
*TOWARDS
A MORE EFFECTIVE
UNITED NATIONS*

Two Studies

by

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and

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UPPSALA, SWEDEN

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Editorial Note

As readers of *Development Dialogue* are well aware, the activities of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation are guided by the principles and ideas formulated in the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report on Development and International Cooperation, *What Now: Another Development*. Despite the turbulent changes that have taken place since then the Foundation has seen no reason to yield to 'current realities' and give up the normative view that development should be need-oriented, endogenous, self-reliant, ecologically sound, and based on structural transformations.

Nor has there been any reason to ignore the larger implications of these principles for multilateral development. The 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report noted that 'the United Nations system, as the only universal system available, should be reorganized and moulded into an effective instrument geared to the objectives of another development and renewed international cooperation'. Existing structures would have to be drastically modified to ensure functional and trans-sectoral coherence, and the UN Secretariat reorganized to provide more effective leadership of their activities. In various issues of *Development Dialogue* published after *What Now*, special attention has been given to the work of the multilateral institutions, and to the role that not only the first system, governments, but also the second system, business, and in particular the third system, the people and their associations, should play in this context.

Given the importance of the United Nations for global governance and development, the Foundation thus welcomed the opportunity to make possible, with the Ford Foundation, a project on UN Leadership in the 1990s. 'A World in Need of Leadership: Tomorrow's United Nations', published in *Development Dialogue* 1990:1-2, attracted world-wide attention.

The authors of the leadership study, Sir Brian Urquhart and Erskine Childers, have since then been able to follow up their work for a more effective world organization in the two papers, 'The Reorganization of the United Nations Secretariat' and 'Strengthening International Response to Humanitarian Emergencies', published in this issue. For obvious reasons these papers go more deeply into the technical aspects of the UN system than has been usual in our journal. These are, however, matters of

extraordinary importance to the world community. The papers provide unique insight into management problems and challenges facing the world organization that deserve the attention of all concerned in another development.

As we prepared this issue for the printer there were subsequent developments, first in the adoption by the General Assembly of a major resolution on humanitarian assistance. The statement made by the chairman of the working group, Ambassador Jan Eliasson, when introducing the draft resolution in the Assembly was encouraging.

'It is sometimes said that it is only possible to achieve a consensus resolution at the United Nations on the basis of the lowest common denominator and through the skilful avoidance of tough decisions. That has not happened during this process. Member States have recognized their responsibility to deal decisively with concrete and crucial items on the United Nations agenda... Most importantly, it conveys a strong signal to the peoples around the world, particularly those in distress, that Member States of the United Nations care and are accepting—and dealing with—the challenges and responsibilities facing us. In this way, the draft resolution which we have in front of us could constitute a small but strongly needed victory for solidarity'.

The resolution was in fact unanimously adopted and this does, indeed, offer some renewed hope for solidarity.

In the final days of preparing this issue in February 1992, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali announced some preliminary steps in a first phase of restructuring and streamlining the Secretariat. His announcements make clear that the process will extend over at least one year, and it is hoped that the printed publication of these papers may continue their contribution to that process.

It remains, however, to be seen if good will, conciliation, and a sense of responsibility in the UN towards the whole of its membership can result in its re-shaping and re-vitalization in the economic, social and environmental fields that are of transcendental concern to the countries of the South and the North. These needs have been well illustrated in a long series of authoritative reports by representative international commissions, most recently 'The Stockholm Initiative', and by the studies undertaken by the Nordic UN Project, a note on which completes this issue of *Development Dialogue*.

INTRODUCTION

I welcome and will carefully examine every proposal, from within and outside this house, for streamlining our operations, eliminating what is wasteful or obsolete, and ensuring that the mandates entrusted to the Secretary-General are carried out faithfully, accurately, and without delay.

*Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali
on appointment, 3 December 1991*

The United Nations is unique among institutions. No other in the world has 166 governments as governors; is required to work in six official languages and to employ citizens of 166 nationalities; and is charged with responsibilities for virtually every facet of the human and planetary condition. To do all this it is provided with less funds per year than Western children spend at Christmas, and fewer staff than the civil service of a medium-size European city.

Even organizations with normal characteristics inevitably develop faults in their managerial and administrative structure over time. It is therefore hardly surprising that the UN, after nearly 50 years of unprecedented global change, should be in need of reform. As the 46th (1991-1992) Session of the General Assembly opened, a substantial number of member governments were convinced that such reforms were overdue. The two papers that follow were written in response to this concern and as a follow-up to our study, *A World in Need of Leadership: Tomorrow's United Nations*.

The leadership study was first issued by the Dag Hammarskjöld and Ford Foundations on September 18, 1990—the anniversary of the death of Dag Hammarskjöld—and subsequently published in *Development Dialogue* (1990:1-2). Following its initial release some 18-20 Ambassadors from North, South, East and West discussed different aspects of the leadership study with us during three half-day informal meetings at the Ford Foundation between November 1990 and April 1991.

► ***Reorganization of the Secretariat***

Readers of the study will recall that we addressed not only selection and appointment methods, but improved organization for effective leadership. In January 1991 the ambassadors group asked for our detailed suggestions for the reorganization of the UN Secretariat. We offered these in the first of the two papers that follow. It was discussed with the ambassadors in March 1991. Proposals along the same broad lines, sponsored by more than 20 governments, were subsequently discussed during the 46th Session of the General Assembly.

It should be noted that we were specifically asked to address needed reforms in the *management structure* of the UN Secretariat. The word 'Secretariat' as used by governments comprises those elements of the UN system that are created by the General Assembly, and whose budget derives wholly or partly from the regular budget of the United Nations.

The ambassadors were of the view that reform in the overall UN system, which comprises both the United Nations itself and the specialized agencies and voluntarily financed funds and programmes, should be tackled in a second stage between 1992 and 1995. The changes we have recommended in the structure of the Secretariat are, however, designed to provide a dynamic central framework for improvements in the system as a whole. When the results of the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Brazil in June 1992 are known, a full plan of system-wide reforms should be formulated with the least possible delay.

We were not asked to make suggestions about the financing of the United Nations, and indeed this would have required an entire detailed study in itself. We are, however, acutely aware that this problem also needs urgent and comprehensive attention. At a time when major additional responsibilities are thrust upon the UN almost weekly by governments, delinquency in paying up assessed membership dues, combined with the earlier and illicit practice of withholding payments for political reasons, have brought the UN to the brink of insolvency.

► ***Humanitarian Emergencies***

We had outlined broad recommendations for improving the UN's capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies in the paper on reorganization. In early 1991 concern about this UN responsibility deepened as a result of emergencies such as those in Bangladesh and especially in the Persian Gulf region. In May 1991 the ambassadors asked for our detailed suggestions in this area as well.

The resulting study begins with an extensive overview of the subject, because we felt that in this case there was a need for a clear picture of 'the continuous humanitarian emergency'. This paper is the product of intensive research and consultation with UN and government officials, but also with many veterans of major voluntary agencies. It benefited from a working weekend with Sven Hamrell and Olle Nordberg of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in the quiet of Backåkra, the old farmhouse in southeastern Sweden which Hammarskjöld was preparing as his future study-retreat when he died in a plane crash.

The paper was distributed to Delegations at the United Nations in early October 1991 in time for the debate in the General Assembly on the response to humanitarian emergencies. The Secretary-General had been asked some time previously to provide his analysis and recommendations on improvements in humanitarian emergency response machinery. Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar's report was circulated in late October. A working group chaired by Ambassador Jan Eliasson of Sweden was formed to seek agreed proposals for the General Assembly to vote on. The Assembly voted on this matter on 19 December. The text of this resolution is printed as an annex.

* * *

The papers are reproduced as originally circulated in the UN diplomatic community, with only minor additions for clarity. Although their preparation was made possible by the Ford and Dag Hammarskjöld Foundations, and they were prepared at the request of a number of permanent representatives to the United Nations, they have absolutely no official status. We take entire responsibility for their contents.

In his brief acceptance remarks on his appointment as the new Secretary-General,

Boutros Boutros-Ghali gave the General Assembly the assurances about streamlining quoted above. He also referred to many Third World countries, especially in Africa, being 'strangled by the problems of debt, famine, development, human rights, the need for democratization, and wave upon wave of displaced people. Environmental degradation of the planet which is our home adds even greater urgency to the need for action.'

The new Secretary-General must have maximum support from the international community in fulfilling these pledges. Despite early euphoria, the post-Cold War world is a minefield of explosive cultural, ethnic, territorial, economic and resource disputes. It is also a world in which mass poverty and ecological degradation are daily increasing. These complex and inter-connected challenges can only be met by a highly competent and universally trusted United Nations, served by an outstanding and well-organized Secretariat. Major new policy directions, especially in peace and security matters and in North-South economic issues, will need to be adopted by governments at the UN. To ensure effective leadership and execution on these issues by the Secretary-General, the UN Secretariat and the machinery of the UN system must be imaginatively and boldly overhauled. We hope these papers may help in this vital process.

Erskine Childers
New York, 20 December 1991

Brian Urquhart

REORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

A Suggested Outline of Needed Reforms

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► **Glossary of Abbreviations**

In the Organization Chart of the Secretariat reproduced on page 12, the departments and organizations appearing by acronyms in the boxes are as follows.

DG/DIEC	Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation
EOSG	Executive Office of the Secretary-General
OSPA	Office for Special Political Affairs
OPGAASS	Office for Political and General Assembly Affairs and Secretariat Services
ORCI	Office for Research and the Collection of Information
OLA	Office of Legal Affairs
DALOS	Office for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea
DPSCA	Department of Political and Security Council Affairs
OSPARCOT and DCN	Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship Office of the Commissioner for Namibia
DDA	Department for Disarmament Affairs
OIESA	Department of International Economic and Social Affairs
DTCD	Department of Technical Cooperation for Development
CSTD	Centre for Science and Technology for Development
UNCTC	UN Centre on Transnational Corporations
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNDRD	Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator
UNHCR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNEP	UN Environment Programme
UNCHS	UN Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)
ECE	European Economic Commission
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for West Asia
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
WFC	World Food Council
DPI	Department of Public Information
DCS	Department of Conference Services
OAM	Department of Administration and Management
UNOG and CHR	UN Office at Geneva Centre for Human Rights
UNOV and CSDHA	UN Office at Vienna Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs
SPECIAL MISSIONS	Temporary high-level representation of the Secretary-General (e.g. Afghanistan, SE Asia)
OPPBF	Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance
OHRM	Office of Human Resources Management
OGS	Office of General Services
	Acronyms in reorganization chart
USG	Under Secretary-General
ASG	Assistant Secretary-General
MSC	Military Staff Committee

FOREWORD

One glance at the 'Organization Chart of the Secretariat' explains graphically the reason for the growing belief that a reorganization of the Secretariat of the United Nations is essential to its effectiveness.¹

The increasing importance of the work of the UN in the post-Cold War era provides a powerful incentive for improving and strengthening its central services. Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar has steered the organization through the shoals and rip-tides of a tumultuous decade. The appointment of a new Secretary-General in the closing months of 1991 provides an appropriate occasion for making major changes. If given a broad enough intergovernmental mandate for organizational change, the new Secretary-General will be in the best possible position to deal with the many obstacles and entrenched interests that will have to be overcome.

Such a mandate should be sufficiently broad to accommodate the management style and personal views of the new Secretary-General. At the same time, it should provide him with a clear enough picture of the changes now deemed important by member governments to obviate the invocation of claimed special concerns in the existing structure that so often confront a new chief executive.

The purpose of this informal paper is to suggest the general lines along which a reorganization of the Secretariat might proceed. It does not claim to be a perfect blueprint, and does not cover many necessary details of a reorganization. It will not deal with the wider structural problems of the United Nations system of organizations, except where relationships and the need for coordination affect decisions about the Secretariat. The paper's sole purpose is to offer a starting point for consultations among governmental representatives and the Secretariat as to the kind of mandate for change that might be given to the Secretary-General.²

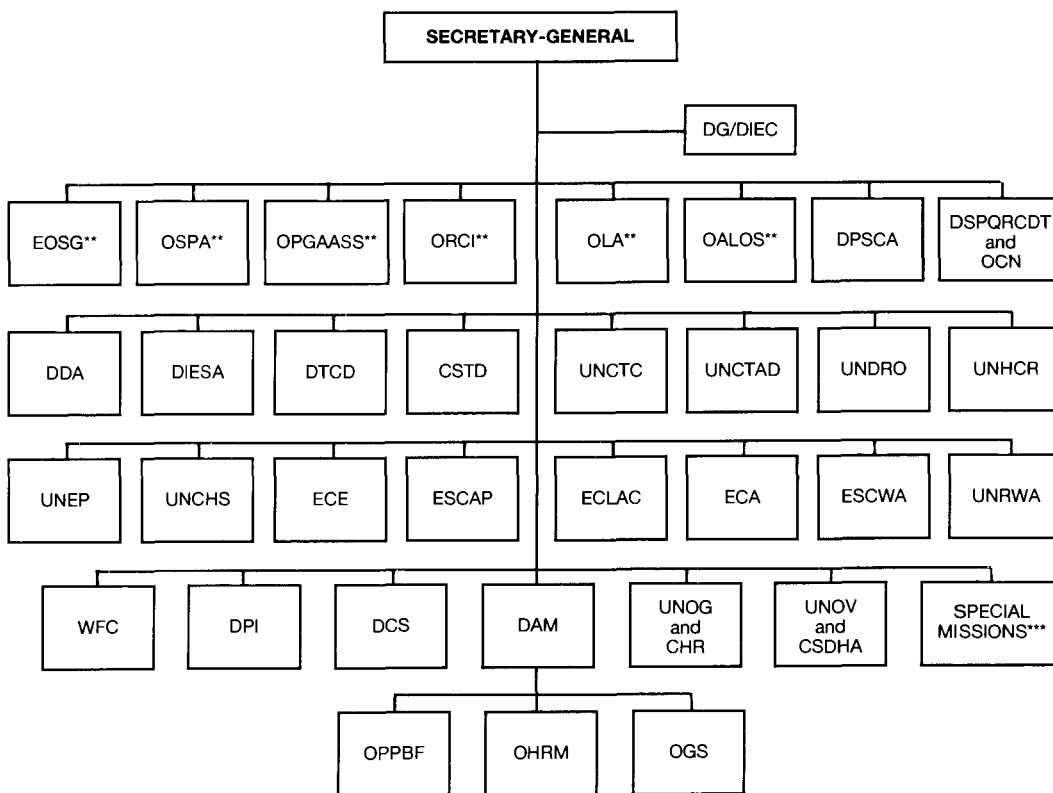
In developing the paper we have been very much aware of the many efforts undertaken in the past to bring about improvements in the organization of the

¹ Chart in Organizational Manual of the Secretariat, ST/SGB/Organization issued 8 June 1989 (see p. 12). Some UN funds and programmes, like UNHCR, UNEP, UNCHS and UNRWA appear in this chart although usually thought of as part of the wider UN system. This is because portions of their budgets, otherwise voluntarily financed, come from the UN regular budget; the budgets of UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF are entirely voluntarily funded and therefore are not included.

² Note: for brevity the acronym 'S-G' is periodically used for Secretary-General.

Secretariat. Most recently there have been the years of work of governments and the Secretary-General in reviewing the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (the 1986 recommendations of the 'Group of 18' and responses thereto).

Figure 1 Organization Chart of the Secretariat*



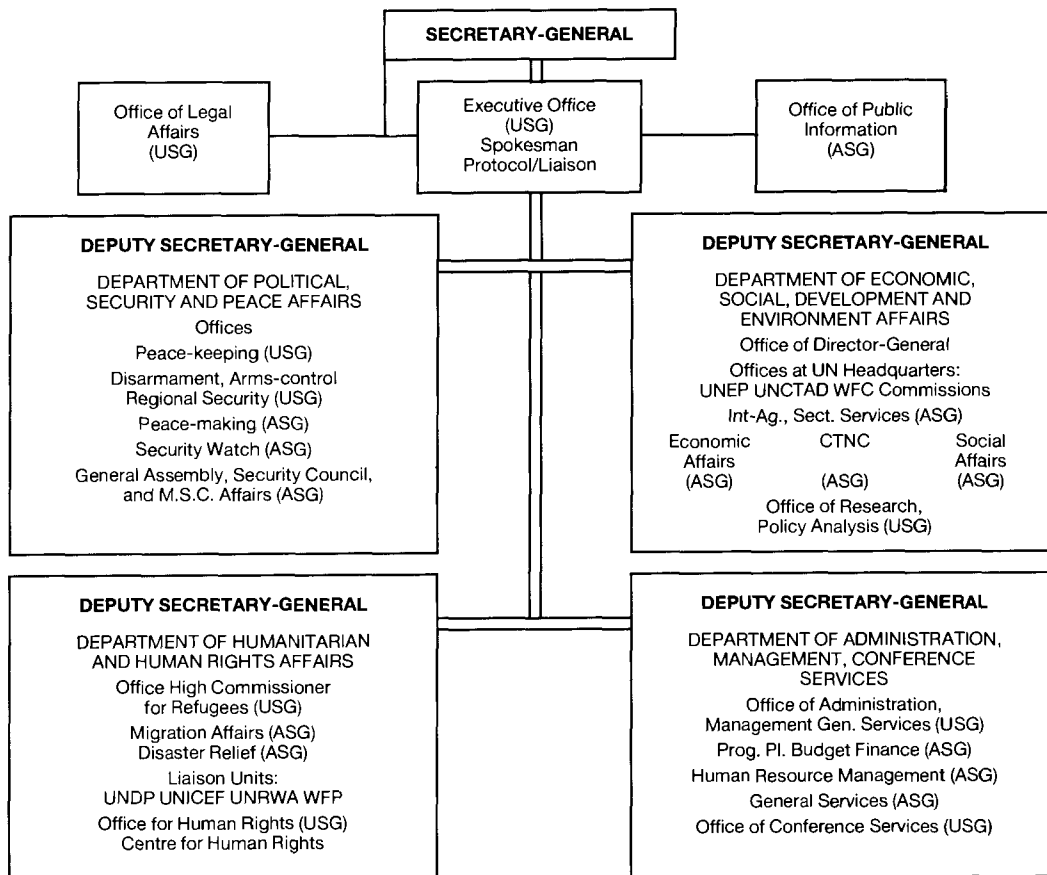
* Shows the departments/offices that are fully or partly financed out of the regular budget of the United Nations and are not a part of another department/office, except in the case of the Department of Administration and Management, where subsidiary offices are indicated. Some of the departments/offices, in all or specific matters, may report to the Secretary-General through another Under Secretary-General and/or the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation. For the full titles of the departments/offices, see the glossary of abbreviations, p. 10.

