



General Assembly

Sixty-eighth session

67th plenary meeting
Friday, 13 December 2013, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mrs. Miculescu (Romania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda items 70 and 71 (continued)

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

Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/489)

Draft resolution (A/68/L.24)

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

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/68/84, A/68/87 and A/68/89)

Draft resolutions (A/68/L.25 and A/68/L.27)

(b) Assistance to the Palestinian people

Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/76)

Draft resolution (A/68/L.22)

(c) Special economic assistance to individual countries or regions

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

Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/498)

Draft resolution (A/68/L.21)

Assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence

Report of the Secretary-General (A/68/497)

Mr. Khan (Indonesia): Indonesia aligns its statement with that delivered by the representative of Brunei Darussalam on behalf of the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (see A/68/PV.66).

At the outset, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports, which provide a comprehensive review for the agenda item under consideration. A major concern that the reports bring to our attention is the increasing number of people affected by humanitarian emergencies, including those associated with natural disasters. Along with that rise in the numbers affected, the situation on the ground has also become more complex. It demands scaled-up efforts in the global humanitarian architecture for improved modalities and capacities that will enable an effective response to the growing demands on humanitarian assistance.

With an international humanitarian landscape that is characterized by an intertwined web of various actors — Governments, the private sector, community leaders, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and even the military — improving the coordination and cooperation among those actors, and putting in place a coherent response to any complex emergency, particularly at the field level, is key. Effective and accountable international humanitarian responses must be strengthened, and efforts continued

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to build capacities, frameworks and resources. Despite all the complexities, however, my delegation wishes to reiterate that the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, which are humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, remain relevant. They should be fully adhered to and respected by all actors in all humanitarian operations.

We appreciate the update on the work of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which we commend for its role in the recent heartbreaking devastation that our brothers and sisters in the Philippines have had to endure, owing to Typhoon Haiyan. In the less than a decade that has passed since its inception, the Central Emergency Response Fund has played a crucial role in supporting humanitarian responses to nearly every major emergency worldwide, including through its multisector interventions. My delegation underscores the importance of continuing efforts to ensure and increase the predictability, sustainability and rapid disbursement of CERF's funding, as a complement to existing humanitarian funding mechanisms.

According to the estimate of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre for 2012, more than 30 million people in 82 countries were displaced because of natural disasters — almost double the number for 2011. Moreover, the damages and losses amounted to more than \$138 billion, meaning that 2012 marked the third consecutive year that economic disaster losses exceeded \$100 billion. The series of unfortunate events that created complex emergencies in 2012 strengthen the case for a timely, effective and well-targeted humanitarian response. Such staggering figures also build a strong case for linking emergency relief seamlessly with early recovery and development, thus enabling an affected country to offset its economic losses. It also helps affected populations to get past the crisis and start rebuilding their lives, securing their livelihoods and planning for the future. For that reason, resources and investment should be channeled into strengthening capacities for humanitarian assistance and disaster risk reduction and preparedness, especially in developing countries.

Reducing disaster risks helps to address the complexities of humanitarian emergencies while mitigating the damage done to economic and social development. Let us therefore continue building our disaster risk reduction and resilience efforts, and look at all the possible ways to integrate comprehensive, effective and inclusive disaster reduction measures

into development frameworks, including the post-2015 development agenda.

My delegation reaffirms that it is the States concerned that play the primary role in initiating, organizing, coordinating and implementing humanitarian assistance. However, the United Nations has a central role in providing leadership for coordinating the international community's support to the affected country. With its universality and its mandate, the United Nations must be able to play a pivotal role in the global humanitarian architecture, not only in financing, but also in coordinating, delivering and reporting on the response to humanitarian crises. When it comes to the performance of that role, my delegation emphasizes the importance of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations, including in ensuring the timely and effective delivery of humanitarian assistance.

The United Nations system and the relevant actors should continue to enhance humanitarian capacities, knowledge and institutions, including through the transfer of technology and expertise to developing countries. The international community, development entities of the United Nations system and other relevant institutions and organizations should support national authorities in reinforcing their capacity to build resilience, mitigate disaster risks and prepare for and respond to disasters.

Governments, humanitarian and development organizations need to develop a common understanding of the various risks that could lead to a humanitarian crisis. In that regard, it is important to develop local, national and regional emergency preparedness plans that draw upon community knowledge and focus on education and institution-building. The development of comprehensive plans needs to involve all relevant stakeholders and actors, including local communities, women, persons with disabilities and private sectors.

Finally, I would like to close by reiterating my delegation's support for the Secretary-General's initiative to convene the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, and our commitment to engaging constructively in the preparations that will culminate in the Summit.

Mr. Kim Saeng (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to express its sincere appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership in dealing with international humanitarian affairs and for his comprehensive report on humanitarian assistance. I

would like to extend my gratitude to Ms. Valerie Amos and her staff at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) for their dedicated work in coordinating international humanitarian aid.

Recently, the frequency and severity of natural disasters has been on the rise with the growing impact of climate change. We are also witnessing larger-scale, man-made conflicts, which are profoundly impacting the lives of those affected. Against that backdrop, there is an increasing need for stronger leadership of the United Nations to cope with international humanitarian issues. In particular, given the rise in the number of humanitarian actors, including States, non-governmental organizations and international organizations, the effective coordination by the United Nations of international relief effort is becoming increasingly important.

