



**STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MOHAMED BENNOUNA, AMBASSADOR,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MOROCCO, ON BEHALF OF THE
GROUP 77 AND CHINA, AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON ITEM 40 A):
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF EMERGENCY
HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS (New York, 20
October 2003)**

Mr. President,

Let me at the outset, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, convey to the Secretary General of the United Nations our deep appreciation for the documentation submitted on item 40 a) "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".

The Group of 77 and China is of the opinion that the report submitted in accordance with resolution 57/152 of the General Assembly on "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development", upon which this declaration will be mainly related to, constitutes a good basis for our discussion.

Mr. President,

I cannot start this statement without referring to the Baghdad tragic events of the 19th of August 2003. The odious attack perpetrated against the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad which costed the life of Mr. Viera De Mello, Special Representative of the Secretary General and that of devoted servants of our Organization, must be condemned with strong determination. These tragic events remind us of the necessity to work out more in order to reinforce the protection of United Nations staff and associated personnel who often realize a remarkable work at the field.

Mr. President,

The natural disaster problematic is of crucial importance to developing countries. These disasters, when occurring, have long-lasting consequences on affected populations but also on environmental protection, social and economic development matters. Therefore, we must determine how the international Community can be more efficient in this kind of situations.

I would like to reiterate that, for the Group of 77 and China, the guidelines contained in the annex to the resolution 46/182 of 16 December 1991 have been, and should remain, the basis of all responses to humanitarian emergency request for assistance. They should guide the efficiency of the humanitarian assistance of the United Nations and other actors. In this context, the primary responsibility for the organization and delivery of humanitarian assistance should fall on the concerned States. It is fundamental to build strong capacities at the regional and national levels in order to strengthen cooperation between the UN and other humanitarian organizations. The States whose populations are in need of emergency humanitarian assistance should endeavor to facilitate the work of the humanitarian organizations, in particular, in securing the delivery of food, shelter and medical care.

Mr. President,

As the Secretary General has pointed out in his report, we notice, during the last few years, an increase in the number of natural disasters, especially in developing countries. In order to tackle the situation, the Group of 77 and China believes that it is imperious to act first in terms of prevention and to reduce vulnerable situations through a global approach based on international cooperation. It is therefore of paramount importance to strengthen national and local capacities, to transfer the appropriate technologies and to develop a system of advance warning in order to avoid natural disasters. In this context, the Group of 77 and China would like to reiterate the importance of strengthening international cooperation, particularly through effective use of multilateral mechanisms, in providing humanitarian assistance for all phases of a disaster, from relief and mitigation to development, including through the provision of adequate resources.

In this spirit, the Group of 77 and China welcomes the resolution adopted in the framework of the humanitarian segment of ECOSOC last July which emphasizes the need for the donors to provide humanitarian assistance with a view to ensuring a more equitable distribution of humanitarian assistance across humanitarian emergencies, including those of a protracted nature. It has been observed that aid has been abundantly provided in humanitarian emergency situations that benefited from wide media coverage. By contrast, as soon as the media lights fade away, the resources tend to be scarce particularly in some specific regions and when the more difficult task of reconstruction begins.

The Group of 77 and China reaffirms the fact that the contributions made to humanitarian assistance should not impact negatively on the resources allocated to international cooperation for development.

In his report, the Secretary General mentions the coordination between the United Nations development programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. This coordination should be strengthened with a view, inter alia, to advancing the implementation of provisions of vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management including prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery as contained in the Johannesburg Plan of implementation.

Mr. President,

The use of space-based and ground-based remote-sensing technologies is particularly important for the prevention, mitigation and management of natural disasters. It is therefore essential to stress, the need to promote the access to and transfer of technology related to early warning systems and mitigation programmes to developing countries affected by natural disasters.

The Group of 77 and China would like to emphasize that the international community should fully take into account the specific needs of the least developed countries that face natural disasters.

Mr. President,

Following the past sessions' practice, the Group 77 and China will submit a draft resolution on "International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development". The Group 77 is delighted of the growing support of which this resolution benefits from and looks forward to the international consensus around this resolution broadening more this year. This will constitute a message of hope to the numerous populations that are dramatically

affected each year by natural disaster.

Thank you.

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