** Historically, this office has been identified as part of the Offices of the Secretary-General.

*** The number of special missions varies from year to year and hence no specific missions are shown.

We have taken this process into account.³ We have consulted our own cumulative service experience, a number of senior Secretariat officials, various earlier blueprints for UN reform, and several recent informal papers.⁴ However, the suggestions herein are made entirely on our own responsibility.

Figure 2 Proposed Reorganization of the Secretariat



³ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-First Session, Supplement No. 49 (A/41/49); Fifth Committee (A/41/795); resolutions 41/213, 42/211, 43/213, 44/200. *Inter alia* S-G reports A/42/234, A/43/286, A/44/222 and A/45/226.

⁴ *Inter alia*, the 1975 Dag Hammarskjöld Report on Development and International Cooperation, 'What Now: Another Development', *Development Dialogue* 1975:1-2, the 1975 expert intergovernmental report, A New United Nations Structure for Global Economic Cooperation, E/AC.62/9; the 1987 international panel report on the UN Management and Decision-Making Project, UNA-USA; Y. Beigbeder, *Management Problems in UN Organizations* (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1987); E. Childers, *Study of the ODG-DIEC for the Nordic Governments' UN Project 1990*; informal papers by i.a. M.Strong/G. Davidson, etc. A recent paper by R. Spiers on the reorganization of the Secretariat also contains a wide range of important suggestions.

MAIN OBJECTIVES OF REORGANIZATION

In suggesting a plan for rationalizing the present Secretariat we have had in mind several main objectives. Of these the most important are:

- ▶ Facilitating the Secretary-General's discharge of a now formidable range of responsibilities;
- ▶ Better distribution and delegation of responsibility for assisting the S-G and simplifying the chain of command;
- ▶ Freeing the Secretary-General for leadership functions and for particular tasks that can only be performed by the S-G;
- ▶ Ensuring improved multi-disciplinary approaches to challenges that require input from two or more departments, through a more coherent scheme of organization and better coordination;
- ▶ Providing for continuity, flexibility and substantive response within the Secretariat to significant trends, as well as swift response to increasingly frequent emergencies;
- ▶ Facilitating and making more efficient the complex and often simultaneous field operations which are more and more requested of the United Nations;
- ▶ Better use of human resources, and stimulation of the staff through more consistent demand on their skills and their commitment;
- ▶ Achieving more efficient working practices, more expeditious follow-up, and routine evaluation to support all of the above objectives.

▶ Personnel Considerations

The paramount Charter consideration in the staffing of the Secretariat, 'the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity', is entirely compatible with 'recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible'.⁵ The latter objective must not be sacrificed in a reorganization, nor need it be.

In this connection it is also essential to recall the General Assembly's repeated injunctions against national monopolies on senior posts.⁶ If the Secretariat is to be truly revitalized, the most important aim must be to get the very best people for, and in, the

⁵ Quotations from Article 101.3 of the UN Charter.

⁶ General Assembly resolution 35/210 of 17 December 1980: 'no post should be considered the exclusive preserve of any Member State, or group of States', and subsequent reiterations.

right jobs, especially at the top. The quality of these officials significantly conditions the quality, the morale, and the creative contribution of all other staff.

We do not propose to specify in detail the rank and grading of each and every senior official throughout a reorganized Secretariat. It is, however, essential to get these issues right at the very top, both to attract the necessary quality of leadership and to assure that adequate and coherent authority is exercised over the Secretariat on behalf of the Secretary-General. Especially in senior posts, rank is also important in relation to officials in the organizations of the UN system, as well as in transactions with governments and other international organizations.

ENTRY-POINTS AND APPROACHES

The two main questions to be addressed in this paper are the top structure of authority under the Secretary-General, and the grouping of functions and services under that structure. If there is a clear plan for these determining factors in the effective functioning of the Secretariat, the overall reorganization and the interaction of its various parts will rationally follow.

► Present Deficiencies

To determine the best approaches to these crucial elements, the main present deficiencies should first be noted:

At present more than thirty units of the Secretariat are supposed to report directly to the Secretary-General; there is no intermediate point of direction, assignment of responsibility, and supervision. Such an arrangement would make management unwieldy even in a smaller and less complex organization.

The working responsibilities of the Secretary-General are obviously beyond the capacity of any one human being to handle alone. The present Office of the Secretary-General has assumed a number of functions in the political and security field. It cannot also cope with the task of detailed substantive direction, coordination, and follow-up of the complex work of so many units which the present structure imposes upon it.

The result is a significant gap between the 38th floor and the rest of the house. There is also a lack of precision as to the normal executive functions of the S-G's own office, the substantive functions which members of it assume, and the work of the main departments and other units of the Secretariat. The 38th floor also tends to be encumbered with administrative detail, many meetings and visits, and the clearance of documents and other decisions. Much of this work could be more efficiently dealt with at other levels.

The device of a periodic 'Senior Officials meeting' has not remedied these deficiencies.

The Secretary-General at present lacks the sustained assistance which could be

provided by a smaller number of senior advisers. Such a group would: survey work in progress; evolve policy, ideas and options based on the work of several substantive units; channel directives coherently throughout the Secretariat; and mobilize, when necessary, substantive cooperation from other entities of the UN system.

The foregoing deficiencies stand in the way of a consistent use of the skills and talents of the staff, as well as diminishing the staff's sense of leadership by the Secretary-General.

► ***Overall Remedial Approaches***

The first key to reorganization lies in the number of senior officials advising, and reporting directly to, the Secretary-General.

One idea envisages a single deputy to act as alternate and executive to the Secretary-General, with four senior officials in charge of four main clusters of work. The argument for this idea is that only a deputy to the Secretary-General can effectively coordinate the work of the Secretariat; that an executive office would not have the clout to do this; and that the Secretary-General's frequent absences require a deputy on those occasions.

We have carefully considered this. In our view the strongest case, on balance, can be made for an authoritative executive office and a group of four deputies in charge of the main clusters of activity, one of them designated by the Secretary-General as senior alternate.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

The Secretary-General requires a private entourage. The actual size and organization of this office must be primarily a matter for the incumbent. It would minimally include personal assistants, appointments staff, and travel and security staff.

► Executive Office

There should be an Executive Office which must be headed by an official senior enough to apply the authority of the Secretary-General for the functions assigned to it. The Executive Secretary, as head of the Executive Office, should therefore be at the Under Secretary-General level. The functions of this office would be:

- ▶ to serve as the central reporting and information point for the Secretary-General, and to keep the deputies and other officials informed as necessary;
- ▶ to review incoming communications addressed to the Secretary-General, decide who is to deal with them and who needs to see them, and ensure prompt and effective response, expeditious outgoing communications to field offices and other organizations in the system, and follow-up;
- ▶ to work with the deputies on allotment of tasks which cross departmental lines, and ensure effective follow-up through them;
- ▶ to coordinate drafting, clearance, deadlines, etc., for substantive papers, speeches, public statements, and other documentation for which the Secretary-General is responsible;
- ▶ to supervise the Protocol and Liaison Service;
- ▶ to coordinate and supervise the work of the Secretary-General's Spokesman;
- ▶ to supervise other public relations matters concerning the Secretary-General as well as the public information service of the Secretariat, and to ensure their effective coordination.

► Services in the Executive Office

It will be noted from the above that a number of services, the work of which concerns all branches of the Secretariat, should be under the supervision of the Executive Office.

These would include the Department of Public Information (DPI), headed by an

Assistant Secretary-General; the Spokesman; and the Protocol and Liaison Service.⁷

The foregoing plan imposes large responsibilities on the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, requiring the rank of USG for its head. The efficiency of the work of the Executive Office will also require considerable improvement in Secretariat computerization and electronic communication—e.g., for far more effective communication at the inter-office level, with delegations and overseas offices, and for document and information retrieval, etc.⁸

► **Office of Legal Affairs**

The Office of Legal Affairs would continue to report directly to the Secretary-General, working, of course, very closely with the Executive Office and the Deputies.

⁷ There are recurring proposals for an Inspector-General in the S-G's Office. Presently, the Director of Internal Audit can report directly to the Secretary-General at need (A/42/234 and Corr. 1); this should be further examined by the new Secretary-General. For personnel matters the same direct access by the head of Human Resources Management, on need, is vital.

⁸ The Secretary-General has reported (1990 on the Work of the Organization) that a new worldwide integrated management information system 'is scheduled to become operational in 1993'. Meanwhile, however, electronic mail and similar systems are incomplete within the Secretariat itself.

THE DEPUTY SECRETARIES-GENERAL

► *Simplifying the Chain of Command*

It is critically important to simplify the chain of command for the Secretary-General, and to provide a Secretariat structure in which staff can work coherently and efficiently. The rationale for the present structure of some thirty functional units, many headed by a USG and all supposedly reporting straight to the Secretary-General, is certainly not related to the size of the units. There are USGs directing as few as 19 or 37 professional staff, and one who directs over 1,000 professionals.

The present set-up makes it virtually impossible for the Secretary-General to obtain the best assessments and syntheses in matters covered by more than one office. Moreover, dividing the staff into so many boxes makes it extremely difficult to get maximum efficiency and rapidity of action, especially in operational situations, and to make effective use of all available staff resources. The remedy lies in carefully organized consolidation.

Under, and acting as the senior advisers to, the Secretary-General there should be four Deputy Secretaries-General (DSG), responsible for four major Departments. These would incorporate in a logical arrangement the thirty or so present departments, centres and other units whose heads at present all report directly to the S-G.

The four main consolidated Departments would be: (1) Political, Security and Peace Affairs; (2) Economic, Social, Development and Environment Affairs; (3) Humanitarian Affairs and Human Rights; (4) Administration, Management, and Conference Services.

Questions of rank and appointment will be dealt with after the following outline of the proposed new consolidated Departments.

**DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL, SECURITY
AND PEACE AFFAIRS**

The maintenance of international peace and security is the primary task of the United Nations. The Secretary-General will clearly remain the chief peace-maker, negotiator and political representative of the United Nations. The first function of the Political, Security and Peace Affairs Department will be to support the Secretary-General in these functions.

► **Functions Brought Together**

To enhance the Secretary-General's discharge of these responsibilities the new Department should bring together roles and functions that have become scattered, or whose interrelationships have been inadequately perceived. Among these, the following deserve note:

The capacity of the Secretary-General to watch over political trends and anticipate potential threats to peace will be of great importance in the unstable conditions of the post-Cold War era. The work of the present Office for Research and Collection of Information should be integrated within the new Department.

Appropriate specialization in regional political and security issues, presently scattered at various points in the house, must also be consolidated. Responsibilities such as those in relation to apartheid, Afghanistan, Palestine and similar special mandates (e.g., Cambodia or Western Sahara) should also be housed within the new Department. It would thus absorb the relevant roles and resources of the Department of Political and Security Council Affairs and the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship.

Disarmament affairs, presently a separate department (DDA), should be an integral part of this new department, since disarmament and arms control are vital elements in any work for a future system of international peace and security.

► **Main Functions**

The main functions of the new Department would accordingly be:

- Security watch, information gathering and analysis;
- Peace-making (i.e., good offices, conciliation, mediation, special missions, etc.);
- Peace-keeping (planning, establishing, maintaining and directing peace-keeping operations in the field);
- Disarmament, arms control and regional security (including liaison with regional organizations and arrangements);
- Substantive functions relating to the General Assembly and Security Council, including the Military Staff Committee.

Each of these functions would be carried out by an office presided over by an Under or Assistant Secretary-General. Their work would be coordinated by the Department head.

These activities are in a transitional phase, due to the relaxation of Cold War tensions and other developments. There has been a marked increase in demands upon the Secretary-General and the Secretariat in this field; for example, four new peace-keeping operations of different kinds were launched by the United Nations in 1988-1989 alone,⁹ as against thirteen over the previous forty years. Mediation, good offices and the assistance of the UN on various problems, including the supervision of national elections, are being sought as never before. We therefore set out below, in some detail, the main objectives of the new Department.

⁹ UNIIMOG (UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group); UNAVEM (UN Angola Verification Mission); UNTAG (UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia); ONUCA (UN Observer Group in Central America).

► **Objectives**

- ▶ Keeping the Secretary-General and, through the Secretary-General, the Security Council informed of developments relating to international peace and security and alerting the Council to possible conflicts or emergencies;
- ▶ Developing recommendations for early initiative by the Secretary-General in use of good offices to resolve emergent or re-emergent disputes;
- ▶ Contingency planning for possible emergencies;
- ▶ Preparing for the peace-making tasks of the Secretary-General, the S-G's representatives, or the Security Council, and providing information, advice and staff as required;
- ▶ Linking the task of peace-making to the task of peace-keeping through a regular review of existing peace-keeping operations and peace-making efforts;
- ▶ Initiating operational planning for future missions in good time and with the full support of all relevant parts of the Secretariat;
- ▶ Maintaining full support of peace-keeping missions when they reach the operational stage;
- ▶ Maintaining constant contact with contributors and potential contributors of troops, as well as contributors of other essential personnel and support, concerning readiness and availability, training and, as necessary, planning for actual operations;
- ▶ Studying and preparing for new types of operations such as supervision of elections, protection of humanitarian operations, etc.;
- ▶ Providing staff and support for the substantive work of the Security Council and Military Staff Committee both on planning for a more effective framework of collective security and on actual demands for collective action such as sanctions, embargoes and other enforcement measures;
- ▶ Linking the work of the Secretary-General and the Security Council on current developments in disarmament, arms control and regional security—i.e., connecting work on peace-making and peace-keeping to efforts to create the conditions in which peace and stability can be better maintained, with appropriate involvement of other organs of the system.

**DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL,
DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AFFAIRS**

The responsibilities of the Secretary-General in the fields of economic and social cooperation, development, and environment will certainly increase in the years to come. There is already an increased awareness of the close interrelationship between these fields themselves, and their significance as indispensable elements of international and human security. The need for global watch systems, and for the Secretary-General to present strategic options to the international community, has been stressed in numerous studies.

The Secretary-General has so far been hampered in taking a lead in this very large and complex area by, among other things, the lack of coherence in the Secretariat and among UN operational organizations, and by inadequate attention to selecting the best possible staff in this field. Intergovernmental mandates, such as those in General Assembly resolution 32/197 calling for a more multidisciplinary approach, and for improved coordination, have not been effectively fulfilled.

The present nature of the UN system of organizations poses many problems which are beyond the scope of this paper. Other problems arise from the fact that reforms of intergovernmental economic and social machinery are long overdue. Geographic diffusion also complicates the situation. UN offices in these fields are spread between New York, Geneva, Nairobi, Rome and Vienna, and Addis Ababa, Baghdad, Bangkok and Santiago.

Nonetheless, substantial improvements can be achieved within the Secretariat and between it and UN operational programmes. Such reforms would make possible a higher quality of service to intergovernmental bodies. They would also greatly improve the Secretariat's capacity for effective leadership of a reformed UN system—and that system's acceptance of such leadership.

► **Functions Brought Together**

In these wide yet interconnected areas of work, there is need for a double consolidation—of various functional organisms because their work is so closely related; and of the whole range of activities under the direction and coordination of a single Deputy.

This new Department would, in its title and in its work, provide greater United Nations leadership on environmental questions.

The new arrangement would bring together, in a logical pattern, the work and resources of the present Office of the Director-General for Development and International Co-operation (ODG-DIEC) and the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs. The integration of these two units alone would be a long-overdue implementation of the restructuring actually proposed in 1975 when the establishment of ODG-DIEC was recommended. The 'strengthening of the Office of the Director-General', a recurring call from governments, cannot be properly achieved while—as the present organization chart shows—it is at once supposedly the highest unit under the Secretary-General yet bereft of line authority over any of the economic and social units in the Secretariat.

The new Department should also direct and draw more effectively on the contributions of a number of other units in the economic and social field. These include UN Drug-Related Activities (now in Vienna), and appropriate elements of the present Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.¹⁰ The economic and ecological work of the Division for Outer Space Affairs, presently in DPSCA, belongs in the new Department.

The Office would also house the Centre on Transnational Corporations and, subject to its further review, the Centre for Science and Technology for Development.¹¹ The Department of Technical Co-operation for Development has been part of the

¹⁰ This Centre's functions and resources were relocated from New York for no better reason than to fill empty space in the new Vienna International Centre. It has virtually disappeared off the map as far as the Secretariat in New York is concerned. Its functions concerning social development, crime, youth, women, the aging and the disabled should be carefully reviewed and better located where each can make most impact and receive best support.

¹¹ There have been recurring suggestions that the functions of the CSTD ought better be redistributed into DIESA and UNDP, cf. Recommendation 25 of the 'Group of 18' but also A/45/226, paras. 113-115.