In that regard, we appreciate OCHA's effective coordination in the Philippines, which was severely damaged by Super-Typhoon Haiyan in November. Since the beginning of the crisis, OCHA has successfully coordinated internal and external relief activities based on close cooperation with the Philippine Government. In partnership with the United Nations, the Republic of Korea also carried out humanitarian activities in the Philippines. We dispatched the Korea Disaster Relief Team and delivered essential items to the affected people of the Philippines.

My delegation believes that in order to strengthen the coordination of United Nations emergency humanitarian assistance, it is essential that the Organization continue to implement the recommendations contained in the transformative agenda of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. That will lead to improvement in humanitarian leadership, coordination and accountability in the field.

The increasing intensity of natural disasters has strongly demonstrated the need to ensure an adequate level of preparedness in disaster-prone countries. Enhancing preparedness capacity is essential for a rapid and effective emergency response. Such efforts should be made primarily at the national and local levels and supported by the international system in a harmonized manner. Building a capacity for preparedness at the national and local levels and implementing a prepared and anticipatory system is not an option, but a must. To that end, efforts to build national and local capacities in preparedness deserve more attention and should be a priority on the agenda.

Two and a half years have passed since the Syrian crisis began in March 2011. We are deeply concerned about the current humanitarian situation inside Syria. We welcome the second high-level international humanitarian pledging conference for Syria, to be held in Kuwait in January 2014. The current crisis is having a profound impact, not only on Syria, but also on the countries that host Syrian refugees. It is time for the international community to focus more on the long-term socioeconomic needs of the host countries by strengthening cooperation and coordination between humanitarian and development actors. We therefore need to design a new framework for more inclusive partnerships between humanitarian and development agencies that may create synergies among different actors and increase the effectiveness of aid.

Women, people with disabilities and children are more greatly affected by humanitarian crises than others, which makes it very important to understand the different needs of these vulnerable groups of people. There is an increased risk of gender-based violence, in particular as physical and social protection become weakened or destroyed in emergencies. We hope that the humanitarian organizations and Governments will do more to protect women in humanitarian crises by providing and funding specific programmes that address gender-based violence concerns.

In conclusion, we welcome the initiative of the Secretary-General to hold the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016, with a view to sharing knowledge and best practices in the humanitarian field in order to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian responses. We hope that OCHA will ensure an inclusive, consultative and transparent preparatory process for the Summit. The Republic of Korea will also do its part by actively participating in global and regional consultations.

Mr. Rishchynski (Canada): People around the world continue to suffer the devastating impacts of both natural disasters and man-made conflicts. With an increasing number of affected populations globally, more must be done to ensure that the United Nations is working as effectively as possible. Canada salutes Ms. Valerie Amos and her colleagues in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for their efforts in the face of multiple global humanitarian crises. We note the progress made to date under the auspices of the transformative agenda to improve the humanitarian response model.

However, much work remains to ensure that these normative principles — particularly on leadership, coordination and accountability — are fully operationalized and implemented in the field. Canada is particularly interested in seeing further performance measures put in place so as to better assess our collective impact as a system and better communicate our results to the broader community. Accountability to affected populations is critical to improving how we respond to and meet life-saving needs. Canada also remains committed to working with a range of stakeholders to strengthen international efforts and coordination to protect and better meet the needs of vulnerable populations, including religious minorities. That includes working to prevent and respond to sexual violence in humanitarian emergencies and ending the scourge of child, early and forced marriage.

(spoke in French)

Canada has taken decisive measures to mitigate the disastrous consequences of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines by working in close cooperation with the rescue bodies and the Philippine Government to provide ongoing support to those in the greatest need. Our thoughts and our prayers continue to be with those in the Philippines who have been affected by Typhoon Haiyan.

Canada is currently providing assistance to ensure that the most vulnerable persons in the region immediately receive the emergency assistance they need. Canada has provided \$20 million in humanitarian assistance in the form of intervention following Typhoon Haiyan, and that assistance is contributing to meeting the needs of peoples affected by the Typhoon throughout the affected region. Moreover, Canadians — individually or through companies — have donated more than \$35 million to registered Canadian philanthropic organizations in support of their efforts to respond to the crisis.

(spoke in English)

We remain extremely concerned about the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Syria and its impact on refugee host countries and the overall stability of the region. We recognize the immense pressure that the influx of refugees is placing on refugee host countries and communities. We commend deeply the generosity of neighbouring States — Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt — in welcoming refugees fleeing the

violence in Syria. Their generosity is born of a genuine spirit of humanitarianism.

(spoke in French)

Canada applauds the courageous efforts of the humanitarian agents in Syria and in the context of other humanitarian emergencies throughout the world, who are willing to risk their own lives to provide crucial assistance to persons in crisis situations. We express our deepest gratitude and sincere condolences to the families, friends and organizations of those who have given their lives in order to save other people.

