



**STATEMENT BY MR. LOTFI BOUCHAARA (MOROCCO), ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA, AT THE SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS SEGMENT (GENEVA, 11 JULY 2003)**

Mr. Chairman,

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 detailed report on "Strengthening the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations".

The Group of 77 and China considers that this balanced, comprehensive and informative report constitutes a good basis for our work in this segment.

The Group of 77 and China has taken note of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General. The Group of 77 and China would like to commend His Excellency Ambassador M. Valery Kuchinsky of Ukraine, Vice-Chairman of the ECOSOC, and the facilitators Gustavo Ainchil of Argentina and Pelle Enarson of Sweden for the excellent work they have accomplished during the last few weeks in order to bring closer the differing views and to reach consensus.

Mr. Chairman,

The G77 and China intends to participate in a constructive way in the proceedings in this segment related to "Strengthening the coordination of the emergency humanitarian aid provided by the United Nations Organization, with particular attention to: a) the financing and the efficiency of humanitarian assistance and b) the transition from relief to development".

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the particular emphasis put on the issue of financing and securing the efficiency of humanitarian aid, a vital issue that requires a thorough and objective consideration in order to define ways and means of improving the performance of the United Nations in this field. The issue of transition from relief to development was considered last year. This year, we should particularly attempt to evaluate the achievements made in light of the experience referred to in the report of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to reiterate at this stage that, for the Group of 77 and China, the guidelines contained in the annex to resolution 46/182 of 16 December 1991 have been, and should remain, the basis of all responses to humanitarian emergency requests for assistance. They should guide the efficiency of the humanitarian assistance of the UN 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 local 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 endeavour to facilitate the work of the humanitarian organizations, in particular, in securing the delivery of food, shelter and medical care.

Mr. Chairman,

The last few years have witnessed an increase in the number of natural disasters, especially in

developing countries. In order to face up to the situation, it is urgent to reduce vulnerable situations through a global approach based on international cooperation, as is duly reflected in paragraphs 25 and 26 of the report of the Secretary-General. 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.

Mr. Chairman,

The Group of 77 and China welcomes the ongoing efforts in the Inter-agency Standing Committee to develop a code of conduct for the staff involved in humanitarian aid in order to prevent exploitation and sexual abuse, and the misuse of humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, it is urgent to reaffirm the necessity to systematically take into account a gender-specific approach in the development and implementation of humanitarian aid.

Mr. Chairman,

We note with interest that the report of the Secretary-General puts a particular emphasis, in paragraph 2, on the fact that, while certain conflicts world-wide are in the process of being resolved, others continue to cause suffering to civilians. In this context, it is important to recall that all the parties to an armed conflict should adhere to their obligations under international humanitarian law. It is likewise important to reaffirm that in armed conflict situations and the post-conflict situation, safe and secure access should be granted to humanitarian personnel in order for them to assist the bereaved populations. The Group of 77 and China would like to insist once again on the necessity to strengthen international cooperation in order to improve the coordination of the humanitarian aid, in particular for refugees and their reintegration, as well as for civilians under foreign occupation.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of coordination among the various bodies and agencies providing humanitarian assistance within the United Nations system, and in particular the transition from relief to development attracts a growing interest. 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 as the more difficult task of reconstruction begins. It is therefore of paramount importance to bridge the gap in terms of resource allocations between emergency assistance and aid to development. Failure to do so would mean that the international community, despite all the efforts made, would only discuss problems rather than solve them. The Group of 77 and China would like to emphasize in particular that the international community should fully take into account the specific needs of the least developed countries that face armed conflicts, natural disasters and other emergency situations.

We recall the considerable humanitarian impact of HIV/AIDS and other diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and cholera on developing countries, especially in Africa. In this context, the Group of 77 and China calls for an international mobilization to replenish the Global Fund to combat AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

Mr. Chairman,

The Secretary-General, in his report, underlines the fact that the efficiency of humanitarian assistance depends to a large extent on the speedy response and the availability of funds. We,

however, witnessed during the last 10 years a significant increase in the number of various players in humanitarian aid, particularly non-governmental organizations. Although this may be welcomed, this increase in the number of players poses new challenges in terms of the availability of resources to the United Nations system and of the coordination of activities in the field. The variety of actors may also lead to the duplication of efforts and interference in others' activities. It is therefore necessary to establish a closer coordination among the various actors in order to insure the success of any operation.

The Group of 77 and China reaffirms its support to develop a financial tracking system allowing for a better coordination and management of humanitarian assistance, in order to increase the transparency and efficiency of the United Nations in this field. The Group of 77 and China expresses its concern vis-à-vis the considerable decrease in funds allocated to humanitarian assistance, and calls for reversing the trend.

Finally, 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.

Thank you.