Secretariat virtually from its outset. It carries out very valuable work but, as has often been recommended, this work should be reassigned within UNDP and UNFPA. Serious consideration should be given to absorbing the work of the Nairobi-based Centre for Human Settlements in the new Department, with its technical assistance functions being relocated in UNDP.¹²

► ***UN Programmes and Regional Commissions***

The above consolidation would be seriously incomplete unless measures are also taken to make closer connections between the Secretariat and other senior officials and units also under the S-G's responsibility in the economic, social, development and environment field. Their geographic separation is no excuse, only a difficulty to be overcome.

Environmental problems are now clearly understood to have enormous implications for the future, but they also have complex linkages with economic, social and development problems. The present organization does not allow for the strategic and coherent leadership that is increasingly expected from the Secretary-General in environmental matters. Although on the current organizational diagram the head of the UN Environment Programme reports to the Secretary-General, UNEP is a separately constituted fund and programme located in Nairobi, and with its own Governing Council. For UNEP's work properly to support more dynamic environment initiatives by the Secretary-General, the head of UNEP should have a small but high-calibre office in the Office of the Director-General (absorbing and strengthening the work of the presently separate UNEP New York Liaison office). As already noted, the Department's name should also convey the importance of environmental matters in the United Nations itself.

More substantial links are also needed with the work of the Geneva-based UN Conference on Trade and Development, by a similar arrangement to that for UNEP.

The heads of the five Regional Commissions (ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCWA,

ESCAP) at present also report directly to the Secretary-General. The work of the Commissions is, however, neglected, with inadequate attention both to staffing and to other needs; yet the regional dimension of international cooperation is of growing importance. Supporting and making more use of the work of the Commissions should be a significant responsibility of the new Department. Their New York Liaison office should also be fully integrated in and supported by it. The World Food Council (WFC) liaison office should be similarly relocated.

The separate status of the UN development funds and programmes may have advantages, but it has also made perennially difficult the Secretary-General's responsibility for assessing trends and formulating options for development and environment cooperation. The Secretary-General should establish a UN Development and Environment Board chaired by the Deputy (or the Director-General) for Economic, Social, Development and Environment Affairs and comprising the heads of funds, programmes, agencies and other participants according to agenda. It should be a serious body, not producing routine documents but assessing the Department's global watch reports, advising on its research, analytical and projection work, and making periodic multidisciplinary reviews of major fields like Population, Environment, or Women.

► **Objectives**

The foregoing reorganization of work in this field of activity, which accounts for a very large proportion of the personnel and budget of the United Nations, together with improved attention to staffing, would be an important step towards the following key objectives:

- Assist the Secretary-General in providing effective leadership to, and coordination of, the various components of the UN system involved in economic, social, development and environment affairs;
- Operate high-quality global watch and early-warning systems designed to provide timely and effective advice to intergovernmental organs on major trends in these spheres requiring their action;
- Enhance the work of the United Nations in the development of longer-term global policies for economic, social, development and environment cooperation;

- ▶ Improve the substantive services of the Secretariat to all intergovernmental organs dealing with these fields;
- ▶ Strengthen the Secretariat's capacity for in-depth analysis and formulation of options for the above, based upon more cohesive and better directed use of research capacities, and effective links between research and operational experience;
- ▶ Ensure that United Nations work in global standard-setting in these fields is of highest quality, with consistent follow-up;
- ▶ Improve the standing of the United Nations with outside international research and analytical institutions in these fields, and develop better mutual collaboration.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Two other major areas of increasing international concern—human rights, and humanitarian matters involving migration, refugees and disasters—deserve an appropriate place in any reorganization at this time, and have sufficient in common to merit their being brought into a new Department headed by a third Deputy Secretary-General.

Human rights have been a central focus of the United Nations since its inception, and particularly since the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration that set in motion so many further measures in declaratory international rights law, conventions and covenants. The momentum in this area of fundamental international standards and cooperation is steadily increasing. While taking due care to preserve the degree of separateness that is important for the work of the Centre for Human Rights, its position could be better recognized and strengthened by its place in a new organizational scheme.

The increasing tides of human migration and of political or economic refugees and displaced persons will pose serious humanitarian challenges to the United Nations and its member states in the years ahead. There is a substantial connection between these phenomena and human rights, not only in the broadest sense that such movements place the rights of the human beings involved in jeopardy, but in numerous specific provisions of the UN International Bill of Rights relating to them.¹³

There is, in any case, an urgent need to consolidate and reorganize the functions in

the United Nations dealing with human emergencies and disasters. These have been far too often the subject of diffused, delayed, and *ad hoc* responses. There has been, justifiably, recurring criticism of the overall lack of coherent leadership and speedy response of the UN system to successive humanitarian emergencies.

The proposed new Department, under its Deputy Secretary-General, should be located at Geneva, where a substantial number of the relevant units are already located. The Department should comprise: (1) Office for Human Rights, headed by a full-time Under Secretary-General for Human Rights, and containing the present Centre for Human Rights, together with such other services presently located elsewhere that may more appropriately belong in it;¹⁴ (2) Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, headed as at present by an Under Secretary-General; (3) Machinery and staff to deal with migration, and disasters.

We believe that it is time to organize boldly and effectively for the interrelationships that are self-evident in this increasingly important field; to cease to rely upon vague promises of 'better coordination'; and to build upon installed competence and experience. Therefore:

Consolidated resources in the field of humanitarian, refugee, displaced persons, and emergency affairs should be built around the present office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The identity of UNHCR (for legal protection, fund-raising, etc.) should, and can, be fully preserved in this new set-up. The HCR mandates should be adjusted in respect of categories of refugees and displaced persons.

The new Department should incorporate the Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO), which should be reorganized and restaffed as necessary as the UN's first-stage disaster-response instrument. It should be able to deploy the appropriate initial team to the site of any disaster in 24-36 hours. 'Disaster' should be redefined to encompass not

¹³ Articles in the Universal Declaration and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights concerning such matters as freedom of domicile, protection from deportation, rights of asylum, rights of return, etc.

¹⁴ The Centre for Human Rights is presently directed by the Under Secretary-General who is also Director-General of the United Nations at Geneva. The two responsibilities should be separated, so that the USG for Human Rights is a full-time responsibility.

only sudden natural phenomena but also major humanitarian emergencies like sudden cross-border waves of refugees. The unit must be geared to respond rapidly and effectively to these as well.

Where not covered by the work of UNHCR and UNDRO staff, the new Department should support the foregoing functions with analyses of trends towards, and early warning on, large-scale migrations or displacements. It should be equipped to monitor and provide advice to the Secretary-General on improvements in the work of all elements of the UN system involved in the shelter, feeding, rehabilitation and self-reliance of refugees and displaced persons. These emergency-responsive organizations should have small but effective liaison units in the new Department (i.e., UNDP, UNICEF, UNRWA and WFP), with efficient communication systems to Headquarters and field stations.

The Secretary-General should establish a high-calibre United Nations Board for Humanitarian, Migration and Disaster Affairs. It should be chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and should comprise (according to agenda) all involved agencies of the UN system, specialist migration agencies, ICRC, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, and other non-governmental voluntary agencies. The Board's first and most urgent task should be to develop for the Secretary-General clear instructions to the UN system on command and control in emergencies, and a common international code of conduct for disasters. The Board should also address the need for revisions in mandates and other legal provisions concerning human displacements. It should meet regularly to review trends, and as a matter of urgency to address early warnings of actual emergencies.

**DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION, MANAGEMENT
AND CONFERENCE SERVICES**

The fourth Deputy Secretary-General should head a department comprising: (1) the present Department of Administration and Management (DAM) which contains the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Finance, the Office of Human Resources Management and the Office of General Services; (2) the present Department of Conference Services (DCS).

The new Department would thus bring under one deputy for the Secretary-General all of the administrative, management, budget and finance, personnel, security, buildings, management information and communications services, as well as support services for conferences and meetings.

Substantial improvements have been made in the organization and work of both DAM and DCS since the 'Group of 18' made its recommendations. We therefore limit elaboration on this proposal to one or two matters.

► **Programme Planning, Budget and Finance**

In an earlier rationalization the work of assembling and coordinating projections for programme and budget has been consolidated in DAM (OPPBF). Interdepartmental review of this planning is carried out by the Programme Planning and Budget Board which is presently chaired by the Director-General on behalf of the Secretary-General. As Chief Administrative Officer of the organization the S-G needs to exert firm leadership and decision-making between inevitably competing demands on budget.

In the new set-up the Secretary-General might designate the senior Deputy as chair of the review Board, with the USG of the Executive Office as vice-chair. Programme planning and budget processes would be substantially improved through the closer teamwork of the four Deputies with the Executive Office.

► ***Servicing of Intergovernmental Deliberations***

A great deal of attention has also been paid by governments to improving substantive services to the General Assembly and other intergovernmental bodies. Duplication has also been reduced between these and the interpretation, meetings-arrangement, translation, editorial and printing services provided by DCS (which have also been improved).¹⁵ The proposed reorganization would not in any way reverse these improvements, but in fact build on them.

Substantive services to the General Assembly and other bodies dealing with political, security and peace affairs (now in OPGAASS) would be coordinated in that new Department. Those dealing with economic, social, development and environment affairs would be brought together in the new Department responsible for those matters (at present they are diffused among OPGAASS, OGDG-DIEC and DIESA). The necessary equivalent services would be located in the Department of Humanitarian and Human Rights Affairs. Technical services for the Fifth Committee, ACABQ, etc., would be in the fourth new Department, from within which, as well, the Office of Conference Services (present DCS) would continue to perform its distinct functions for all intergovernmental bodies.

► ***Modernizing Deliberations***

Work is under way to use new technologies (e.g., digital disk) to make delegation work easier. Increased efficiency of committee and informal negotiation work could now also be economically achieved by the use of PCs in committee rooms, with software packages of quickly retrievable precedential documents and decisions, immediate on-screen presentation of draft resolutions and proposed amendments, and on-site print-outs.

¹⁵ See i.a. Recommendation 19 of the 'Group of 18'; A/C.5/43/1/Add.3 of 28 April 1988, and A/45/226 of 27 April 1990, paras. 92 and 124-129.

OTHER REORGANIZATION QUESTIONS

► *Institutes*

As is often the case at the national level, the autonomy of various research institutes under UN auspices has resulted in their being virtually forgotten by Secretariat units that ought to be among their prime users and supporters. The main resulting damage is in important but traditionally neglected fields like women, social development, social defence, etc. The Deputies and their Office heads should involve these institutes fully in relevant meetings of the proposed new Boards.

The future of the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) is now under General Assembly review. If that review is negative, the long urged establishment of a common UN Staff College network could accommodate UNITAR training work, and some of its fellowship functions. The remainder of UNITAR work could probably be absorbed among other UN entities.

Beyond the UN system, the respective Deputy Secretaries-General should be charged to strengthen the UN's interaction with outside research, and with the international non-governmental community.

► *UN Country-level Representation*

There are at present many separately constituted offices representing different parts of the UN system in developing countries. There is, unfortunately, a long tradition of lack of genuine coordination by Resident Representatives, as well as difficulties between them and Directors of UN Information Centres. The Secretary-General needs clear support by member governments, followed up in all relevant intergovernmental bodies, for forthright measures to overcome this disarray. The evident remedy is the consolidation of all UN offices in each country in a single mission under the authority of a representative appointed by the Secretary-General, who could draw, if necessary, on personnel of specialized agencies or programmes for this post.

RANK AND APPOINTMENT OF THE DEPUTIES

► Rank of Deputies

This reorganization would create, for the first time, Deputy Secretaries-General of the United Nations (Deputy Directors-General have long existed in Specialized Agencies).¹⁶ The question of their rank must be squarely faced. The following is our analysis:

The Offices situated within the four proposed new Departments now entail considerable responsibilities. These warrant such Offices being headed—under the Deputy—by Under Secretaries-General (in one instance possibly a Director-General). A reduction in the total number of USGs would, however, be achieved in this reorganization.

The four Deputies must carry considerable authority on behalf of the Secretary-General vis-à-vis the intergovernmental community. Their level will also be very important in achieving greater cohesion within the UN system, in which Directors-General of Specialized Agencies are sometimes prone to claim their superior status because they are elected.

For these combined reasons we recommend the consideration of a new rank for the Deputies. It should be between that of Secretary-General and the system-wide rank of Director-General. Clear consensus on this will avert the usual play of UN-system sensitivities and rank-games.

► The Designated Senior Deputy

We do not see need for a special rank for the designated senior Deputy. The senior-Deputy function would be the announced personal designation of the Secretary-General for specified purposes, principally to act as alternate during the Secretary-General's

¹⁶ For a brief résumé of the original discussion about Deputies, see Urquhart and Childers, *A World in Need of Leadership: Tomorrow's United Nations* (Uppsala, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, 1990), *Development Dialogue*, 1990:1-2, pp. 81-83.

absence or indisposition. In selecting the four Deputies the Secretary-General would bear in mind this function as an additional role for one of them. It would seem likely that either the Political-Security or the Economic-Social Deputy would be so designated.

► ***Appointment of Deputies***

The appointment of the four Deputies should be the clear prerogative of the Secretary-General under Article 97 of the Charter.

The practice has developed of the confirmation by the General Assembly of the appointment by the S-G of some heads of UN organizations. This practice has lost all logic along the way.¹⁷ Such confirmations by the General Assembly should be reviewed within a wider reform of the UN system. Meanwhile, however, for reasons given above, it would seem desirable that the Secretary-General's appointment of the four Deputies be confirmed by the General Assembly.

► ***Job Descriptions***

Clear job descriptions for these four posts, with the qualifications required, should be incorporated in the decisions establishing them, and publicly gazetted in advance of the first appointments. This will greatly assist the Secretary-General in resisting pressures for and recommendations of candidates manifestly not qualified. It will also provide clarity as to the Deputies' lines of responsibility and authority under the Secretary-General.

¹⁷ For example, the DG-DIEC, a rank above USG, is not confirmed by the General Assembly; the UNDP Administrator having the same rank is; and a number of USGs heading UN entities are also confirmed by the GA.

OTHER SENIOR RANKS AND APPOINTMENTS

In the chart outlining the reorganization we indicate units to be headed by USGs and by ASGs. A number of points arise.

► **Director-General (DG-DIEC)**

Existing legislation (resolution (32/197) explicitly mandates the post at Director-General level for Development and International Economic Cooperation. This office (ODG-DIEC) would become part of the new Department for Economic, Social, Development and Environment Affairs.

The original rationale for this post at a rank above USG was to achieve effective coordination in the UN Secretariat and the UN system. On the face of it, since the functions would be within a Department headed by a Deputy Secretary-General, the need for this above-USG post would be reduced. This would apply, however, only if the Deputy can devote sufficient time personally to the special responsibilities currently vested in the ODG-DIEC in relation to the UN development programmes on one hand, and the wider UN development system on the other. This may not be possible if the Deputy is to meet the major responsibility of assisting the Secretary-General in the overall leadership on economic, social and environmental issues in the international community.

► **Appointments and Job Descriptions**

USGs and ASGs are, of course, appointed by the Secretary-General. As already noted, the present practice of a few USGs being confirmed by the General Assembly will need attention at some stage in the total reform process ahead.

The Secretary-General should publicly gazette job descriptions for all USG and ASG posts, without exception, for the same reasons noted about the new DSG posts. There should also be a firm commitment to achieve immediate and substantial progress towards real gender balance.

Guidelines should be promulgated with the general rule that service at these levels would not exceed ten years and not go beyond the age of 65. The posts should remain open to UN staff, but staff permanency would end with appointment at these levels.

THE RESULTANT 'PYRAMID'

At the beginning of this study we have provided a chart illustrating the reorganization that would result from the foregoing proposals.

A reorganization that creates a total of five top posts and reduces the number of Under Secretary-General posts changes the shape of the 'pyramid' of the Secretariat at the senior level and is likely to create some sensitivities. We seek to address this question at least in summary terms, hereunder.

The following table provides the numbers of ASG-and-above posts in the present organizational chart, and the number of such posts that would result from the proposed reorganization within the Secretariat as so defined. It should be noted that the Organization Manual chart reproduced in this paper covers only those UN funds and programmes part of whose budget is financed from the UN Regular Budget. It does not, therefore, include other, entirely extra-budgetarily financed entities like UNDP, UNFPA, and UNICEF. We have followed the same definition of the Secretariat; neither column in the table deals with posts of those organizations.

Table 1 Changes in ASG-and-above posts

Level	Existing structure	Proposed reorganization
Secretary-General	1	1
Deputy Secretary-General	-	4
Director-General	1	1 ¹⁸
Under Secretary-General	27	17 ¹⁹
Assistant Secretary-General	21	22 ²⁰
Total	50	45

¹⁸ Retaining the post of Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation, but subject to the question discussed on the opposite page.

¹⁹ In addition to a number of reductions in USG posts through consolidation within the Secretariat proper, this reduction also assumes the transfer of DTDC into UNDP and UNFPA, and redistribution of functions of UNCHS.

²⁰ Includes ASG posts to administer the UN Offices at Geneva and Vienna in place of present USG posts. Assumes redistribution of functions of CSTD. Does not include any ASG post for Special Missions.

The reorganization would thus involve a substantial reduction of USG posts, largely through consolidations under the four Deputies. It should be borne in mind that many of the USG posts in both columns involve issues of reorganization and rank (including comparability in the total UN system) that are beyond the scope of these proposals. These include the heads of the Regional Commissions and the heads of UNCTAD, UNEP and UNRWA, accounting for eight of the seventeen USGs in the proposed reorganization.