(spoke in English)

We call upon the Government of Syria to fully implement the Security Council's call of 2 October (S/PRST/2013/15) for improved humanitarian access to Syria, and to allow humanitarian actors, including health-care providers, full and safe access to those affected by the violence, and to remove obstacles to aid delivery. The people of Syria must be safe from oppression and attacks. Civilians denied the necessities of life require humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs. We urge all parties to the conflict to fully respect their obligations, especially their obligation to take constant care to spare the civilian population from the effects of hostilities.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): New Zealand extends its deepest sympathy to the families and colleagues of those United Nations humanitarian personnel who lost their lives or were injured in the course of their duties this year. We applaud the dedication of all national and international humanitarian personnel working in and with the United Nations — people who work in dangerous and difficult circumstances providing support for those in need of humanitarian assistance.

Against the background of the sacrifice of some and the humanitarian work of many, New Zealand welcomes progress towards enhancing the United Nations security management system and to managing the risks to which personnel are exposed. We also extend our sympathy to all the victims of natural and man-made disasters — the blameless victims who require humanitarian relief, not least our friends in the Philippines who have suffered so much in recent weeks.

The year has 2013 presented us with many highly publicized and deeply disturbing images of children and adults in appalling humanitarian situations. But this has also been a year in which too little media attention has

been given to other humanitarian emergencies — all of which expose the complexity of the environments in which humanitarian actors must operate. Like others, New Zealand is committed to the core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and believes that, as we form new partnerships with new actors, we must be vigilant in adhering to those principles. They are essential to ensuring timely, secure and unimpeded access to those who need humanitarian assistance.

We also believe that we — Member States and the United Nations system — must address gender-based violence in humanitarian emergencies and ensure that measures are in place to protect the victims and survivors, including through the provision of sexual and reproductive health services.

The protection of all people with humanitarian needs is paramount. Humanitarian actors must be granted access to those in need of assistance without undue delay, and permitted to do so free from the threat of being attacked, kidnapped or harassed. New Zealand particularly deplores the increased targeting of medical personnel. The protection of medical professionals is essential to ensuring that necessary, often life-saving, medical attention is provided to the wounded and sick.

New Zealand is pleased that we are today adopting draft resolution A/68/L.24, reaffirming the obligations of States and parties to armed conflict to protect and respect medical personnel, facilities and transport, and to ensure that the wounded and the sick receive the medical attention they require without undue delay. We also commend the willingness of many States bordering conflict-affected areas to provide safety and assistance to large numbers of people in need.

It is essential that, wherever and whenever possible, we prevent emergencies from occurring by strengthening the resilience of communities and building their capacities to deal with shocks. Like Lithuania, Malaysia, Thailand and others, New Zealand recognizes that disaster risk reduction provides the best value for money in mitigating the impact of humanitarian crises and in reducing the loss of life and livelihoods. One dollar invested in prevention is estimated to save up to \$7 in humanitarian response.

The impact of climate change and the increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters highlight, as Indonesia has so recently emphasized, the need for closer coordination and collaboration among those

working in the humanitarian, development, political and security-related areas. New Zealand welcomes the focus on the linkages between those aspects, as recognized in the humanitarian draft resolutions we will also be adopting today.

New Zealand supports the Secretary-General's proposal to hold the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, and it congratulates Turkey on its successful bid to host the Summit. We look forward to working with others in making humanitarian action fit for the challenges of 2015 and beyond. We also commend Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos and her staff for their impressive efforts to promote a more efficient, faster and better coordinated humanitarian response, and for her leadership of and improvements to the Central Emergency Response Fund. She has taken up a great task, and we support her in that.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his reports on the progress of the humanitarian activities of the United Nations system. We would also like to commend the tireless efforts of Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos to ensure the effective coordination of the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Recently, the world has been facing a growing number of natural and man-made disasters. Although the global capacity to respond to these challenges is increasing in parallel, the huge damage and loss of life caused by various disasters remain cause for concern. The effective coordination of humanitarian assistance and cooperation among relevant stakeholders are essential. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) plays a central role in realizing these goals.

Disaster preparedness significantly reduces risks and damage, thereby ensuring the continuity of economic and social life. Adopting a comprehensive approach to humanitarian efforts, including disaster risk management, early response and recovery, is necessary. Disaster mitigation and relief efforts must be part of the comprehensive development agenda.

This understanding is set to be reflected in the process leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit, which will be held in Turkey in 2016. The Summit process will address the issues of aid effectiveness, serving people in need, innovation and risk management, with the aim of sharing best practices and broadening partnerships in the humanitarian field.

We commend the Secretary-General and OCHA for developing this holistic, inclusive and comprehensive approach, and we look forward to working together with all humanitarian partners, including civil society bodies and non-governmental organizations.

We believe that the World Humanitarian Summit, together with post-2015 development agenda efforts, will mark a new era in our understanding and conduct of risk management and humanitarian assistance. The key to success in these areas undoubtedly lies in increasing the capacity of local and national institutions and in building the resilience of communities.

As the crisis in Syria approaches its third year, the suffering of the Syrian people has intensified and the ramifications of the conflict have become more alarming. As we continue to hope to find a long-lasting political solution to the crisis in Syria, Turkey will continue to provide the necessary assistance to the Syrian people, in close cooperation with United Nations agencies.

