribution to improving coordination to the extent allowed by the imperatives of its fundamental principles, adherence to which sustains its access and operational capacity.

It is only by respecting the principles of humanitarian action and engaging in dialogue with all concerned that the best response to urgent needs can be found and that a lasting improvement in people's welfare can be achieved.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 49/2, of 19 October 1994, I now call on the observer of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Mr. Jilani (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is grateful for the opportunity to participate in this debate.

Last week, Typhoon Bopha struck the southern Philippines and left behind devastated communities and widespread destruction. More than 700 people have been confirmed dead and more than 900 reported missing. As the scale of the devastation continues to emerge, it is estimated that the typhoon has affected the lives of over 5 million people, wrecked over 70,000 houses and left more than 400,000 people seeking shelter in temporary evacuation centres. In some areas, entire villages have been devastated, with the entire livelihoods of their communities lost.

On 5 December, the IFRC launched an emergency appeal to support the Philippine Red Cross in its efforts to roll out a massive relief operation. The Chairman of the Philippine Red Cross, Richard Gordon, said:

“We will need the support of our partners, locally and abroad, to help alleviate the suffering of these families and to help them recover their lives with dignity”.

It is expected that the results of the ongoing assessments will lead to an increased need for international support to enable the Government of the Philippines and the Philippine Red Cross, among other actors, to respond to the immense needs.

Last month, we witnessed first-hand the devastating impact of superstorm Sandy. Millions of people were directly affected by Hurricane Sandy as it tore through the Caribbean and the United States. Many communities are still facing the challenge of a long recovery. In Cuba, the storm is estimated to have directly affected 1 million people and indirectly affected 3 million people. In Haiti, the rain continued after Sandy, thus compounding the impact and increasing the threat of cholera. It is estimated that in Jamaica, more than 200,000 families have been affected by the storm. Food insecurity is also a major concern, as many of those countries have experienced a catastrophic loss of food crops and livelihoods, and also face the potential risk of the spread of waterborne diseases.

Furthermore, the monetary impact is huge. One estimate put the material cost of Sandy at around \$170 billion in the United States alone, making Sandy one of the most economically devastating climate-related disasters.

It is evident that the impacts of climate change and vulnerability to natural disasters are challenges that affect all States, rich and poor, small islands and large countries, and thus require serious and concerted efforts to tackle the related environmental challenges and their humanitarian impact, especially on the most vulnerable.

In paragraph 2 of his report (A/67/363), the Secretary-General reminds us that:

“Humanitarian needs around the world are rising in part owing to the increased frequency and severity of natural disasters and the growing number of vulnerable people”.

Last week, on closing day of the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Doha, the IFRC Vice-President reminded Governments of their collective responsibility to better protect those at risk from the potentially devastating impact of climate change. He said:

“We witness every day the worsening impact of climate change on the lives and livelihoods of

millions of vulnerable people. The humanitarian impact of a changing climate is not a future threat. It is a daily reality”.

Now that the Doha meeting has ended, we must still translate that collective responsibility into the concrete measures, commitments and resources needed now to help national Governments help their people adapt.

Humanitarian agencies are already seeing increased food insecurity, public-health threats, migration and displacement, and other related consequences. While humanitarian organizations will continue to respond to extreme-weather and climate-related events, we can also help to reduce the impacts through disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness systems.

We recognize that the primary responsibility to protect citizens in disaster situations lies with the national authorities. We believe that national authorities should invest adequately in building resilience and promote programmes that strengthen resilience at all levels. We believe also that Governments have a duty to request international assistance when the scale of the disaster and the needs of the affected people exceed the capacities of their national authorities. At the same time, we reiterate the call of the Secretary-General for Member States

“to provide timely, flexible, predictable and multi-year funding for programming that supports community resilience, including preparedness, early action and early recovery” (*A/67/363, para. 52*).

On our part, we are committed to continuing to support our Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies to build the capacities of their tens of millions of members, volunteers and members of the communities they serve.

Collectively, we need to work together to ensure that disaster risk reduction and preparedness is given due attention and resources, including throughout the discussion in the year ahead related to the post-2015 development framework.

The Acting President: In accordance with resolution 47/4, of 16 October 1992, I now call on the observer for the International Organization for Migration.

Ms. Borgman (International Organization for Migration): I shall deliver this statement on behalf of Ms. Michele Klein Solomon, Permanent Observer of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The International Organization for Migration is very pleased to take the floor today with reference to the reports of the Secretary-General on the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance by the United Nations.