We may have been somewhat conservative in estimating the number of Assistant Secretary-General posts that would be needed in such a reorganized structure.

In sum, the *total* number of ASG-and-above posts to be appointed in the 'pyramid' would not substantially change—from 50 at present to between 45 and 50 under the proposed reorganization. The chief effect would be the introduction of the four new-level posts of Deputy Secretary-General, and an increased (indeed restored) importance to be attached to Assistant Secretaries-General.

The issue of regional representation would have to be handled by the Secretary-General with considerable care, but it should be possible to accommodate all concerns if some new ground rules were to command general agreement. We note what these might be, merely to provide a basis for discussion.

- ▶ Reaffirmation of the General Assembly proscription of national monopolies on senior posts, and a general rule that no nationality should succeed the same nationality in the same post.
- ▶ Acceptance in good faith that no candidate for Secretary-General will be pressed by any member state for a commitment on any senior-level appointment. As a corollary it follows that the Secretary-General will have full sensitivity to the concerns of all member states and regional groups.
- ▶ Support for the Secretary-General in not filling any senior post until a really suitable and outstanding candidate has been found.
- ▶ Acceptance by permanent members of the Security Council and by major financial contributors that, especially given the legitimate demands of other countries, it will probably be impossible (under any structure) to maintain a full reflection of their special status in terms of senior jobs.
- ▶ A general understanding that no more than two of the new DSG posts should be held at any one time by nationals of countries in either of the above categories.
- ▶ A similar understanding that while no USG post will have any automatic nationality or

regional attribute (except those heading the Regional Commissions), in appointing USGs the Secretary-General will take due cognizance of how the four DSG posts are being filled, of the relative political importance of given USG posts, and of the need for adequate geographical representation.

- ▶ This means that the new Secretary-General must be free to retire or make other temporary use of present incumbents, without pressure to the contrary.
- ▶ Recognition that observance of the foregoing ground rules should make it both easier and more practicable for the Secretary-General to appoint ASGs according to both criteria in Article 101.3.²¹

²¹ Article 101.3 of the Charter states: 'The paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible'.

CONCLUSION

The reorganization should be used as the occasion to make a marked improvement in the search for and selection of all senior officials.

The most important factor here is better understanding among member governments that, when asked, they have a responsibility to suggest, as candidates for senior posts, not merely the qualified but only the *very best qualified* among their citizens.

The search criteria for a new Secretary-General should include demonstrated ability in the choice of senior officials. It is also important that the Secretary-General is willing—with due regard to the unique status of the office—to delegate an important degree of responsibility to Deputies.

A mandate is needed that will cut through long-accumulated layers of vested interests and organizational traditions, and afford the new Secretary-General the means to shape a far more effective Secretariat. We have framed the foregoing outline suggestions in a spirit of hope and expectation for the future of the United Nations. The opportunities that exist now do not often arise. They must not be missed.

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FOREWORD

In the course of 1991 the need to improve the response of the UN system and the wider international community to disasters and other humanitarian emergencies became dramatically evident. There have been discussions in the Economic and Social Council, followed by more detailed consideration of these matters in the General Assembly's 46th session in the closing months of 1991.¹

The Secretary-General has provided the General Assembly with a major paper containing his own analysis and recommendations. Other pertinent UN system analyses have recently been issued. In the interest of brevity we have not, therefore, in this paper, repeated all basic facts, since they are well covered in UN documents and in many papers by other experienced agencies and individuals. Nor have we taken space fully to acknowledge the roles of all elements of the UN system, or the vital contributions of donor governments and the voluntary agencies.

The issue of international 'intervention' or 'access' across sovereign borders to aid and protect large groups of civilians suffering the consequences of violence or other emergencies has also arisen in dramatic form in recent months. While we recognize the fundamental importance of this question, this paper is concerned only with the organizational and administrative reforms needed to improve the quality and speed of international response to humanitarian emergencies.

In preparing this paper we have drawn, in consultations and from their writings, upon the views of people working in this field in the UN system, in governmental and voluntary agencies, as well as upon our own combined experience in emergencies both on the ground and at headquarters. We sincerely thank all those—too numerous to list—whom we have consulted. We have tried to present common-sense suggestions which take account both of the urgent need for improvement and the very real impediments to it. They are made entirely on our own responsibility.

¹ Editors: The General Assembly adopted a major resolution, which is reproduced following this paper (pp. 86-93).

THE CONTINUOUS HUMAN EMERGENCY

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF FUTURE HUMANITARIAN NEED

Major humanitarian emergencies are likely to become more frequent. The causes of such emergencies are increasingly complex. Modern technologies, far from reducing their impact, often actually contribute to the incidence of major emergencies.

There are four broad types of emergency: natural disasters, environment-related emergencies; the results of human conflicts and upheavals; and technological disasters (e.g., Bhopal and Chernobyl²). The following overview concentrates on the range of emergencies within the first three categories, which, however, are becoming less and less distinct as human activity creates more links between them.

► Natural Disasters

Natural disasters encompass, in the main, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, windstorms, floods, and land instabilities. They have always been with us. In 1228 over 100,000 people in the Netherlands were killed by an inundation; in 1558 some 850,000 perished in an earthquake in China. Modern global information systems provide an accurate, and sobering, picture of such disasters.

Red Cross data indicate that a significant natural disaster occurs in the world on average once a week. Every three weeks, on average, there is a disaster which exceeds the response capacities of the country afflicted.³

The impact of such disasters can be enormous. In public health terms alone, the

² Such disasters are fortunately more rare although often devastating when they do occur. The accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station exposed over 1.7 million people to high levels of radiation, forced abandonment of 370,000 hectares of land and the necessary gradual decontamination of another 1.3 million hectares of agricultural land.

³ Nordic UN Project, Report No. 14, *Responding to Emergencies*, p. 13, Stockholm 1990. This report is also published in printed form in *The United Nations: Issues and Options*. See note on The Nordic UN Project, p. 95.

1988 earthquake in Armenia destroyed 32 hospitals and 224 health centres. The mid-1991 floods in four Chinese provinces forced 7 million people to leave their homes and affected 80 per cent of the crop area. In 1990 the World Food Programme had to provide emergency food aid to 3.4 million people, at a cost of some \$34 million, in 12 countries afflicted by drought, floods, earthquakes, crop failures and cyclones.⁴ The World Bank has estimated current global losses from natural disasters alone at an average of 250,000 deaths, and at least \$4 billion in damage per year.⁵

► **Human Factors in Natural Disasters**

The classic distinction between natural and man-made disasters is being gradually blurred by contemporary developments. In many areas inappropriate development and commercial over-exploitation of natural resources have generated poverty and migration. With the present rate of population increase, every day there are also 250,000 more human beings needing land, food, fuel, shelter.⁶ The numbers of the absolute poor have increased from some 800 million in the 1970s to about 1.2 billion, and are projected to rise to 2 billion over the next decade. The poorest are increasingly compelled to subsist in marginal-resource areas, many of which are disaster prone.

Earthquakes or avalanches of various kinds (sometimes in sequence) may thus directly afflict far more human beings than in the past. In 1970 an entire Peruvian town of 15,000 was buried under a landslide triggered by an earthquake. The 1991 Philippine Mount Pinatubo volcanic eruption displaced over 150,000 people, and its continued effects, including giant mudslides, threaten tens of thousands more.

This new phenomenon is not limited to rural areas. It may affect cities in earthquake zones, swollen by the influx from rural areas. Large peri-urban shantytowns have arisen on already dangerously unstable (or quickly degraded) terrain, where thousands may be vulnerable to a landslide caused by one sudden rainstorm. A

⁴ World Food Programme, Food Aid Review 1991, Rome.

⁵ Cited in UN document A/46/266, para. 17.

⁶ UN Population Fund (UNFPA) for these and other population data.

disturbing number of hydroelectric and nuclear installations have been built in zones of varying degrees of natural disaster hazard, and not only in developing countries. Here the human factor links natural with technological disasters.

It is now well established that soil erosion caused by population pressure increases flood dangers from heavy rains. Much of the Himalayan watershed is now severely degraded. FAO estimates that by the year 2000 over 2 billion Asians will either be without wood fuel or will be consuming more fuel than can be replenished. Erosion is causing unprecedented silting of river and delta systems: the flood-prone area of India increased from 19 million to 60 million hectares between 1960 and 1984. Large-scale floods used to occur below the Himalayas only every 50 years; they now inundate an ever-increasing population every few years. For Bangladesh in particular these floods are interspersed by cyclones (55 in this century). The 1991 Bangladesh cyclone killed an estimated 140,000 and left at least 3 million homeless, with reconstruction costs of some \$2.4 billion.

Low-lying nations are now actively anticipating a rise in sea level through global warming caused by industrial and other human-originated emissions. Nearly a third of humanity lives within 60 kilometres of a coastline: experts have warned that a rise of only 25 cm. in sea level would displace tens of millions all over the world.

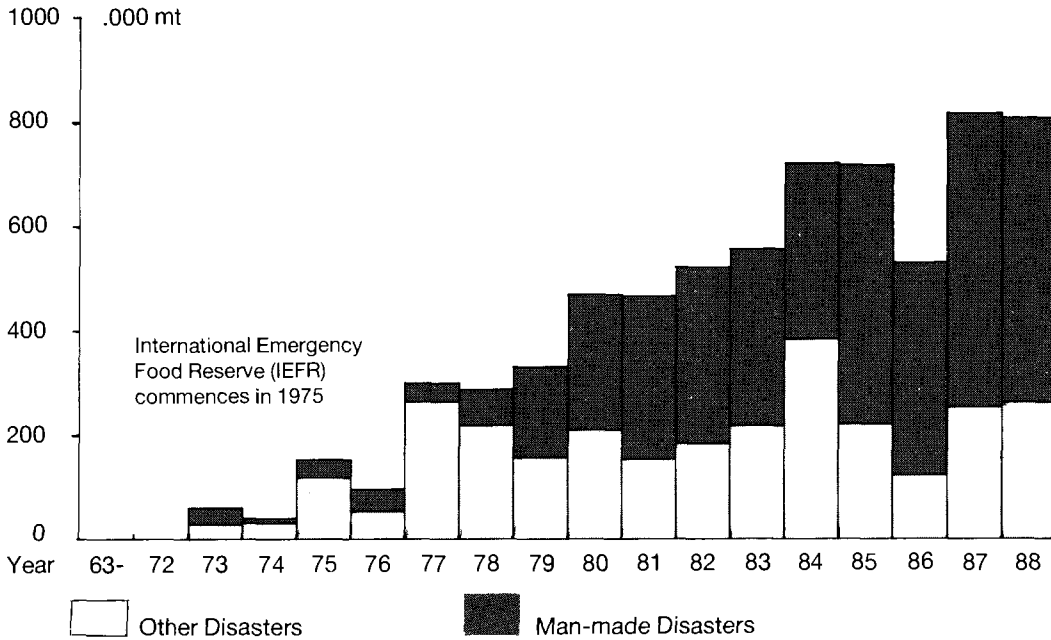
It seems clear from the above that our world is becoming increasingly vulnerable to disasters. The increase in man-made disasters is graphically illustrated by the World Food Programme chart of emergency expenditure on food aid on the opposite page.⁷

► **Resource Scarcities**

Large-scale humanitarian emergencies have always been accompanied by immediate scarcities of the essentials of life. There are now serious grounds for predicting that the scarcity of resources themselves will create more and more emergencies, especially through environmental exhaustion.

Every year more families in the Sahel can no longer find enough trees for fuel and

Figure 3 Emergency Expenditure in Tonnage 1963 to 1988



shelter. Thus they move on to another area, where their numbers ensure that its resources are in turn depleted. The cumulative uprooted populace then presses on into neighbouring countries which are quite unable to look after them without external help. Suddenly tens of thousands of people are destitute and starving.

Water in over-abundance has perennially caused huge human suffering. Yet perversely, on a planet where only 0.014 per cent of its water is readily available to human and other organisms, human consumption of water has increased over 400 per cent in only the last 40 years. Major aquifers are being depleted beyond the possibility of natural replenishment.⁸ Thus, large-scale human movements, and even conflict, may increasingly be triggered by the scarcity of water.

⁸ *Inter alia*, World Resources Institute State of the World 1990 (New York, Norton, 1990) pp. 39-58.

► *Famine*

The classic definition of famine is the mass starvation that occurs when a community's access to food collapses. The basic cause may be drought or interruption of food production during civil strife—sometimes both. Nature-caused famine is avoidable if there are adequate food reserves, transportable to and affordable by the afflicted, and if water, seeds and other necessities are available for the next planting season. These are all functions of development. Without sustainable, equitably distributed development the threat of famine will remain. In 1991, 30 million Africans were again on the brink of starvation.

Other questions qualify the optimism generated in some quarters by the 'Green Revolution'. In 1965 Secretary-General U Thant had to issue a global appeal for aid to some 100 million Indians faced with famine following a succession of droughts; today India's agriculture has built up such food reserves that it assists African countries in temporary need. Yet apparent triumphs of crop yields over increase in population (India's has doubled since the 1960s) must not lead to complacency.

'Miracle' high-yielding seeds are reaching their technological limits. They are also expensive in fertilizers and pesticides and often environmentally damaging, requiring large amounts of water that also salinizes or alkalizes the soil. Vast areas of land throughout the world are now water-eroded.⁹ Hundreds of millions of small, subsistence farmers have not acquired any crop technologies. They are growing in numbers, have less and less access to land, and their traditional seeds are threatened.

The possibility of massive food losses through plagues of insects resulting from climatic change, environmental degradation or chemically-induced mutations cannot be ruled out either. Even the locust, whose swarms can consume entire harvests overnight, can still generate major emergencies among poor people unable to import food for their ever larger communities.

World population is now likely to rise to 8.5 billion within 35 years, inevitably

⁹ Half of India's 143 million hectares; about a quarter of US irrigated land is salinized; FAO and UNFPA reports.

increasing the threat both to the adequacy of food distribution and to the integrity of the environment. It is by no means certain that the classic forms of mass famine are past history. It is very evident that war-generated famine is not.

► ***Human Upheaval and War***

Large-scale violence has always spawned humanitarian emergencies. It seems unlikely that the volume of emergencies generated by civil strife and military violence will decrease in the near future even if the risk of global armageddon may have been reduced. Long frozen ethnic tensions, unresolved boundary and natural resource disputes, and new challenges to the central authority of nation states all contribute to the world's contemporary level of conflict.

Here again there are new aggravating factors. Modern weapons technology has to some extent blurred distinctions between 'conventional' and mass-destruction armaments. The entire civil infrastructure of a country can be rapidly destroyed and large-scale malnutrition and disease set in motion by the 'surgical' use of conventional weapons. With the modern weaponry accessible even to a low-income country, civil war can quickly devastate its fragile infrastructure, while population increase and density usually means that more people are killed, maimed or displaced than in previous conflicts.

► ***Migrations***

Large-scale movements of people away from degraded environments and conflict areas now rival static classical famines in the scale of humanitarian emergencies. Many recent migrations, especially in Africa, have ostensibly originated in periods of extreme drought, but the basic causes can no longer be defined as purely 'natural'. Human over-use of vegetation can at least exacerbate regional drought cycles. Global climatic changes caused by human activities are under intensive study. Population increase, soil and cover degradation, depletion of water resources, and civil conflict are more and more likely to generate large migrations of poor people. Bereft of even the minimal succour of

home and community, they will make larger demands on international humanitarian assistance. Once these uprootings have occurred it can take years to reverse them and end the suffering. In 1990 WFP was providing food aid for some 6.6 million longstanding refugees and displaced persons in 18 countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America at a cost of over \$320 million.¹⁰

In addition, population growth, poverty and greater access to information now propel large numbers of migrant workers to far distant alluring centres of prosperity. If one of these places becomes a centre of conflict, as happened in Kuwait, the displacement can be in millions overnight, with huge human suffering, as well as severe repercussions in home countries grown dependent on the migrants' remittances. The migrant worker exodus in the Gulf crisis included 500,000 Egyptians, over 800,000 Yemenis, 100,000 Bangladeshi (who had been remitting \$100 million p.a.), 200,000 Indians (remitting 15 per cent of the Kerala State economy), and 100,000 Sri Lankans (\$100 million p.a.).¹¹

Large-scale migration towards areas of greater prosperity is a major phenomenon of our times. The trend is especially strong from the South to the North, but recent reports suggest a similar tendency from East to West. If the great economic disparities between groups of nations and inadequate international economic management persist, such migration will cease to be orderly. Millions of people who cannot be sustained in their own countries will be poised to move towards centres of wealth. Above all, until North-South economic disparities are adequately addressed, uncontrolled mass surges towards the comparatively prosperous and luxurious sectors of the planet must be added to the list of potential major humanitarian emergencies.

► **Human Displacement**

The level of human displacement is already a global emergency. In 1951, when UNHCR was established, there were some 1.5 million refugees; by 1980 there were 8.2 million; in 1991 there were some 17 million. To these numbers must be added an estimated 24

¹⁰ World Food Programme, *ibid.*

¹¹ *Inter alia*, Overseas Development Institute Briefing Paper, March 1991, London.

million displaced people who do not currently fall under the Refugee category. The total figure is undoubtedly far higher, especially through displacement within countries, often itself only a transition to cross-border flight. Mass human exodus has been an increasing concern of the General Assembly ever since 1980.¹² Current trends have fully warranted this concern.