Over the past four years, Turkey's humanitarian assistance increased from \$31 million to more than \$1 billion in 2012. Reaching out to various parts of the globe, from Haiti to the Philippines and from Myanmar to Somalia, Turkey has spent more than \$2 billion for Syrian refugees in Turkey in only the past two years. The *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2013* indicates that Turkey was the fourth-largest Government donor in 2012. Turkey has also been a contributor to the Central Emergency Response Fund. Turkish contributions to the Fund have now reached \$2 million since the Fund's inception.

Turkey is also willing to exchange experience and knowledge on humanitarian issues. The HOPEFOR initiative, sponsored by Turkey, the Dominican Republic and Qatar, is a case in point. The initiative aims to strengthen the coordination of civil and military assets in natural-disaster relief operations.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that Turkey will continue its cooperation with the international community and the United Nations system, in particular in the process leading up to the World Humanitarian Summit. As President Gül highlighted during the high-level week of the General Assembly (see A/68/PV.5), humanitarian diplomacy is a key objective of Turkish foreign policy.

Ms. Derderian (United States of America): The United States welcomes the Secretary-General's

reports, which describe the accomplishments and continuing challenges in international humanitarian assistance.

We would like to acknowledge the tremendous pressure that national and international humanitarian staff are under and the great sacrifices they are making in responding to the multiple crises going on around the world. It is also important to recognize the contributions made by persons affected by conflict even in the most dire of situations.

The United States is pleased to be a leading humanitarian donor and to support responses to crises around the world. We continue to strongly support the international humanitarian system. Our commitment to working with the United Nations and other partners to protect and assist civilians uprooted by conflict and devastated by natural disasters remains firm. We fully endorse the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's transformative agenda, and we urge all United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and other humanitarian actors to continue to implement the various elements of the Agenda so that together we can help to make the system more coherent, coordinated and effective.

We share the Secretary-General's concern about the increase in the number of persons displaced by conflict and other violence to 28.8 million at the end of 2012 — the highest figure ever recorded by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. It is logical to assume that this number has only grown in 2013, with new displacements in Syria, Mali and the Central African Republic, among other places. We call on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), UNICEF, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other United Nations actors to redouble their focus and efforts on such populations, in particular as they relate to durable solutions and cooperation with development actors. We strongly back the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons, and urge all Member States to fully support his efforts.

We continue to note that as the world becomes increasingly urbanized, so do humanitarian crises. Of the more than 1.1 million new refugees in 2012, many found refuge outside of camps and in urban and other settings. We urge the United Nations and its humanitarian partners to continue to rethink

their responses in non-camp settings and to develop appropriate tools, strategies and programming that best serve those in need. More often than not, this will mean connecting refugees and others to services rather than providing direct aid.

The United States was pleased to participate in a panel discussion in October with Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos to discuss OCHA's recently released report on the impact of counter-terrorism measures on principled humanitarian action. As we noted during the Washington, D.C., event, the United States has taken several steps to address these issues and looks forward to continued dialogue and cooperation on sanctions, counter-terrorism and humanitarian assistance.

The United States completely endorses the wide variety of efforts aimed at increasing compliance with international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law. We agree with the Secretary-General that protecting people from harm requires a comprehensive response from the humanitarian community, involving legal, policy, operational and advocacy elements. Such an approach is necessary to address issues ranging from access and legal documentation to gender-based violence.

As we look back at humanitarian responses over the past year, we continue to be deeply troubled by the lack of access, risks to the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, and attacks against medical and health-care workers, hospitals and other medical facilities that are protected under applicable international law. Such attacks are unacceptable and remind us of the extreme risks that humanitarian personnel take each day to perform their basic duties. To help mitigate such risks, humanitarian actors must be able to operate in an independent, neutral and impartial manner and be perceived by local populations as doing so.

We also call on States and parties to conflict to facilitate rapid and unimpeded access for humanitarian and medical personnel to civilians in need, including by simplifying and expediting procedures for humanitarian personnel and goods. Further, the consent of States and parties to conflict should never be withheld arbitrarily. Those and other issues are some that we hope the Secretary-General will consider advancing at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, an event that we fully back.

The United States plans to be centrally involved in the consultations leading up to the Summit and looks forward to working with the United Nations, Member States, other humanitarian organizations and affected populations to make the international humanitarian system more inclusive, responsive and effective.

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

My Government would particularly like to express its appreciation for Ms. Amos's two separate visits to the Philippines in the wake of the devastation caused by Typhoon Haiyan last month, as well as the dedicated efforts of the United Nations humanitarian community to support those affected by the typhoon.

Japan, for its part, extended various kinds of support to the Philippines, which included the provision of relief goods and funds totalling more than \$56 million, dispatching medical teams and self-defence force units to transport humanitarian supplies and affected people and to provide medical assistance. In addition, two expert teams in the fields of rehabilitation and oil-spill response are also working in the field. That assistance is being implemented in close coordination with the United Nations humanitarian community. My Government would like to commend the great work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in their relief coordination, which is the theme of today's joint debate.