Recent and protracted crises have forced millions of people to flee their homes, either within or outside the borders of their countries, which calls for the international community to respond collectively. IOM, as the global lead agency on migration, continues to provide essential life-saving assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and other migrants affected by crises around the world.

Based on the comprehensive reports of the Secretary-General, I would like to take up three points for reflection.

First, when providing humanitarian assistance during crises, our response must take into account the specific needs of migrants, whether they are refugees, IDPs or migrant workers, who are sometimes referred to in this context as third-country nationals. Recent emergencies have demonstrated the vulnerable situation of people crossing borders and of those who are stranded or unable to leave. Among these are some particularly vulnerable persons, including women, children, the disabled and indigenous peoples, who also merit special attention.

Such humanitarian emergencies can often be regarded as migration crises, causing complex and often large-scale migration flows and mobility patterns. They show the need for a rapid and inclusive response that provides immediate life-saving assistance as well as longer-term life planning and preparedness. IOM has developed a migration crisis operational framework that allows for the improvement and systematization of such a multidimensional response. The framework was recently endorsed by the IOM Council, which comprises IOM’s 149 member States.

Secondly, the multifaceted character of migration requires strong partnership and coordination with Governments, with partner international organizations from a range of areas of expertise, and with many actors in civil society, from academia to direct assistance service providers. Working with many partners in the process of leveraging expertise to meet the protection, assistance and recovery needs of the affected populations is critical to IOM’s operational work.

We are grateful to see Member States acknowledge in the current draft humanitarian omnibus resolution (A/67/L.39) that the effectiveness of humanitarian response is improved through coordination among humanitarian actors. We appreciate the welcoming of partnerships with regional organizations and the private sector. IOM highly values the leadership role of national Governments and continues to provide its support to them. Strong and consistent partnerships enable us to build long-term solutions.

Thirdly, as the Secretary-General states in his report (A/67/89) on strengthening humanitarian assistance, delivering life-saving support in emergencies is essential, but it addresses only short-term needs. Long-term development is crucial to limit the need for emergency relief in future.

For IOM, it is therefore of the utmost importance that humanitarian and development action be linked in order to build national and local preparedness and response capacity and to increase the resilience of populations. The multilayered and often long-lasting challenges confronting migrants cannot simply be divided into two stages. People on the move may find themselves in need of both humanitarian and development assistance; one does not preclude the other. Furthermore, to ensure sustainability, we must be aware that the transition is a gradual process that requires both flexibility and inclusiveness. Actors involved in both fields must work together to ensure a smooth transition from relief to development.

To conclude, let me reiterate IOM's commitment to those who are most vulnerable. We maintain our commitment to strengthening partnerships and coordination and are convinced that, as providers of emergency humanitarian assistance, we can and must continue to contribute to long-term development solutions.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 70 and its sub-items (a) to (c).

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/67/L.32, A/67/L.37, A/67/L.38 and A/67/L.39.

The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.32, entitled "Participation of volunteers, White Helmets, in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed in the draft document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.32: Albania, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, Honduras, India, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Panama, Portugal, Serbia and Ukraine.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.32?

Draft resolution A/67/L.32 was adopted (resolution 67/84).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.37, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed on the draft document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.37: Albania, Argentina, Georgia, Honduras, Madagascar, Montenegro, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia and Ukraine.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.37?

Draft resolution A/67/L.37 was adopted (resolution 67/85).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.38, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft

resolution and in addition to those delegations listed on the draft document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.38: Andorra, Argentina, Burkina Faso, Guatemala, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, San Marino and Ukraine.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.38?

Draft resolution A/67/L.38 was adopted (resolution 67/86).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/67/L.39, entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations”.

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Zhang Saijin (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that since the submission of the draft resolution and in addition to those delegations listed on the draft document, the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/67/L.39:

Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Madagascar, Mexico, Montenegro, the Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia and Ukraine.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/67/L.39?

Draft resolution A/67/L.39 was adopted (resolution 67/87).

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 70 and its sub-items (a) to (c).

Programme of work

The Acting President: I would like to inform members that consideration of the following agenda items, originally scheduled for Monday, 17 December, has been postponed to a later date to be announced: agenda item 33, “Prevention of armed conflict”; agenda item 34, “Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development”; and agenda item 120, “Multilingualism”.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.