Poverty, landlessness, and civil strife over a decade have uprooted one in every five Salvadoreans (over 1 million). Civil conflict in Liberia uprooted 1.2 million, more than half its entire population; one-third fled into neighbouring countries. An estimated 2 million southern Sudanese had fled their homes in 1988 due to civil war, 200,000 of them into Ethiopia, itself the source of tens of thousands of people in flight. Destabilization attacks in Mozambique uprooted 2 million citizens within the country or fleeing across borders; half the entire population became dependent on external food aid. Pakistan is currently host to some 3.6 million of the total of over 5 million refugees from the conflict in Afghanistan. Over a decade Thailand had to give temporary asylum to some 700,000 Indo-Chinese refugees. Maintenance of some 350,000 Cambodians still in UN camps along the Thai-Cambodia border costs over \$55 million a year.

The current global aggregate of 41 million uprooted exceeds the whole population of Spain or Zaire. It represents one in every 135 human beings on earth, most of them children and women. The number can increase significantly within days. In the world of the 1990s a single conflict may cause a million or more people suddenly to flee in one direction, while another million are migrating. At the very same time hundreds of thousands more may be stricken in another region by a new natural or human disaster.

On the eve of a new millennium that undoubtedly holds great promise, the world is also in a state of continuous large-scale humanitarian emergency and is all too likely to remain so.

¹² *Inter alia*, Resolutions 35/196, 36/148, 37/121, 37/186, 38/103, 41/70, 42/144, 43/154 and 44/164.

OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROBLEM

The community which responds to disasters and emergencies comprises: the country or countries afflicted; the United Nations system; other intergovernmental bodies (e.g., the International Organization for Migration, IOM); donor governments across the world; the unique International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement; national and internationally affiliated voluntary organizations; and the print and electronic media.

In analysing possible improvements to the capacity of this national and international community to respond to emergencies, some of the major impediments should be noted at the outset.

Emergencies are by their nature not easily manageable. They are inherently 'inefficient', but normal bureaucratic practice compounds this characteristic, often disastrously. To improve emergency response inherent inefficiency must be reduced to a minimum. This has not yet happened.

Rapidity of response can be ineffective and even counterproductive if it is not based on the most accurate possible information on needs. The immediate availability of people competent to assess these needs must be improved. Efficient international 'situation report' systems, providing donors with consistent data on use of contributions and further needs, must also be a high priority.

Thirdly, compassion and courage in emergencies is not enough; trained, experienced people are indispensable. Emergency units are small, and are seldom, if ever, adequate for the emergency itself; they allow no margins for mediocre performance. Officials who are inappropriate for emergency posts should be removed. Back-up personnel rosters for emergencies must be improved.

Human beings do not necessarily behave as saints even in humanitarian emergencies. Resistance to 'being coordinated', media publicity contests, and backbiting do occur in the humanitarian community, both intergovernmental and private. Outstanding leadership can reduce this paradoxical behaviour. Leadership posts must be filled only by outstanding people.

One reason for less than saintly behaviour is the competitiveness of the emergency

community. Voluntary agencies by definition compete with each other for funds from the same citizenry and governments. Official relief agencies compete with development agencies for funds. And over the years governments have built competitiveness into the patchwork of UN response mechanisms they have created: compelling each UN agency also to divert staff time from the emergency itself to compete for funds.

Thus, the UN system does not, at present, contain one single emergency response agency. Apart from UNHCR and UNDRP, international emergency functions have been acquired by agencies like UNDP, FAO and WHO that have other, taxing mandates, and have been extended for UNICEF which began as an emergency fund. There are some cogent reasons for specialized treatment of emergencies, but the machinery that exists is less the product of logic than of historical accumulation.

Finally, there has often been uncertainty in the international response to emergencies. Political attitudes towards governments, intercultural factors, and the shifting attentions of the media have sometimes been disastrously influential in shaping the international reaction to massive suffering that in grim reality knows neither nationality nor politics. Far too often, thousands who are starving and uprooted in one part of the world receive the bare minimum of relief and succour, while aid pours forth for those who are suffering at a focus of international power politics and of international media attention.

The international community must equip itself better to meet the major humanitarian crises that all too certainly lie ahead. Reforms must tackle the drawbacks and maximize the benefits of UN 'polycentrism' and donor voluntarism in mass human crisis wherever it occurs. The response must be more assured and more equitable. There must be sufficient pre-crisis planning and organization to avoid the necessity of starting almost from scratch in each new emergency. In the UN system it is time that the years of 'band aid' temporary reforms come to an end. In the words of the United Kingdom representative at ECOSOC in 1991, the challenge is to 'get it right this time'.

A CONTINUUM OF IMPROVEMENTS

It is vital to begin the search for improvements at the right point, which is *before* an emergency has occurred. Morocco's representative pointed out at ECOSOC in 1991 that there are 'endogenous causes that bear the name of suppression of fundamental freedoms, crippling of associative life, mismanagement of public resources and ill-organized disaster preparedness, (and) also exogenous causes in the inconsistencies of a trading, financial and monetary system which, because of its disfunctions, makes a direct contribution to the devastation of the environment... the worsening of food insecurity, and the endemic spread of absolute poverty.'¹³

Improvements thus need to be sought all the way across a spectrum from development, through prevention and mitigation, to response and rehabilitation.

PREVENTION AND MITIGATION

Measures that can be taken in advance of emergencies will not be a guarantee against such disasters. But they may prevent some, and can unquestionably lessen the impact of those that do occur.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Containing the impact of natural disasters is directly related to sound economic, social and environmental development. Many man-made emergencies could be prevented altogether by sustained development. The essentials are:

- ▶ civil stability, a benign external environment, democratic government and *minimal* arms expenditure;
- ▶ adequate infrastructure and social services;
- ▶ appropriate population (fertility and migration) policy;
- ▶ food production, storage, and ability to purchase food;
- ▶ forest, water and soil conservation, renewable energy resources and spatially planned development;
- ▶ a stable and equitable external trading and financial environment to foster and sustain all of the above.

Neglect of these essentials virtually guarantees that if a developing country is hit by a disaster it will enter a vortex that will take it to the brink. There will be unnecessarily protracted human suffering and costs, and recovery will be commensurately slow. In turn, pessimistic reporting in donor countries of the resultant abysmal conditions will prompt 'development aid fatigue'. This may help generate another cycle of even larger humanitarian emergencies.

For both moral and entirely practical reasons the dialogue about more equitable and stable international economic and financial relationships must be resumed and vigorously pursued. Its continued shelving is all too likely to lead to levels of unrest and upheaval that will not only be a constant reproach to humanity but may in many cases jeopardize international peace and security. In such circumstances developing countries will become increasingly vulnerable to emergencies and disasters.

REDUCTION AND MITIGATION OF DISASTER IMPACT

Developing countries have the greatest need for technical assistance to reduce and mitigate the effect of emergencies. Hitherto, however, insufficient attention has been given to helping build up national capacity, both official and NGO, to deal with emergencies. Thus, when an emergency strikes, international agencies pour in people to deal with it, and in the end the country is often left no better prepared for the next crisis.

Specific measures to reduce the effect of natural disasters include defensive structural engineering (roads, bridges, buildings, and energy, water, fuel and communications systems); proper land stabilization and protection; and prudent location planning of human settlements and installations. Numerous other measures can be taken to increase the preparedness of a country, including arrangements for disaster command and control, trained disaster teams, citizens' relief organizations, and stockpiling of supplies and equipment.

UNDRO has done productive initial work, together with the Secretariat for the new International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), in collaboration with UNDP, other UN agencies, and the international scientific community. The IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee held its first meeting in March 1991. It estimated that if Decade targets are achieved there could be a 50 per cent or higher reduction in loss of life, and reduction in financial losses from 10 to 40 per cent depending on the nature of the emergency. As of mid-1991 national focal points for IDNDR efforts had been designated in 84 countries.¹⁴

Governments themselves can take similar measures to mitigate the effect of humanitarian emergencies. Again, there must be pre-advised command and control organization, 'disaster profile' data banks, trained auxiliary and popular emergency services, and minimal pre-positioning of emergency supplies.

The new joint UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Training Programme is a

notable step forward. It will train 1,000 personnel of national governments and NGOs in fifty of the most disaster-prone countries and 500 staff of UN agencies, and 500 of donor governments and NGOs. However, pre-service teaching and training will also be required finally to overcome the notion among economists and planners that emergencies are 'charity matters' beyond their concern.

The best location within the UN system for assistance to governments on emergency reduction and mitigation also needs attention. At a time when the continuum between crisis prevention, rehabilitation, and development was little understood, these roles were assigned by the General Assembly to the new UN Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO).¹⁵ During long periods of uncertain performance and intra-mural contest about actual emergencies, UNDRO devoted considerable effort to this mandate,¹⁶ but with staff limitations this inevitably affects its capacity for immediate response.¹⁷ The operational work with developing countries on this technical assistance should be handled by UNDP.

The separation of the function of impact-reduction for natural disasters from that for other emergencies also needs review. The founding resolution for UNDRO clearly referred to 'natural disaster or other disaster situation',¹⁸ but the Office was for many years identified only with natural disasters, and officials in other agencies tended to balk at a wider definition of its mandate. The Decade referred to above is only for natural disaster reduction; yet the new UNDRO-UNDP Training Programme, although called 'Disaster Management', is for all types of emergencies including natural disasters. The confusion should be ended.

¹⁵ Resolution 2816 (XXVI), 1971.

¹⁶ For background analysis cf. inter alia Charles A Schmitz, *Disaster: The UN and International Relief Management* (New York, Council on Foreign Relations, 1987), esp. Chapter 2.

¹⁷ As of mid-1991 UNDRO was maintaining 'quality support' for some 25 mitigation projects serving a total of 77 countries; UNDRO draft paper intended for ECOSOC, E/1991/121.

¹⁸ Resolution 2816 (XXVI).

► ***Suggested Improvements***

- ▶ Emergency impact analysis should be included in development planning courses: the World Bank, UNDP, UNFPA and UNESCO should jointly promote this.
- ▶ The Decade (IDNDR) should receive sustained support, with adequate financing of its Secretariat. It is still early enough to widen its scope of work to cover reduction of the impact of *all* humanitarian emergencies.
- ▶ UNDRO and UNDP responsibilities should be realigned, with UNDRO retaining promotion of technological R&D and the synthesis of experience in emergencies, but UNDP implementing all technical assistance to build national capacities.
- ▶ The CPC¹⁹ should carry out a thorough assessment of whether there is any duplication of research and other emergency study between entities of the UN system, so that scarce resources are optimized.
- ▶ UN and agency governing bodies should fully address 'grey areas' and clearly define responsibilities for assisting countries to build reduction and mitigation capacities. The proper lines of responsibility should form a part of one comprehensive assignment of responsibilities in humanitarian emergencies.

IMPROVING THE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES

► *The Vital Early Stages*

The gravest threat to human lives usually occurs in the initial stages of a major emergency. Far too often lives have been lost and many more lives subjected to unnecessarily long suffering because crucial actions were not, or could not be, taken in the early stages of the emergency. The victims of an emergency quickly deteriorate both physically and mentally. Often they feel compelled to leave their homes, a move that tends to prolong their suffering and to make it far more difficult and costly even to alleviate it.

The prime responsibility in emergencies must be with the government of each afflicted country, but the crisis is very often beyond national capacities. Responsibility for the failure to act rapidly must then be shared by the international community, and primarily by the United Nations, which should lead decisively in mobilizing the essential response.

Successful UN handling of an emergency is entirely feasible. Among other responses down the years, the operation in Bangladesh in the early seventies and the work of the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEOA) are universally accepted as a demonstration of this. Sometimes UN country staff led by the Resident Coordinator have helped a distressed government and people magnificently (even despite occasional headquarters fumbling). Far too often, however, expectations of the UN have not been realized, and most especially in the opening days of an emergency.

There is no one precise reason for this. The weaknesses are spread throughout the international system—failure to anticipate disaster (or to heed an early warning); slow first response through interagency confusion; inability to mobilize urgently needed experts; confusion over needs information and appeals to donors; inadequate or inappropriate deployment of supplies. Donors also have contributed to these shortcomings. It is pointless to criticize a UN agency for slow response if it has not been given the key resources to act at once. This section therefore contains recommendations first of all on the prerequisites for effective UN response, and secondly on what is required from the wider international community.

IMPROVING UN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

In the response to serious emergencies one ingredient governs the quality of all others—management. UN response machinery has hitherto assumed that emergencies can be managed *ad hoc*—possibly by UNDRO, or by appointing a Special Representative of the Secretary-General, or by one agency simply being there first and becoming the lead agency.

UN agencies argue that there must always be ‘flexibility according to each emergency situation’. This contention, together with the competition for a high profile vis-à-vis donors, has made an institution of the *ad hoc* approach. Flexibility is certainly essential; but it flows from, and is not a substitute for, properly established crisis management. Such management has to be in place *before* the emergency occurs. In other words, it has to be a standing capability.

► **Key Crisis Management Requirements**

The need for permanently installed overall crisis management in the UN can be seen in the following short list of imperatives:

- Both in the country and at the international level, *who* is responsible for first international responses must already be clear to, and accepted by, all concerned.
- The person responsible must have the necessary competence, authority and confidence of all concerned to take the immediate, make-or-break actions, including prompt allocation and confirmation of responsibilities, and diplomatic or political trouble-shooting if needed.
- It must be agreed who is responsible for identifying first needs in the country; to whom such information must be routed; and who at the international level will collate it in appeal form and communicate it to potential donors.
- There must be continuously maintained rosters of experienced people (according to type of need) who can be tapped and deployed within 24-36 hours; available funds that can be spent at once; basic supplies that can be moved within hours; and logistics to move them.

These prerequisites for adequate crisis management may seem obvious when set down on paper, but they have not been realized in any consistent form in the UN system's emergency response machinery. They begin with the need for a senior UN crisis manager close to the Secretary-General.

► ***A Deputy Secretary-General***

There is full consensus that major humanitarian emergencies require the leadership of the Secretary-General for rapid response, resource mobilization, political questions, and to ensure sound coordination. Obviously, however, the Secretary-General cannot personally manage such emergencies. The Secretary-General needs an official of international repute and stature who can manage and backstop all the elements of the system to ensure the most effective work by UN agencies, and to mobilize the contributions of the wider international community.

Such overall crisis organization and management, including immediate first responses, must not be confused with actual emergency relief operations. If their respective responsibilities are fully clarified and 'mandate gaps' resolved, the present response agencies of the system can and should continue to handle emergency operations. The job of improved management is to facilitate their prompt, orderly, and immediate response, and to provide them with maximum support.

Concern is often expressed about the place of the UN Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO) in any reforms of the system. The proposals that follow will neither duplicate nor add to UNDRO's functions. On the contrary, the intention is to make them more assuredly effective in facilitating actual relief operations.

To obviate misunderstandings and at the same time to identify the loose ends which presently exist in the machinery, the prospective responsibilities of a Deputy Secretary-General need to be set down in detail.

► ***Responsibilities of the Deputy Secretary-General***

Preparedness Phase

- ▶ *Chair* on behalf of the Secretary-General a standing high-level United Nations Board for Humanitarian, Disaster and Migration Affairs, comprising the heads (or senior and responsible representatives) of relevant UN bodies, ICRC, the League, IOM, and representatives of the voluntary agency community;
- *represent* the Secretary-General in the process of evolving, where necessary, new or adjusted legal mandates within the UN system regarding assistance to and protection of civilians in humanitarian emergency conditions;
- ▶ *prepare* for the Secretary-General a comprehensive assignment of responsibilities within the UN system in humanitarian emergencies and, in consultation with agency heads, propose any adjustments indicated by experience;
- *promote* preparedness at all levels;
 - support and monitor national disaster reduction and mitigation assistance by UNDP with related agencies, and appropriate regional mitigation arrangements;
 - support and monitor systematic national and international personnel training for emergencies by UNDP with other agencies;
 - help ensure the maintenance of rosters of all needed types of experienced standby personnel, and make them available on an interagency communication network;
 - promote and coordinate the contribution to UN emergency efforts of national disaster relief units;
 - promote, coordinate and ensure the availability of rapid-use supplies and materiel in strategically placed depots;
 - promote and coordinate rapid-response logistics;
 - remove bureaucratic obstacles for procurement and other response factors in the UN system;
 - regularly review the response capacity of the international community to appeals for humanitarian assistance and, through the Secretary-General, ensure adequate public attention to needed improvements.

These functions are at present either not discharged by any official or are carried out piecemeal at inadequate levels. They are pivotal to the improvement of the UN system's response and add up to a very substantial responsibility. To be effectively carried out, these functions need to be centred around a single very senior official. Given the likely volume and scale of future humanitarian emergencies, the frequent need for high-level intervention to ensure effective care for the afflicted, and the complexities of international coordination, the authors are convinced that this official should have the

Emergency Response Phase

- *Advise* the Secretary-General on the technical and political aspects of emergencies and engage the Secretary-General's personal involvement when necessary;
 - ▶ *exercise* responsibility on behalf of the Secretary-General for all matters of security of UN offices and staff in emergencies;
 - ▶ *administer*, on behalf of the Secretary-General, two central rapid-response resources:
 - a central focal point for receipt of early warning information from all sources, and for their synthesis;
 - a central emergency fund for immediate financing of first responses to emergencies;
 - *act* for the Secretary-General in the management of major emergencies and ensure the optimal coordinated response of agencies of the system, governments, and voluntary agencies:
 - initiate first rapid-response actions at the international level;
 - consult relevant UN system agencies on each emergency, and confirm to the Secretary-General that standing UN coordinating relationships will suffice or, in an especially complex emergency, advise that the Deputy Secretary-General should coordinate;
 - advise the Secretary-General on any need to appoint a Special Representative on the ground, and in such case direct that official's work;
 - collate information on needs and coordinate appeals and ongoing situation reports to donor governments, voluntary agencies, and media;
 - continuously monitor the emergency, assisting UN agencies to overcome bottlenecks, acting in sensitive political situations, and advising the Secretary-General and the international community on further needs;
 - develop effective support for the afflicted country's transition from emergency to rehabilitation and development;
 - maintain evaluations of experience in emergencies and promote their effective application throughout the international community.
-

rank of Deputy Secretary-General.²⁰ The incumbent *must* be an experienced international emergency manager, who can command the confidence of all players in the international response community.