The United Nations humanitarian system is woefully overstretched. In addition to the emergency in the Philippines, the system already has to make every effort to support those affected by the Syrian conflict. Japan has already provided more than \$155 million for humanitarian needs resulting from the Syrian conflict, including the \$60 million promised by Prime Minister Abe in his address to the General Assembly in September (see A/68/PV.12). We remain committed to helping people affected by the conflict. Japan looks forward to seeing the revised humanitarian planning

and is ready to actively participate in the upcoming pledging conference for Syria in Kuwait.

Nevertheless, the needs are so immense that financial contributions from traditional donors alone are simply not enough. That is why we have to discuss not only how we finance humanitarian needs, but also how better to address such needs. Therefore, the importance of today's debate and the draft resolutions we will adopt can hardly be overestimated.

In that context, Japan strongly welcomes the initiative of the Secretary-General to hold the World Humanitarian Summit, aimed at sharing knowledge and best practices in the humanitarian field in order to improve the coordination, capacity and effectiveness of humanitarian responses. We welcome the readiness of Turkey to host the Summit in 2016, and we are ready to host regional consultation processes for North and East Asia next year in Japan. We will also actively participate in thematic discussions in the process of preparing for the Summit. We are especially happy to share any best practices learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011.

There are two closely interrelated processes towards the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, namely, the post-2015 development agenda process and the process towards the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to be held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015. As we are all aware, the current challenges that the United Nations humanitarian system now faces cannot be resolved by the humanitarian community alone. We have to make sure that the disaster risk reduction is explicitly incorporated into the framework of the post-2015 development agenda. We also have to ensure the synergy of those three processes. Japan, as the host of the United Nations Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, will actively participate in all relevant discussions towards that end.

In view of those concerns, my Government strongly welcomes the draft resolutions that we will consider today. Japan actively participated in negotiations of those drafts, and we express our appreciation to the facilitators of each.

This year, Japan made several inputs to the draft resolutions regarding the importance of the gender perspective in humanitarian response, as we believe, on the basis of our experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake, that such a perspective is key to ensuring the effectiveness of that system and accountability to

the affected people. In that connection, we are currently considering once again submitting a draft resolution on natural disaster and gender at the upcoming fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women. We look forward to the positive participation of all representatives and much constructive discussion.

In conclusion, let me reiterate Japan's commitment to enhancing the United Nations humanitarian system. Japan will continue to be a major supporter in the future as well.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Today, States Members of the United Nations have gathered once again to reiterate that humanitarian issues constitute one of the core areas of the Organization. In that context, Chile has co-sponsored the draft resolutions entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations" (A/68/L.25), "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel" (A/68/L.24) and "Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster" (A/68/L.21).

In particular, my delegation values the fact that, through draft resolution A/68/L.25, we continue to strengthen the language on the protection of humanitarian personnel, particularly medical personnel and medical assistance installations, in line with international humanitarian law and, most importantly, in any emergency response. At the same time, we welcome the General Assembly's reiterated recognition in draft resolution A/68/L.24 of the need to appropriately address the elements aimed at ensuring the security and protection of United Nations humanitarian personnel.

Furthermore, we believe it to be critical that draft resolution A/68/L.25 underscores the importance of bearing in mind the specific humanitarian needs of different sectors of the affected population, including girls, boys, women, the elderly and persons with disabilities. We also appreciate the reference to the transformative agenda — a process that seeks to improve the efficacy of humanitarian response through greater predictability, accountability, responsibility and cooperation.

Similarly, in the context of the need to face the new challenges to the humanitarian system, it is essential in our view that continued emphasis be given to the need to incorporate innovation into the various phases of

humanitarian assistance by the different stakeholders, including the private sector. Furthermore, in addressing the issue of financing at a time when humanitarian challenges are increasing and resources dwindling, we reiterate the call for major donors to continue their current commitments to humanitarian programmes without having a negative impact on the resources available to international cooperation for development. We also deem it essential that the need to adequately address neglected and underfunded humanitarian emergencies be highlighted. The foregoing should be in line with the need for long-term conditions for the transition from relief to development.

In the various forums of the multilateral system, Chile has stressed the importance of having a coordinated response from the international community, represented by the United Nations system, in support of States and populations affected by humanitarian emergencies. In that context, the leadership of Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos has been key, as has been her team in the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, for whose efforts we are grateful.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our commitment to the various regional and subregional organizations that play an important role in humanitarian emergencies; their goal should be to act in a coordinated and cooperative manner, avoiding duplication and achieving full recovery. In that regard, we note the recent Sixth Regional Meeting on International Humanitarian Assistance Mechanisms in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Kingston, Jamaica.

My delegation believes that humanitarian assistance should give priority to human rights, human security, and the promotion of and respect for the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. It should also ensure the rapid and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel and assistance to affected populations. Recognizing the humanitarian challenges we face today, we welcome the holding of the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit in Turkey, and agree with the reference in paragraph 45 of draft resolution A/68/L.25 to the need for the event to allow for

“sharing knowledge and best practices in the humanitarian field to improve the coordination, capacity and effectiveness of humanitarian response”.

We hope that the preparations for the meeting will be undertaken in an inclusive, consultative and transparent manner.