²⁰ See the first paper in this issue pp 20-32 for elaboration of the need for four Deputy Secretaries-General, one for Humanitarian and Human Rights Affairs.

It bears repeating that this function will *not* infringe on the mandated responsibilities of heads of the different agencies of the UN system. On the contrary, it will enhance their discharge of their responsibilities.

► ***Reorganization for Crisis Management***

An improved organizational structure headed by the Deputy Secretary-General should group the critical management functions listed above. This will entail some reorganization of present structures, and improvements therein.

► ***Location***

The Deputy should have two offices, one in New York, the other in Geneva where the Department should be sited. The Deputy must be in New York whenever major emergencies require the close attention and public initiative of the Secretary-General, and when political or security aspects may require activity with New York-based UN organs such as the General Assembly or the Security Council.

A substantial proportion of the emergency response capacity of the international community is situated, or specially represented, in Geneva.²¹ In addition, a special concentration and experience in humanitarian and emergency affairs has been built up over the years in the Permanent Missions to the UN at Geneva.²² For these reasons the new Department should be headquartered at Geneva, with the understanding that the Deputy must be with the Secretary-General in New York at critical stages in an emergency.

²¹ UNHCR, WHO, ITU, WMO, the UN Centre for Human Rights, ILO, the ICRC and League, the Licross-Volags Steering Committee comprising Caritas Internationalis, Catholic Relief Services, the League, Lutheran World Federation, Oxfam and the World Council of Churches, and the IOM.

²² Governments might wish to reaffirm the special role of their Geneva Missions and delineate how this will best work in relation to Mission responsibilities at New York.

► **Core Organization**

The new Deputy post would absorb the functions of the UNDRO Coordinator. The Department's core organization for humanitarian emergencies would comprise UNDRO in Geneva, staffed entirely by emergency professionals and continuously managed by a senior official; and complementary staff and communication capacities in the Deputy's New York office built around the existing well-organized UNDRO Liaison Office. The assignment by relevant UN agencies of qualified staff to the Department would greatly enhance liaison and efficient response.

All of the presently mandated functions of UNDRO except, as earlier recommended, technical advice and assistance on disaster prevention and mitigation, should come under the direction of the Deputy Secretary-General.

Present regional emergency responsibilities, at present diffused in the Secretariat, should be consolidated in the new Department. The functions of the Unit for Special Emergency Programmes in the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship should be reallocated between the new Department and UNDP.

Further elements in the Department will be identified in the following analysis of other needed improvements.

COORDINATION

Thousands of staff hours have been spent wrestling with the issue of coordination in emergencies, but a satisfactory result has so far eluded all concerned. There has been fear that any one established official would want to run everything and would be unable to do so. There has often been doubt about the professional competence of would-be coordinating offices. There has also been a fear of losing a high profile in a system in which competitiveness has become a major factor.

Coordination does not mean either central control, or the submergence of the identity of those coordinated. It means *enabling* different UN agencies to do consistently

well what they are best qualified to do, and to work as a team. Coordination means a continuous effort, from helping to launch the responses of the various agencies and getting the necessary resources, to monitoring their operations in order to be able to continue to support them. With such rare exceptions as the OEOA effort, this kind of coordination in emergencies has, so far, not been provided. It *can* be consistently provided through the new Department, headed by the right Deputy Secretary-General for this kind of leadership.

► ***The United Nations Board for Humanitarian, Migration and Disaster Affairs***

Upon the first clear indication that any complex or large-scale emergency is imminent the Deputy should immediately consult with principal leaders in the international response community. The Secretary-General should establish for this and other purposes a standing high-calibre United Nations Board for Humanitarian, Migration and Disaster Affairs, normally chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General, and serviced by the department.

Exclusively interagency mechanisms have often deprived the UN of the active collaboration of other vital elements in the international community.²³ The Board should routinely also include the ICRC, the League, and IOM, and representation of the voluntary agency community. It should serve as the framework for agreeing on lines of cooperation and resource mobilization in emergencies. It should meet to review these matters, identifying serious problems and major new needs in crises. It should also carefully evaluate experience.²⁴

► ***Patterns of Coordination***

Although the point is often made for self-serving reasons, it is quite true that there can be no one model for the workings of the UN system (with other partners) in an

²³ A useful precedent breaking this pattern was set in NGO membership of the UN Steering Committee for the Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAEERD).

²⁴ A similar mechanism is urged in the Nordic UN Project report, *op. cit.*, Recommendation I.

emergency. There will always be many variables in scale, degree of complexity, and type of major relief needed. A hurricane tearing through a country and disappearing leaves one set of (themselves varying) needs. These will be totally different from the results of a drought-aggravated famine, or a civil war, or an inter-state conflict, or combinations of these. An emergency may tragically be converted into protracted distress, which will probably call for treatment different from what was needed in the first stages of the crisis. The UN role in an emergency may vary from relief and reconstruction to a more formal presence, even including peace-keeping elements.

The vital missing ingredients in this shifting scene of emergencies have been: the standing management capacity of the permanent senior official and core service recommended above; a clearer agreed delineation of operational responsibilities among agencies, including filling of present gaps in the system (to be discussed further later on); and a definite, publicly announced choice of the management arrangement for the actual relief operations on the ground in each case.

► ***Agreed Assignment of Responsibilities***

Apart from the choice of leadership on the ground, it is clearly essential that the basic respective areas of competence of the response agencies in the UN system be agreed in advance of emergencies. This will enable each agency to seek the resources to enable it to do what it does best, while member governments will be more confident that they are providing resources for clearly defined purposes which are not duplicated.

A first charge on the Deputy Secretary-General should be to negotiate a 'charter of responsibilities in emergencies' (as the Delegation of Canada has called it), incorporating the reforms adopted by the General Assembly, and the nature of the contribution that each agency could make in a given emergency. The draft of this 'charter' would be discussed in an early meeting of the proposed Board, and the final document published by the Secretary-General on behalf of the system.

In recent years manuals of emergency procedures have been developed in several UN organizations. The new department should examine these to determine whether a

single manual applicable to all UN agencies can be assembled. At a minimum, all separate manuals should contain a common overall first section.

If everyone knows what their area of agreed competence is, the next crucial question is who will lead the operations on the ground?

► **Ground-level Coordination**

On the face of it, in an emergency that is wholly contained within one country, the UN Resident Coordinator—the regular representative of the Secretary-General there—should be the team leader. This practice should not, however, be blindly followed in all circumstances. The Resident Coordinator is also the UNDP Representative. Chosen as managers of development programmes, these officials should become increasingly aware of the continuum of development, emergency prevention, and emergency response and rehabilitation. Even a development manager with these perspectives is not necessarily the best team leader for every type of emergency. The Resident Coordinator may be absent or the post vacant between incumbents when an emergency strikes; and the officer-in-charge may not be as qualified to lead as some other available person. Jurisdictional claims and other bureaucratic considerations have no place in humanitarian emergencies when people's lives are at risk.

The Deputy Secretary-General should constantly monitor the UN's representatives in country posts, with a view to being able to decide whether, in an emergency, a different person is needed (or at least, the immediate addition of emergency-qualified personnel²⁵). Rosters should be maintained for every country, should include the emergency qualifications of other senior staff stationed there, and should be cross-referenced to those in adjacent countries as well as to the general roster (see below).

The choice of emergency team leaders has to be made authoritatively, publicly announced, and accepted by all concerned. This procedure should be clearly set out in the 'charter' of responsibilities to avoid any misunderstandings when an emergency occurs.

²⁵ In the Persian Gulf crisis the assignment of Special UN Emergency Managers to Resident Coordinators was tried. Their work was too brief to provide clear guidance, but the concept should be further examined by the Deputy.

Even within a country, especially a large one, the scale and complexity of a crisis may dictate that a more senior and more experienced team leader be sent in, either from a UN agency or from outside. Where the crisis involves more than one country, a higher-level and more experienced person is likely to be required, and the standby rosters discussed below become of utmost importance.

► **Basic UN Country-level Organization**

Resident Coordinators are already setting up Emergency Operations Groups (EOG) comprising all relevant UN system capacities present in a country in order to be ready for any serious crisis. This should become standard practice in all countries, in appropriate coordination with the government concerned, to ensure immediate action in case of an emergency.

► **Disaster Data**

All too often the most elementary practical information has not been immediately available to those on the ground who are trying to mobilize first responses to disasters. Such information includes maps, population by district, dietary patterns, telecommunications, road and other transport factors, airports and airstrips. In every emergency-prone country there should be clearly assigned responsibility, probably in the Emergency Operations Group, for maintaining a common data-banked 'disaster profile', which would also be on file in Geneva and in other relevant offices.

EARLY WARNING

Early warning is the link between preparedness for and an actual response to emergencies. It has two main components: identifying the danger as early as possible, and communicating the nature of it coherently and effectively to those who must respond.

Modern science and technology provide a growing capacity to predict natural disasters related to the weather, and, to some extent, to earthquakes. Various technical agencies of the UN system and many scientific centres have devoted much effort to developing these aspects of preparedness. One example is the Global Information and Early Warning System of FAO over both food production and migratory pests. Networked with larger information systems, it is also being extended into especially vulnerable regions, as with the new (1988) Africa environment monitoring information system (ARTEMIS).

There has been much less progress on early warning for human-originated emergencies which are by their nature political and socio-economic, and thus less easily analysed by technological means. Many such humanitarian emergencies produce a level and duration of suffering far exceeding the impact of natural disasters. Few such emergencies are totally unpredictable, but in the past little attention has usually been paid to signs of the disaster to come.

There are many reasons for this. Few, if any, governments will easily acknowledge that political, social or economic conditions are about to cause large-scale distress among their citizens, and authoritarian regimes are least likely of all to do so. Officials in low-income countries are also aware that such acknowledgement may affect foreign investment or other financial flows. Diplomatic tradition has usually militated against an outside authority publicly identifying an impending humanitarian emergency ahead of the government directly concerned.

In countries most prone to major humanitarian emergencies the presence of a UN official representing the Secretary-General (the UN Resident Coordinator) places the UN in a unique position to provide early warning. However, the same official is normally the Resident Representative of UNDP, whose development cooperation mandate is supposed to be entirely non-political, and this has sometimes led to undue caution. Lack of a specific UN mandate—for example, over people moving towards a border but not yet across it—can also inhibit early warning from the UN representative on the spot.

Even when a warning has been conveyed from the country concerned, it has all too often lost its force at the international level. In the UN system reaction to disasters has suffered both from lack of resources and from problems of coordination among the wide

range of specialized early warning responsibilities.²⁶ Recent efforts to bring more order into this kaleidoscopic situation have not so far worked.

When the Secretary-General established the UN Office for Research and the Collection of Information (ORCI) in 1987, he assigned it early warning responsibilities over 'refugee flows and comparable emergencies'.²⁷ Since ORCI's overall responsibility was monitoring political developments and threats to peace for the Secretary-General, this had a certain logic. It presupposed, however, adequate sources and staffing; the full collaboration and coordination of all existing early-warning units in the system; and active use of information received. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) reported in 1990 on early warning of possible refugee flows, and its observations on progress to date in ORCI in fulfilling its assigned role are not encouraging.²⁸ The JIU is reviewing the total field of early warning.

► **Key Requirements in Early Warning**

Technically specialized early warning capacities are certainly necessary. Assessment of climate and weather threats, ominous environmental degradation, potential crop failure or pest losses, is indeed specialized work. Careful assessment of potential large-scale human movements is also far more complex and sensitive than many have assumed.²⁹ The crucial problems that must now be resolved are how to ensure:

- that their mandates fully enable UN country representatives to provide early warning whenever the verified facts warrant it;
- that the separate flows of forecasting from the various agencies are always timely and of high quality;

²⁶ Early warning on refugee flows was assigned to the UN Centre for Human Rights in 1985 but this was changed after 1987 with the creation in the Secretariat of ORCI. Early warning and watch functions now exist in the UN in ORCI, but for Africa also in the Department for Special Political Questions, Regional Cooperation, Decolonization and Trusteeship; in UNHCR; in UNEP; in FAO, but UNICEF-FAO-WHO jointly for Food/Nutrition Surveillance, and WFP for food aid; WMO has World Weather Watch, but UNESCO reports on tidal waves; and IAEA. ICRC operates an early warning system; some major donor governments do as well.

²⁷ UN administrative circular bulletin ST/SGB/225, March 1987.

²⁸ A/45/649 and S-G's comments in Add. 1; ACC response in A/46/134.

²⁹ See, *inter alia*, the study by Lance Clark, *Early Warning of Refugee Flows* (Washington, Refugee Policy Group, December 1989).

- ▶ that these flows *converge* for synthesis, validation and overall analysis in the UN office charged with crisis management;
- ▶ and that resultant early warning advisories are communicated to the Secretary-General with the appropriate recommendation for action.

To date these requirements have not been adequately met. There has been no clear and reliable early-warning coordination mechanism. The recently established interagency task force cannot by itself remedy the deficiency. There must be one properly located focal point, with adequate resources for the job, fully accepted and supported by the whole UN system, and drawing on other valuable (e.g., governmental and non-governmental) sources of early warning.

▶ **Improvements**

- ▶ The humanitarian emergency early warning functions now with ORCI should be transferred to the new department. In an overall consolidation of lines of responsibility in the Secretariat³⁰ there should be no difficulty about rapid consultation between ORCI and the department.
- ▶ An effective exchange of information must be maintained between the department, all specialized early warning units in the UN system, and key sources outside it.

PERSONNEL FOR EMERGENCIES

In scores of emergencies, lack of the right people in the right place at the right time has been identified as a serious, sometimes fatal weakness. The UN is criticized when it does not have water engineers, nutritionists and others on the spot as soon as and in whatever numbers needed, but governments do not provide the UN with the resources to maintain such staff between emergencies.³¹ The increasing duration of emergency needs further overtaxes such staff resources as exist, especially when conditions of service in emergencies are particularly hard for staff who have families.

³⁰ Now being suggested to the General Assembly by a group of states.

³¹ UNHCR, for example, has only a handful of such specialists on staff and available for even one, let alone several simultaneous, refugee emergencies.

► **Standby Rosters**

There are sound reasons for the main emergency response agencies of the system maintaining their own standby rosters to meet sudden specialized needs. The Deputy Secretary-General's role in this should be to lend such support as will ensure readiness and quality; to make sure there are no expertise gaps between the various rosters; and to create an efficient connection between them.

The department should, however, keep an up-to-date standby roster of experienced senior crisis managers and multi-sectoral needs assessors for rapid dispatch to major and complex emergencies if needed. This roster should include people who could be quickly deployed as Special Representatives of the Secretary-General when needed. The lack of such a roster has been one of the principal weaknesses in rapid response.

The Deputy should early consult with all relevant UN agencies to identify and eliminate all bureaucratic impediments to the kinds of special service agreements that rapid emergency personnel deployment requires.

► **Improvements**

Five main remedies are indicated:

- More effort needs to be made to build up such personnel capacities in developing countries themselves.
- The UNDP/UNDRO Training Programme must be strongly supported for this purpose, as for UN system staff and voluntary agencies if so requested.³²
- Serious attention needs to be paid to conditions of emergency field service to the extent that line staff have to be involved.³³
- Resources such as UN Volunteers, already increasingly deployed into longer-term emergency situations, need to be expanded. This will also free up specialists for crises.
- Rosters of experienced and appropriately qualified people outside the UN Secretariat, willing to be on short-notice standby, must be quickly improved, as also procedures for their rapid hiring.

³² Should the long-recommended UN Staff College network be established, training for emergencies should be integrated in its programme.

³³ Cf., *inter alia*, Testimony of Mr. Frederick C. Cuny to the US House of Representatives Select Committee on Hunger, June 1991.

RAPID-RESPONSE EMERGENCY FUND

The Secretary-General should have immediately available a standing fund that can be used at the Secretary-General's discretion for the first immediate cash needs that invariably arise in large-scale emergencies. In the great majority of instances this fund would be disbursed directly to the UN agencies coming into action on the ground. Their authorized emergency funds are quite inadequate.

The fund should be established at \$50 million. This is not at all a large sum for emergency response: chartering only one large transport aircraft, for example, can cost \$1 million a month, before fuel and landing costs. Assuming a general agreement that emergency financial flows will not be diversions from development, the most direct means to establish the fund would be by a one-time membership-wide assessment. Thereafter it should be replenished, in the amounts that they have received from it, by UN agencies from donor contributions to them following unified appeals.

The Deputy Secretary-General would be responsible for disbursements, accounting, monitoring the replenishment, and recommending to the Secretary-General any adjustments that should be proposed for the Emergency Fund in the light of experience.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

When a significant emergency occurs, the most crucial information requirement is an accurate assessment of immediate needs. Only with this assessment can the right rapid-standby resources be deployed, and a clear, coordinated appeal be issued.

Assessment of immediate needs by the UN system has been one of the most criticized areas of its response to emergencies. In all fairness, this task is not as easy as it sounds. It is replete with complexities and variables, but the basic problems can be identified and remedied.

In the past there has been confusion over practical responsibility for making assessments of immediate needs. Relief agencies of all kinds very naturally want to get

out appeals ahead of each other, and this can seriously confuse donor sources. UN staff and information systems in the country concerned have been inadequately prepared to make the required assessment. And when outside specialized assessors have been needed, there have often been delays in deploying them.

► **Improvements**

- ▶ In developing countries, the UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative³⁴ should be clearly in charge of leading and coordinating needs assessment with the government, relevant UN agencies, and other sources including donor missions and NGOs. The new EOG could serve as the framework for this task.
- ▶ Sufficient country staff must be trained in efficient needs assessment; here again the UNDP/UNDRO training programme is indispensable.
- ▶ The procedures for immediate formation of a basic assessment team on the ground—built around the EOG—should be written down and known to all concerned.
- ▶ Necessary computer programmes for accurate, comprehensive assembly of data as it is gathered are now entirely feasible and must be installed in each country.
- ▶ The Resident Coordinator (or alternate) must quickly agree with the Government any need for special outside assessor(s), and notify the right headquarters as well as the department. If any agency cannot locate the needed specialist within 24 hours, the department should assume responsibility. This is an example of the back-up role that the Deputy Secretary-General should be ready to assume.

LOGISTICS

Valuable advances have recently been made in rationalizing previously confused responsibilities for ground and sea transport. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has agreed with the Executive Director of the World Food Programme that WFP will be responsible for all such logistics. WFP has technical experts in this field on its staff and more on roster. When given full responsibility, its performance in meeting seemingly impossible logistical obstacles throughout the world has been universally praised. This rationalization should be completed. It is not efficient for more than one

³⁴ Clear methods for designating a responsible alternate, discussed earlier, are critically important to rapid assessment of needs.

UN agency to maintain the experience and up-to-date global knowledge necessary to handle emergency logistics rapidly and at the most economic rates.

► **Improvements**

- To the greatest extent possible, logistics expertise and other capacities should be centered in the WFP to deliver both food and non-food aid in emergencies.
- The Deputy Secretary-General should be responsible for developing optimal rationalization and monitoring progress.

STANDBY SUPPLIES AND MATERIEL

Responsibility within the UN for stockpiling most first-need emergency commodities and materiel, with data bases on other supply sources, is presently divided between UNICEF's long-established warehouse (UNIPAC) at Copenhagen, and UNDRO with its recently (1987) opened depot at Pisa. FAO, UNHCR, and WHO specialized stores are also maintained in various places.

Whether this is the most efficient long-term pattern is subject to many factors. These include the projected needs of UN peace-keeping and other field operations (presently also supplied from the Pisa depot), and whether there are clear technical advantages in having combined depots for basic supplies. Since the UN cannot maintain its own aircraft fleet, immediate availability of aircraft has a close bearing on depot location. Therefore another important question is whether governments of countries where depots may be sited are willing firmly to commit national air transport resources to airlift in emergencies.

As with logistics, the most logical arrangement would be for all such stockpiling to be handled by one competent UN agency. This is another example of the need for expert and decisive pre-crisis management for the UN system and the wider international community.

► **Improvements**

- The Deputy Secretary-General should make an early review of the whole matter with expert advice and make appropriate recommendations to ensure the most effective and economical stockpiling system for all emergency needs worldwide.³⁵
- Donor governments in a position to do so should offer firm pledges of air transport on standby to airlift rapid-response supplies and materiel, to be recognized as part of their contribution to humanitarian emergencies.

CONTRIBUTION OF DISASTER RELIEF UNITS

Major emergencies have become almost continuous. If the basic provision of resources to the UN system were as assured as it should be, it might make sense to propose standing UN teams and stocks of equipment for emergencies until disaster-prone countries can build adequate national relief units themselves. Meanwhile the international contribution of standby disaster units, such as those of Switzerland and Sweden, needs to be expanded.

Units like the Swedish Special Unit for Disaster Relief have the merit of coming self-contained to serve under the UN flag with trained teams of different specialists complete with their own emergency-tested equipment, transport and communications.³⁶ The Swedish Unit for Disaster Relief has served with the UN in 15 emergency missions in Africa, Asia, and Central and South America. The specialists work at home in their professions but hold one-year standby contracts, agreed with their employers, to be ready for overseas duty within five days. Maintenance costs to the Government for rostering, information, etc., are therefore extremely low (e.g., \$107,000 p.a.), and availability to the UN costs nothing, since the Government contributes the costs of the mission.

³⁵ Some authorities recommend regional stockpiling of non-food commodities for greater proximity to afflicted countries.

³⁶ SWEDRELIEF can provide administrators, architects, doctors, electrical engineers, health inspectors, water and sanitary engineers, logisticians, motor engineers and mechanics, nurses, nutritionists, pharmacists, plant engineers and foremen, stores managers, structural engineers, telegraphists, transport directors, veterinarians and water drillers.

► **Potential Military Humanitarian Roles**

A second type of potential for emergency service under UN auspices, always of course with the consent of the afflicted country, lies in non-combatant military teams for rapid rescue in disasters and for longer-term help (engineers, medical units, signals teams, etc.). This would be a valuable use of standing defense capacities and, where a host government wishes, might extend also to joint work with the afflicted country's military establishment that would build up its own relief capacities.

Recent experience has shown that some emergencies require equipment—for example heavy lift helicopters—which are normally to be found in sufficient numbers only in military establishments. In future, standby arrangements for making such equipment immediately available might be negotiated with the countries with such capacity.

► **Improvements**

- All governments in a position to do so should consider forming standby contributory Disaster Relief Units.
- The Deputy Secretary-General should actively promote such special unit contributions, and the department should be the focal point in the UN system for soliciting missions by such units on the request and consent of host governments.
- The role of non-combatant military units in disaster relief should be actively studied.

EMERGENCY FOOD AID

At the heart of virtually every major emergency is the disruption or collapse of basic food supplies for the afflicted people. Delay in delivering food aid is the severest and most important problem in emergencies.

Such a delay begins the grim cycle of deaths by starvation or malnutrition. It soon leads the survivors to sell their last possessions to buy whatever food they can find at whatever exorbitant price. When they sell their livestock for food they destroy more of

the basis of their existence; when they are forced to eat their seedstock they virtually eliminate the possibility of a restorative crop. And when they see no hope of food they start to move, in ever larger numbers—often only making vastly more difficult the problem of feeding them. Delays in food aid thus exact a terrible toll, and almost guarantee a protracted burden of assistance on the country concerned and on the international community. When such delays occur in large-scale emergencies like those in Africa, they precipitate nothing less than a massive human disaster.

The needs are enormous. Emergency food aid delivered—by no means all that is needed—nowadays ranges between 2 and over 3 million metric tons a year.³⁷ The World Food Programme is already responsible for some 50 per cent of the total delivered, but faces continuous difficulties.³⁸ The causes are too complex to detail in this paper, but salient problems must be highlighted.

The General Assembly in 1975 established the International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR), designed to provide a rapid-response facility based on pledges (in advance), of cash or commodities from national stocks over and above regular pledges to WFP. The minimum annual target for the IEFR is 500,000 tons of food commodities which were to be placed 'at the disposal' of the Programme for urgent, unconditional use wherever emergencies arose.³⁹

In actual practice, however, the IEFR has been seriously circumscribed by (among other things) donors too often pledging *ad hoc*; earmarking for specific countries only; and designating the source of purchase and/or type of commodity from which WFP must procure against a pledge. The further requirement of a number of donors for case-by-case approval of use of their IEFR pledges causes serious delays in even starting to move food towards an emergency. Average response time now often exceeds three months. WFP has repeatedly had to resort, in emergencies, to borrowing from shipments intended for food for development (including school-feeding) with disastrous consequences for those projects.

³⁷ 1987, 1.98 million MT; 1988, 3.2 million MT; 1989, 2.4 million MT; 1990, 2.7 million MT, all channels. Emergency food needs for 1991 in Africa alone are in excess of 3 million tons. WFP paper for the Committee on Food Aid Policies and Programmes, CFA: 31/P/7, 14 April 1991.

³⁸ In 1988-90 emergency food aid in cereals comprised 21 per cent of WFP total food aid in cereals. Emergency aid was 28 per cent of WFP's non-cereals aid.

³⁹ CFA: 31/P/7, para. 3.

Another very serious handicap is that the IEFR does not receive enough straight cash to cover anything like the full needs in two other vital elements of emergency food aid—ability to buy supplementary commodities from wherever needed to ensure that recipients have a minimally balanced diet, and money enough actually to transport food to them. WFP has often actually had to limit the volume of food aid delivered, even when higher tonnage was available, because it has not had enough cash to pay for transport.⁴⁰

By 1991 WFP was constrained to observe to its governing body that because of these and other weaknesses in implementation of the original agreed premises of the Reserve, 'over time the IEFR's multilateral character and its flexibility in responding quickly has steadily diminished'.⁴¹

Fifteen years since the IEFR was established, the international community thus confronts an obvious paradox—abundant food stocks in the North, strong concern and compassion among Northern citizens, a solemn General Assembly commitment to an untied, advance-pledged Food Reserve, and yet, in reality, handicaps to its effectiveness that can place masses of human beings at ultimate risk.

► **Improvements**⁴²

- ▶ WFP is requesting a wholly unencumbered cash fund of \$50 million for rapid purchase of commodities in the first stages of an emergency. This should be supported without prejudice to the central fund earlier recommended.⁴³
- ▶ Donors should fulfill the IEFR premise of firm pledges, well in advance of each year, to be fully at WFP disposal without earmarking; if a donor insists on earmarking it should respond to a draw request from WFP within 72 hours.
- ▶ Donors should commit, as part of their IEFR pledge, to meeting its full actual internal transport, storage and handling costs.
- ▶ Donors should try to make larger and multi-year pledges to the IEFR; developing countries should, where possible, make interest-free loans of commodities for first emergency use; and bilateral and NGO food providers should more closely inform WFP of their plans and operations.

⁴⁰ Ibid., para. 14.

⁴¹ Ibid., para. 8.

⁴² The following recommendations in this complex field are not exhaustive of those identified, but are the critically important needs.

⁴³ Purchasing has already been reaching levels of \$30 million p.a. without meeting actual needs.

- ▶ The Deputy Secretary-General should work with the Executive Director of WFP, and all relevant UN agencies, to help complete rationalization of food aid in all aspects around WFP's capacities, and should support special WFP appeals regarding major emergency needs.

PEOPLE MISSED IN UN MANDATES

Finally, there is the increasingly serious problem of very large numbers of people whose emergency status does not presently fall under the mandates of any UN organization, or who lack legal protection even if an agency can reach them with material relief. These are, above all, the internally displaced.⁴⁴

The UN is seized of these problems,⁴⁵ which have not only humanitarian relief but also human rights dimensions.⁴⁶ They must be resolved, but with due care for the implications. In legal and political terms, providing a mandate covering internally displaced persons must not lead to jeopardy of the right to asylum. It will also require the development of additional instruments of international law, and universally acceptable practices, covering the responsibilities of sovereign states to care for their citizens on one hand, and of the international community to safeguard their human rights (economic and social as well as civil and political) on the other. It may well, in some cases, involve General Assembly consideration of the extension of UN protection, in varying degrees, to internally displaced persons and the agencies assisting them.

Administratively, adding such an internal mandate to UNHCR must not detract from its ability to protect and assist refugees. And financially, the institution of a mandate for internally displaced persons must arrive with additional funds for the operations that would then be expected of UNHCR, the NGOs with which it works, and

⁴⁴ The High Commissioner has competence regarding Refugees outside their country as defined in the UNHCR Statute; a broader category recognized as, e.g., victims of conflict under regional arrangements; returning refugees; 'good offices' facilitation and/or relief when requested by the General Assembly as in Resolutions 2956, 3455, and 42/110; and limited assistance for non-refugee stateless persons.

⁴⁵ UNDP Governing Council Decision 90/22, and ECOSOC Resolution 1990/78 requesting a report on refugees, displaced persons and returnees, for which Consultant M. Jacques Cuenod prepared a Report, E/1991/109/Add.1 of 27 June 1991.

⁴⁶ In February 1991 the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to report on 'the protection of internally displaced persons'; E/CN.4/1991/L.34.

other involved agencies like UNICEF and WFP. It would be irresponsible in the extreme to extend mandates but expect the UN system to provide for these millions of people from already inadequate present resource levels.

► ***Improvements***

- ▶ Member states should actively address the problem of all significant categories of victims of emergencies including the internally displaced, to ensure that the UN system can act to help and protect them under internationally recognized modalities.
- ▶ There should be clear understanding of the larger resource requirements that will result from the wish to extend international humanitarian assistance to all who need it.
- ▶ The Deputy Secretary-General should be the point of referral on these issues for the Secretary-General and the system.
- ▶ The proposed new UN Board outlined earlier should have a standing watch function over these mandate problems.

VOLUNTARY AGENCIES

The community of voluntary agencies is playing an ever larger role in response to humanitarian emergencies; precise data distinguishing emergency from development work are not available, but their annual contributions are estimated at between \$1.5 and \$2 billion. They are the essential direct link between peoples; they operate at local community level, often in extremely severe, even dangerous conditions, and with a constantly increasing professionalism and sensitivity to national and local cultures that more and more governments recognize.

Until quite recently their relationship with most of the UN system was uneasy. Many UN officials accustomed to the intergovernmental world found it difficult to perceive their real value; many voluntary agency people regarded the UN system (with considerable justification) as distant, often lofty, and impenetrable bureaucracies. Much has been done, especially by UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP to bridge these distances. Much more needs to be done. It is essential for UN emergency managers to listen more to voluntary agency views, and to organize effective teamwork with them at both country and headquarters levels.

► *Improvements*

- Regular dissemination of overall information to NGOs by UN Resident Coordinators, and keeping their front-line workers abreast of developments in an emergency, is vital to their morale, and to the accuracy of their comments to media which usually gravitate towards them. In turn, NGOs can be critically important sources of early warning of emergencies and of new phases in them.
- The regular participation of the voluntary agency community as full members of the UN Board earlier proposed could open a new chapter of greater mutual trust and respect in the history of these relationships. The building of such relationships with NGOs should be a significant responsibility of the proposed new Deputy Secretary-General.

MEDIA LIAISON

There is some validity in the current truism that serious humanitarian assistance only follows serious media attention to an emergency. Responsible print and electronic media have, however, accepted this phenomenon and the attendant responsibility to identify new humanitarian crises as early as possible. The power of modern trans-border communications—as well as the popular entertainers who are a dynamic part of the media—has already been harnessed with great effect to create a feeling of mutual concern among the peoples of the United Nations, especially young people. The United Nations has a corresponding responsibility to cooperate with the media as effectively as possible in every such emergency. Media vigilance is, on balance a healthy force for improvement in the UN's response machinery, and the service the media can render in quickly generating public and official attention to an emergency is, quite literally, invaluable.

Individual UN agencies working in relief operations have acquired considerable skills in cooperating with the media, but lack of coordination of public information at the country level has often caused confusion and resentment. The leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, or whoever else is designated as coordinator, must be accepted in public information no less than in operations.

Journalists also often express frustration over difficulties in obtaining 'the overall picture' to balance the individual and competitive offerings of agencies in the field and to obtain more in-depth information on an emergency. With the exception of the special *Africa Emergency* unit in the OEOA (continued in UN-DPI as *Africa Recovery*), there have been no special arrangements for public information on humanitarian emergencies at UN headquarters.

► Improvements

- ▶ Clear procedures for country-level public information releases and briefings should be established and published as part of improved country-level coordination.
- ▶ Drawing on the widely praised *Africa Emergency/Recovery* unit's experience, the UN Department of Public Information should establish a full-time and especially skilled capacity for public information on humanitarian emergencies, working with the Deputy Secretary-General in New York and in Geneva.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis and recommendations seek to define the major practicable and cost-effective improvements that could be made in the machinery of international response to the world's increasingly complex humanitarian emergencies. They are necessary, not because there has been no initiative for improvement in the UN system in recent years, but because too many such initiatives have been taken too haphazardly. It is now urgent to pull into coherent shape, and make the most of, the valuable capacities that do exist, to ensure that in emergencies the UN is able to 'anticipate early, initiate immediately, and implement seriously'.⁴⁷

Two complementary initiatives, however, must be taken if these technical reforms within the UN system are to achieve their optimum results. The donor community must bend every effort to provide the financing, commodities, and other resources that can alone enable the UN system to meet the ever-increasing expectations invested in it. And there must be renewed attention to the development process and to a stable and equitable external economic environment for it. That is the only ultimate insurance against disasters and humanitarian crises.

⁴⁷ Chairman of the Third Committee of ECOSOC, 1991 Second Regular Session, Ambassador Jan Eliasson of Sweden.

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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S RESOLUTION

Forty-sixth session
Agenda item 143

A/46/182
19 December 1991

STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS

The General Assembly

Recalling its resolution 2816 (XXVI) of 14 December 1971, and its subsequent resolutions and decisions on humanitarian assistance, including its resolution 45/100 of 14 December 1990,

Recalling also its resolution 44/236 of 22 December 1989, the annex to which contains the International Framework of Action for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction,

Deeply concerned about the suffering of the victims of disasters and emergency situations, the loss in human lives, the flow of refugees, the mass displacement of people and the material destruction,

Mindful of the need to strengthen further and make more effective the collective efforts of the international community, in particular the United Nations system, in providing humanitarian assistance,

Taking note with satisfaction of the report of the Secretary-General on the review of the capacity, experience and coordination arrangements in the United Nations system for humanitarian assistance,¹

1. **Adopts** the text contained in the annex to the present resolution for the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system;
2. **Requests** the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session on the implementation of the present resolution.