Mr. Bagabo (Rwanda): At the outset, Rwanda wishes to thank the Secretariat for organizing today's timely joint debate on assistance to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, particularly orphans, widows and victims of sexual violence. We would also take this opportunity to commend the Secretary-General for his detailed and comprehensive report (A/68/497) submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to resolution 66/228, which provides a status report on and an analysis of the current challenges to the delivery of relief and rehabilitation assistance by the United Nations and its partners to survivors of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, in addition to recommendations for appropriate ways to meet those survivors' remaining needs.

Next year, in April, the international community will join the Rwandan people in commemorating the tragic events that took place 20 years ago — the 1994 genocide committed against the Tutsi — which led to the death of over 1 million innocent Rwandans in just three months, while the entire world stood by helplessly and indecisively watching. Nearly 20 years since the genocide took place, Rwandans, and particularly the survivors, are continuing to make tremendous strides in restoring the social fabric that was torn as a result of the genocide. However, the post-traumatic effects of the genocide on Rwandans involves a continuing healing process.

The adoption of resolution 58/234 on 23 December 2003, upon the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and its subsequent decision to designate 7 April 2004 as the International Day of Reflection on the Genocide in Rwanda, was perceived by the people of Rwanda, especially survivors of the genocide, as a gesture of solidarity and recognition of the shared failure of the international community. The report of the Secretary-General gives hope to the international community that with commitment, determination and resilience, there is no adversity that cannot be overcome, which is what Rwandans, having opted for life instead of despair and hopelessness, have proved to the rest of the world. Furthermore, the selection of Rwanda as one of the eight Delivering as One countries in 2007 was a clear acknowledgement of the remarkable achievements that the Government of Rwanda has managed to achieve in that regard.

In that context, the Government of Rwanda welcomes the report of the Secretary-General and substantive recommendations with respect to future assistance to genocide survivors in Rwanda, particularly those addressing their remaining basic needs, despite the fact that the Government of Rwanda continues to allocate part of its ordinary budget to the pressing needs of genocide survivors through the Government Assistance Fund for Survivors. To give the Assembly a picture, since the establishment of the Fund in 1998 up to 2012, the Government of Rwanda spent about \$39 million from its ordinary budget.

However, the Government still faces major critical challenges linked to the daunting task of rebuilding the lives of survivors of the genocide in Rwanda. Those challenges include finding a way to incorporate the support previously provided by the Government of Rwanda to genocide survivors into the national social protection strategy in which survivors receive priority alongside a number of other vulnerable groups for support in, inter alia, housing, health care, education and welfare support.

The second challenge is that raising funds to support the survivors becomes ever more difficult as the events of the genocide recede into the past, especially with the expectation that the population will have overcome the immediate consequences of the events that they endured.

The third challenge is that the extreme difficulty that young survivors of the genocide, many of whom are orphans, have in securing sustainable employment, so that they can provide for themselves and, frequently, the households for which they are responsible.

The last challenge is meeting the increasing needs of genocide survivors, especially the disabled and elderly, despite the Government's limited resources. In that context, while Rwanda endorses all recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, we particularly encourage future focus on vulnerable groups such as orphans, widows and those who have experienced physical injuries resulting in mental and physical disabilities, as well as ageing genocide survivors. We encourage the approach supporting those groups through sustainable enterprises and other income-generating activities through capacity-building, microcredit and access to markets in order to promote self-sufficiency and self-reliance.

In conclusion, let me take this opportunity to call on Member States and the entire international community to recommit to the promise of "never again" in the prevention of and the fight against genocide throughout the world.

Mr. Pedersen (Norway): Natural disasters are becoming increasingly disastrous, claiming thousands of lives and affecting millions of people. A few weeks ago, the largest typhoon ever hit the Philippines, killing several thousand people and causing enormous damage to infrastructure and the livelihoods of millions of people. Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos took a firm leadership role, along with the Government of the Philippines. The declaration of a level 3 crisis quickly triggered the delivery of personnel, plans and support. We look forward to the evaluation of and lessons learned from the international humanitarian response.

The disaster in the Philippines also reminded us of the importance of local disaster risk reduction and emergency preparedness plans. The consequences of the typhoon could have been even worse if around 700,000 people had not been evacuated. The message that disaster risk reduction and preparedness save lives and are cost effective has been repeated in many forums and for many years. We may not be able to avoid disasters, but the consequences for a well-prepared community could be less disastrous. Despite that, disaster risk reduction measures continue to be poorly financed and are not systematically integrated into existing strategic and fundraising tools.

We welcome the declaration of a level 3 crisis in the Central African Republic. We hope that it will continue to raise awareness and lead to greater commitment on the part of the international community. The people of the Central African Republic have suffered for a long time and are in critical need of assistance and protection.

Despite the fact that millions of people find themselves in desperate need of humanitarian assistance, and despite the fact that humanitarian actors stand ready to respond, Governments continue to deny civilian access to life-saving assistance. A particularly grave example is the besieged areas in Syria, where hundreds of thousands of girls, boys, women and men continue to suffer under dire circumstances.

We are particularly concerned about health workers' ability to provide humanitarian aid, save

lives and alleviate suffering. Large numbers of people in Syria, Mali, Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan and Somalia are not receiving treatment due to a lack of access to health care.