ANNEX

I. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Humanitarian assistance is of cardinal importance for the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies.
2. Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.
3. The sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States must be fully respected in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. In this context, humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country and in principle on the basis of an appeal by the affected country.
4. Each State has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory. Hence, the affected State has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory.
5. The magnitude and duration of many emergencies may be beyond the response capacity of many affected countries. International cooperation to address emergency situations and to strengthen the response capacity of affected countries is thus of great importance. Such cooperation should be provided in accordance with international law and national laws. Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations working impartially and with strictly humanitarian motives should continue to make a significant contribution in supplementing national efforts.
6. States whose populations are in need of humanitarian assistance are called upon to facilitate the work of these organizations in implementing humanitarian assistance, in particular the supply of food, medicines, shelter and health care, for which access to victims is essential.
7. States in proximity to emergencies are urged to participate closely with the affected countries in international efforts, with a view to facilitating, to the extent possible, the transit of humanitarian assistance.
8. Special attention should be given to disaster prevention and preparedness by the Governments concerned, as well as by the international community.
9. There is a clear relationship between emergency, rehabilitation and development. In order to ensure a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and development, emergency assistance should be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development. Thus, emergency measures should be seen as a step towards long-term development.

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10. Economic growth and sustainable development are essential for prevention of and preparedness against natural disasters and other emergencies. Many emergencies reflect the underlying crisis in development facing developing countries. Humanitarian assistance should therefore be accompanied by a renewal of commitment to economic growth and sustainable development of developing countries. In this context, adequate resources must be made available to address their development problems.

11. Contributions for humanitarian assistance should be provided in a way which is not to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development.

12. The United Nations has a central and unique role to play in providing leadership and coordinating the efforts of the international community to support the affected countries. The United Nations should ensure the prompt and smooth delivery of relief assistance in full respect of the above-mentioned principles, bearing in mind also relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolutions 2816 (XXVI) and 45/100. The United Nations system needs to be adapted and strengthened to meet present and future challenges in an effective and coherent manner. It should be provided with resources commensurate with future requirements. The inadequacy of such resources has been one of the major constraints in the effective response of the United Nations to emergencies.

II. PREVENTION

13. The international community should adequately assist developing countries in strengthening their capacity in disaster prevention and mitigation, both at the national and regional levels, for example, in establishing and enhancing integrated programmes in this regard.

14. In order to reduce the impact of disasters there should be increased awareness of the need for establishing disaster mitigation strategies, particularly in disaster-prone countries. There should be greater exchange and dissemination of existing and new technical information related to the assessment, prediction and mitigation of disasters. As called for in the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, efforts should be intensified to develop measures for prevention and mitigation of natural disasters and similar emergencies through programmes of technical assistance and modalities for favourable access to, and transfer of, relevant technology.

15. The disaster management training programme recently initiated by the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator and the United Nations Development Programme should be strengthened and broadened.

16. Organizations of the United Nations system involved in the funding and the provision of assistance relevant to the prevention of emergencies should be provided with sufficient and readily available resources.

17. The international community is urged to provide the necessary support and resources to programmes and activities undertaken to further the goals and objectives of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction.

III. PREPAREDNESS

18. International relief assistance should supplement national efforts to improve the capacities of developing countries to mitigate the effects of natural disasters expeditiously and effectively and to cope efficiently with all emergencies. The United Nations should enhance its efforts to assist developing countries to strengthen their capacity to respond to disasters, at the national and regional levels, as appropriate.

Early warning

19. On the basis of existing mandates and drawing upon monitoring arrangements available within the system, the United Nations should intensify efforts, building upon the existing capacities of relevant organizations and entities of the United Nations, for the systematic pooling, analysis and dissemination of early-warning information on natural disasters and other emergencies. In this context, the United Nations should consider making use as appropriate of the early-warning capacities of Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

20. Early-warning information should be made available in an unrestricted and timely manner to all interested Governments and concerned authorities, in particular of affected or disaster-prone countries. The capacity of disaster-prone countries to receive, use and disseminate this information should be strengthened. In this connection, the international community is urged to assist these countries upon request with the establishment and enhancement of national early-warning systems.

IV. STAND-BY CAPACITY

(a) Contingency funding arrangements

21. Organizations and entities of the United Nations system should continue to respond to requests for emergency assistance within their respective mandates. Reserve and other contingency funding arrangements of these organizations and entities should be examined by their respective governing bodies to strengthen further their operational capacities for rapid and coordinated response to emergencies.

22. In addition, there is a need for a complementary central funding mechanism to ensure the provision of adequate resources for use in the initial phase of emergencies that require a system-wide response.

23. To that end, the Secretary-General should establish under his authority a central emergency revolving fund as a cash-flow mechanism to ensure the rapid and coordinated response of the organizations of the system.

24. This fund should be put into operation with an amount of 50 million United States dollars. The fund should be financed by voluntary contributions. Consultations among potential donors should be held to this end. To achieve this target, the Secretary-General should launch an appeal to potential donors and convene a meeting of those donors in the first quarter of 1992 to secure contributions to the fund on an assured, broad-based and additional basis.

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25. Resources should be advanced to the operational organizations of the system on the understanding that they would reimburse the fund in the first instance from the voluntary contributions received in response to consolidated appeals.

26. The operation of the fund should be reviewed after two years.

(b) Additional measures for rapid response

27. The United Nations should, building upon the existing capacities of relevant organizations, establish a central register of all specialized personnel and teams of technical specialists, as well as relief supplies, equipment and services available within the United Nations system and from Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, that can be called upon at short notice by the United Nations.

28. The United Nations should continue to make appropriate arrangements with interested Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to enable it to have more expeditious access, when necessary, to their emergency relief capacities, including food reserves, emergency stockpiles and personnel, as well as logistic support. In the context of the annual report to the General Assembly mentioned in paragraph 35 (i) below, the Secretary-General is requested to report on progress in this regard.

29. Special emergency rules and procedures should be developed by the United Nations to enable all organizations to disburse quickly emergency funds, and to procure emergency supplies and equipment, as well as to recruit emergency staff.

30. Disaster-prone countries should develop special emergency procedures to expedite the rapid procurement and deployment of equipment and relief supplies.

V. CONSOLIDATED APPEALS

31. For emergencies requiring a coordinated response, the Secretary-General should ensure that an initial consolidated appeal covering all concerned organizations of the system, prepared in consultation with the affected State, is issued within the shortest possible time and in any event not longer than one week. In the case of prolonged emergencies, this initial appeal should be updated and elaborated within four weeks, as more information becomes available.

32. Potential donors should adopt necessary measures to increase and expedite their contributions, including setting aside, on a stand-by basis, financial and other resources that can be disbursed quickly to the United Nations system in response to the consolidated appeals of the Secretary-General.

VI. COORDINATION, COOPERATION AND LEADERSHIP

(a) **Leadership of the Secretary-General**

33. The leadership role of the Secretary-General is critical and must be strengthened to ensure better preparation for, as well as rapid and coherent response to, natural disasters and other emergencies. This should be achieved through coordinated support for prevention and preparedness measures and the optimal utilization of, *inter alia*, an inter-agency standing committee, consolidated appeals, a central emergency revolving fund and a register of stand-by capacities.

34. To this end, and on the understanding that the requisite resources envisaged in paragraph 24 above would be provided, a high-level official, emergency relief coordinator, would be designated by the Secretary-General to work closely with and with direct access to him, in cooperation with the relevant organizations and entities of the system dealing with humanitarian assistance and in full respect of their mandates, without prejudice to any decisions to be taken by the General Assembly on the overall restructuring of the Secretariat of the United Nations. This high-level official should combine the functions at present carried out in the coordination of United Nations response by representatives of the Secretary-General for major and complex emergencies, as well as by the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator.

35. Under the aegis of the General Assembly and working under the direction of the Secretary-General, the high-level official would have the following responsibilities:

(a) Processing requests from affected Member States for emergency assistance requiring a coordinated response;

(b) Maintaining an overview of all emergencies through, *inter alia*, the systematic pooling and analysis of early-warning information as envisaged in paragraph 19 above, with a view to coordinating and facilitating the humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system to those emergencies that require a coordinated response;

(c) Organizing, in consultation with the Government of the affected country, a joint inter-agency needs-assessment mission and preparing a consolidated appeal to be issued by the Secretary-General, to be followed by periodic situation reports including information on all sources of external assistance;

(d) Actively facilitating, including through negotiation if needed, the access by the operational organizations to emergency areas for the rapid provision of emergency assistance by obtaining the consent of all parties concerned, through modalities such as the establishment of temporary relief corridors where needed, days and zones of tranquility and other forms;

(e) Managing, in consultation with the operational organizations concerned, the central emergency revolving fund and assisting in the mobilization of resources;

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(f) Serving as a central focal point with Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerning United Nations emergency relief operations and, when appropriate and necessary, mobilizing their emergency relief capacities, including through consultations in his capacity as Chairman of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee;

(g) Providing consolidated information, including early warning on emergencies, to all interested Governments and concerned authorities, particularly affected and disaster-prone countries, drawing on the capacities of the organizations of the system and other available sources;

(h) Actively promoting, in close collaboration with concerned organizations, the smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and reconstruction as relief operations under his/her aegis are phased out;

(i) Preparing an annual report for the Secretary-General on the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance, including information on the central emergency revolving fund, to be submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

36. The high-level official should be supported by a secretariat based on a strengthened Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator and the consolidation of existing offices that deal with complex emergencies. This secretariat could be supplemented by staff seconded from concerned organizations of the system. The high-level official should work closely with organizations and entities of the United Nations system, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Organization for Migration and relevant non-governmental organizations. At the country level, the high-level official would maintain close contact with and provide leadership to the resident coordinators on matters relating to humanitarian assistance.

37. The Secretary-General should ensure that arrangements between the high-level official and all relevant organizations are set in place, establishing responsibilities for prompt and coordinated action in the event of emergency.

(b) Inter-Agency Standing Committee

38. An Inter-Agency Standing Committee serviced by a strengthened Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator should be established under the chairmanship of the high-level official with the participation of all operational organizations and with a standing invitation to the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of the Red Cross Societies, and the International Organization for Migration. Relevant non-governmental organizations can be invited to participate on an ad hoc basis. The Committee should meet as soon as possible in response to emergencies.

(c) Country-level coordination

39. Within the overall framework described above and in support of the efforts of the affected countries, the resident coordinator should normally coordinate the humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system at the country level. He/She should facilitate the preparedness of the United Nations system and assist in a speedy transition from relief to development. He/She should promote the use of all locally or regionally available relief capacities. The resident coordinator should chair an emergency operations group of field representatives and experts from the system.

VII. CONTINUUM FROM RELIEF TO REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT

40. Emergency assistance must be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development. Development assistance organizations of the United Nations system should be involved at an early stage and should collaborate closely with those responsible for emergency relief and recovery, within their existing mandates.

41. International cooperation and support for rehabilitation and reconstruction should continue with sustained intensity after the initial relief stage. The rehabilitation phase should be used as an opportunity to restructure and improve facilities and services destroyed by emergencies in order to enable them to withstand the impact of future emergencies.

42. International cooperation should be accelerated for the development of developing countries, thereby contributing to reducing the occurrence and impact of future disasters and emergencies.

The Nordic UN Project

United Nations reform in the economic and social fields has been the subject of study and discussion in a major project sponsored by four Nordic countries. This project, which has been running parallel to the studies in UN reform undertaken by Brian Urquhart and Erskine Childers, has now been completed and the results published in three books and a number of reports.

The Nordic countries have traditionally been strong supporters of the UN, not least its unique role in the field of international development cooperation. For many years the Nordic countries have financed one third of total voluntary contributions to some key programmes in the UN system, such as UNDP and UNICEF. As major contributors to these programmes, the Nordic countries feel a special obligation to ensure their efficiency and developmental impact. The Nordic UN Project was launched in mid-1988 by the governments of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden with a view to strengthening the activities of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. In May, 1991, the Final Report of the Project was presented in New York to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Subsequently, the Nordic countries have presented the report in various multilateral fora and in bilateral consultations.

The focus of the Nordic UN Project has essentially been on the operational activities for development under ECOSOC, where more than two thirds of the four to five billion dollars comprising the UN system's annual turnover is put to work. There has been a strong concentration on the fragmentation and marginalization of the UN system in the operational field of development. Two of the most important fields where the UN operational organizations need to be reformed have been identified by the Project as related to the questions of governance and financing.

Governance. Nowhere is the above-mentioned fragmentation more keenly felt than as regards the governance of the UN's development activities at the highest level. While the governing bodies of the specialized agencies provide a forum and an opportunity for sector ministers to meet and to discuss matters of common concern, there is no body to give effective high-level guidance and cohesion to the executive organs of the UN's operational activities. In order to remedy this situation, the Nordic UN Project makes two proposals as illustrations of what can be done. The first is the creation of an International Development Council within the UN and the second is the creation of a system of smaller governing bodies for the UN's operational activities. The function of the former would be to give overall policy guidance for the UN's operational activities for development and the function of the latter would be to give UN organizations involved in these activities a more effective form of executive governance on a continuous basis building on the principles of universality and representativity of membership.

Financing. The funding of most of the UN's development programmes depends on a small group of donors. In the case of the UNDP, ten donors provide around 80 per cent of the contributions. The trend in the 1970s and 1980s towards an increasingly uneven sharing of the burden among donors gives cause for considerable concern. In the long run, it is an untenable situation.

Voluntary funding of the UN operational activities for development is not only unequally shared among members, but depends too much on short-term high priority UN activities. The lack

of stability and predictability in donor contributions impedes the laying of sound financial foundations for the individual agencies as well as for the UN system as a whole.

Against this background the Nordic UN Project argues that the present system with voluntary contributions to the UN does not suffice. In order to increase funding—or to prevent a decline—a new approach must be adopted.

The proposal in the Nordic UN Project is for appropriate UN programmes, which have hitherto exclusively relied on voluntary funding, to be provided with a broader funding base combining three sources.

One source might be based on assessed contributions from all member states. This would emphasize the sharing of responsibility between members.

The second source, which would raise the bulk of the necessary resources, would be a process of negotiated pledges. Such a process would have features similar to the capital replenishment exercises of the 'soft windows' of the international financing institutions, IFIs.

A third source would be voluntary contributions, as at present.

A basic proposition in the Project is that revising the present funding system should be built on the principles of partnership and joint responsibility for the UN's operational activities.

* * *

The results of the UN Project have now been published in three books by the Project Secretariat.

The United Nations in Development: Reform Issues in the Economic and Social Fields—A Nordic Perspective. This is the final report of the Project. It is divided in two parts. The first presents a joint view of the priority areas for reforms as seen by the Under-Secretaries for International Development Cooperation in the four Nordic countries sponsoring the project, Bent Haakonsen, Denmark, Ilkka Ristimäki, Finland, Einar Risa, Norway, and Bengt Säv-Söderbergh, Sweden. The second part represents an attempt by the Project Secretariat, headed by Ulf Rundin and Bo Jerlström, to sum up the thrust of the discussions held, the observations made, and the recommendations arising from the studies undertaken in the course of the project. Stockholm, 1991, 110 pp, ISBN 91-22-01437-3. Price SEK 212.

Perspectives on Multilateral Assistance—A Review by the Nordic UN Project. This volume presents eight country case studies on multilateral development assistance provided by the United Nations. They are preceded by an analytical summary by the Project Secretariat. The objective of this analysis has been to explore the views and perceptions of the governments in the countries selected for study, not primarily those of the consultants. Thus the focus is not especially on UN working methods and organization. It has seemed more important to discuss if the UN agencies and programmes are 'doing the right thing according to the views expressed by the recipient governments'. A common feature of the countries selected is that they have a relatively high multilateral assistance ratio. The following studies are presented in the book: Cameroon by Peter Gisle and Matti Vainio; Mali by Anders Forse and Eyolf Jul-Larsen; Mozambique by Allan Gustafsson and Lars Rylander; Sudan by Poul Engberg-Pedersen and Henning V. Pedersen; Bangladesh by Ole David Koht Norbye and Kimmo Kiljunen; Nepal by Poul Engberg-Pedersen and Hallvard K. Kulpø; Bolivia by Stefan de Vylder and Erik Whist; and Ecuador by the same consultants. Stockholm, 1990, 317 pp, ISBN 91-22-01405-5. Price SEK 282.

The United Nations: Issues and Options—Five Studies on the Role of the UN in the Economic and Social Fields. This volume features five studies on different aspects of the work of the United

Nations or of concern to the UN system, namely: 'A Review of International Future Studies' by Staffan Laestadius; 'The Role of the UN in Emergencies and ad hoc Operations' by Krister Eduards, Gunnar Rosén and Robert Rossborough; 'The Role of the United Nations Specialized Agencies' by Gus Edgrén and Birgitte Möller; 'Options for Funding the UN System and the Development Banks' by Percy S. Mistry and Paul Thyness; and 'The UN and the Bretton Woods Institutions' by Lars Kalderén. Stockholm, 1991, 357 pp, ISBN 91-22-01426-8. Price SEK 282.

These three publications are distributed by Almqvist & Wiksell International, P.O. Box 638, S-1 01 28 Stockholm, Sweden.

Several other studies and reports have also been produced under the auspices of the Project. The following are available in English versions: *Towards Sustainable Energy Development: The Energy Activities of the UN System and the Development Banks* by the Beijer Institute, Stockholm, and the Fridtjof Nansen Institute, Oslo; *United Nations and the Advancement of Women: The Role of the Nordic Countries to Promote Efforts by the UN System for the Advancement of Women* by Ingrid Eide and Hilikka Pietilä; *Nordic Influence in the United Nations* by Peter Hansen and another report on the same subject by Jennifer Metzger and Edmund Piasecki.

Copies of these reports may be obtained from the Nordic Ministries for Foreign Affairs.