In armed-conflict situations, medical personnel, facilities and transportation are increasingly under attack. The lack of understanding and disregard of international humanitarian law challenges basic humanitarian principles and values, as well as the right of populations to access health care. Medical personnel and those in need of medical assistance must be respected and protected in all circumstances.

Norway is determined to strengthen our own humanitarian policy in this field and to work with partners to enhance the protection of health facilities and health-care workers, as well as to ensure that affected populations have access to health care. We need to reiterate the obligations of parties to conflict to the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. We need to bring countries together across regional and political divides to forward that agenda and to reduce the suffering of innocent civilians.

While the United Nations has a leading role to play in the coordination and delivery of international humanitarian assistance, the primary responsibility for the protection of people in need remains, of course, with Governments. However, enormous protection needs, in a number of crises, continue to be ignored by Governments. In order to meet their responsibilities, Governments must live up to their obligations under international law and invest in preparedness and resilience. This is ultimately a question of political priority — to invest for the better of all, including the poor and vulnerable.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): The Government of Brazil is extremely appreciative of the work carried out by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Emergency Relief Coordinator, and is honoured to co-sponsor the draft resolution on strengthening the coordination of the United Nations humanitarian system (A/68/L.25).

The coordination between the Central Emergency Response Fund and other specialized United Nations agencies, such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme, has permitted the implementation of effective responses in addressing some of the most severe humanitarian situations over the past year, such as the humanitarian

crisis in Syria and the tsunami in the Philippines, as well as the food security crises in the Sahel region in 2012 and the Horn of Africa in 2011.

The delegation of Brazil is pleased that this year's draft resolution incorporates language that recognizes that economic growth and sustainable development are essential to the prevention of and preparedness against natural disasters and other emergencies. In line with the guiding principles on humanitarian assistance contained in resolution 46/182, which point out that emergency assistance should be provided in ways that will be supportive of recovery and long-term development, we are also pleased to note that this year's draft resolution encourages Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations to do just that. In particular, the draft resolution explicitly mentions, among the policies that strengthen resilience, programmes such as cash transfers, the local procurement of food and services, and social safety nets.

As stated in OCHA's humanitarian symposium yesterday, as well as by the Secretary-General in his report, a strong body of evidence has emerged, indicating that providing people with cash transfers works because it provides the means for rebuilding livelihoods. What is more, cash transfers generate a virtuous circle by stimulating local economies and making emergency response faster and more cost-effective.

The relief responses of national Governments to the Indian Ocean tsunami and the South Asia earthquake included substantial cash-based assistance. In response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the United States, the United States Government itself provided over \$4 billion in cash grants to affected households. Currently, cash transfers are also being used to provide humanitarian assistance in Syria and in the Philippines.

The procurement of local food and services is another instrument that can be used to achieve humanitarian development goals. As noted in the Secretary-General's report (A/68/84), the use of local production has minimal logistical and infrastructure implications. Local procurement can provide stimulus to local economies and in some contexts may be more cost-effective by reducing extremely high shipment expenditures. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has started with local procurement for refugee camps in the Sudan, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Namibia and Pakistan as part of durable solutions.

With the Purchase for Progress initiative, the World Food Programme is using purchasing power and its expertise in logistics and food quality to build resilience among smallholder farmers. By raising farmers' incomes, the Purchase for Progress programme turns the World Food Programme's local procurement into a vital tool to address hunger on a structural basis.

Brazil also believes in the long-term social benefits of safety nets, which reduce the need for external humanitarian assistance in countries facing chronic or recurrent humanitarian crises. Ethiopia's productive safety-net programme for example, provides households with enough income to bridge their food gap, thereby protecting assets from depletion and enabling recipients to be lifted out of long-term food insecurity.

Areas not covered by the social safety-net programme have relied on traditional humanitarian actors, including United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, to meet emergency food needs at much greater costs. The emergency humanitarian assistance provided in response to the 2011 food crisis assisted people at an estimated cost per beneficiary of \$169, while Ethiopia's safety-net programme's response to the crisis totalled an estimated \$33 per beneficiary. The implementation of cash transfers and social safety nets in Brazil throughout the past decade has proved to be extremely effective in reducing and eradicating poverty and lifting a population of over 40 million into the middle class.

In concluding, let me reiterate Brazil's firm commitment to humanitarian cooperation policies which reduce inequality and exposure to risks and promote resilience by achieving assistance and development goals in a mutually supportive manner, and which strive to eliminate the risks of dependency by focusing on policies and programmes geared towards self-reliance.

Mr. Ruiz (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Colombia recognizes the value of humanitarian assistance in cases of emergency and the broad spectrum of relevant activities. Few countries of the world have faced the challenges that Colombia has faced during more than 40 years of conflict and natural disasters. The many lessons we have learned, despite the harsh and complex circumstances in which we obtained them, have allowed us to look forward optimistically to building our society in environment of peace and security. Those challenges have also bequeathed us a heritage of experience that

gives us the necessary authority to address with firm and serious conviction the issues reflected in draft resolution A/68/L.25, which is before the Assembly today.

Undoubtedly, consensus is a fundamental element of the required legitimacy of a draft resolution of this kind, which touches the very core of the *raison d'être* of States — the human beings to whom they owe their existence. Colombia's position is characterized by the belief that international humanitarian assistance should be provided and managed on the basis of the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, and with respect for the primary role of the affected State in initiating, organizing, coordinating and implementing humanitarian assistance within its territory. We hope that in future that can be reflected explicitly in the text.

Humanitarian assistance provided by United Nations agencies, countries and other stakeholders must be delivered with the consent of and, in principle, on the basis of a request from the affected State. In that regard, it is important that international cooperation efforts not only recognize the local and national institutions with which each State has to cope in situations of disaster or conflict, but also support the strengthening of coordination local and national mechanisms for the provision of humanitarian assistance.

That coordination, as well as the engagement of the knowledge and experience of local and national actors in the strategies and activities of the international humanitarian response, contribute to strengthening the capacities of affected States, identifying good practices and lessons learned, and building trust and complementarity between international humanitarian actors and Government institutions. Such actions result in improved response, attention and coverage efficiently and without duplication of efforts.

Faced with issues of humanitarian access, it is necessary to reiterate that access of humanitarian personnel and the delivery of aid is subject to the request of the affected State, as provided for in resolution 46/182 of 1991. Unrestricted access does not ensure the effective delivery of humanitarian aid, much less if it is not coordinated with the concerned State, which is responsible for prioritizing and determining the criteria for care within its territory, in accordance with the geographical, cultural, social and demographic specificities, among others.

Colombia wishes to reiterate that State coordination mechanisms should be considered not a last resort, but rather as a first choice. My country therefore recognizes that, in the context of reform of the United Nations system and efforts to strengthen its coherence, it is important that the system establish inter-agency coordinating mechanisms in order to activate the technical, human and financial capabilities that each agency can make available to respond to disasters. However, it is critical that the process be consistent and articulated with the planned programmes and strategies of national prevention and humanitarian mechanisms.

Colombia also believes that humanitarian assistance should be provided through the adoption of a holistic perspective. We understand that such assistance should contribute to the design and implementation of a process that serves to rebuild the social and economic fabric of affected populations, while contributing to the development of sustainable structures in the aftermath of emergencies.

Finally, it is important that the transition from emergency response to development take into account the processes of rehabilitation and, in particular, reconstruction, which are crucial steps towards avoiding further dependence and assistance by providing new skills and livelihoods. A basic aspect of the provision of humanitarian assistance must be the integration and strengthening of an approach based on rights and differentiated aid.

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

Mr. Jilani (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies): During the debate on this agenda item last year (see A/67/PV.55), I opened my statement with reflections on the devastating impact of Typhoon Bopha, which hit the Philippines last December, and how it affected the lives of more than 5 million people. This year, we once again open our debate on emergency humanitarian assistance as the Philippines continues to deal with the aftermath of one of the most powerful typhoons to ever make landfall. Typhoon Haiyan has impacted the lives of almost 15 million people, displaced more than 4 million people and destroyed millions of livelihoods. The resilience of the people of the Philippines is well recognized. We express our solidarity to the Philippine Government

and people and our commitment to continue working with them in the recovery.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (IFRC) has responded to Typhoon Haiyan with an appeal for 87 million Swiss francs to support the relief and recovery efforts in the Philippines. Within that Movement's overall appeal, the IFRC is seeking 72 million Swiss francs to provide 100,000 families with food, shelter and other essential relief, as well as early recovery assistance, over the next 18 months.

The pressure on humanitarian budgets and humanitarian organizations to meet the increasing needs of today's humanitarian emergencies is evident, from Asia and the Pacific to Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. While media attention shifts from one disaster to the most recent, the humanitarian community today needs to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to millions of people affected by emergencies, both chronic and new, ranging from conflicts to typhoons, floods, droughts, tropical cyclones and food insecurity, to mention just a few.

The majority of those disasters are climate related. Their impact can be mitigated and their costs, both human and material, reduced through better investment in disaster preparedness and risk reduction. The recently published World Bank report *Building Resilience: integrating climate and disaster risk into development* highlights the fact that, from 1980 to 2012, disaster-related losses amounted to \$3,800 billion worldwide. Some 87 per cent of those reported disasters and 74 per cent of losses, as well as 61 per cent of lives lost, were caused by weather extremes. The World Bank report also notes the particularly high disaster impacts on poor countries and in rapidly growing middle-income countries due to growing asset values in at-risk areas. According to the report, the largest coastal cities, for example, could experience combined losses of \$1 trillion by mid-century.

Unless measures are taken to reduce risks, climate change is likely to undermine poverty goals and to exacerbate inequality for decades to come. The general assembly of the IFRC, which brought together our 189 member national societies, has just held its nineteenth session in Sydney, Australia. It adopted the Declaration on the post-2015 humanitarian agenda, which calls on Governments to take action to protect the environment for future generations, to address the negative impacts

of climate change and to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable people.

The IFRC works in partnership with the Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies and supports them in their role as auxiliaries to their public authorities in the humanitarian field. The IFRC works with the national societies to reduce disaster risk by strengthening the preparedness and capacities of communities to better respond to and recover from disasters, to promote actions that mitigate the adverse effects of hazards and to protect development gains from the impact of disasters.

We believe that the national authorities should invest adequately in building resilience and promote programmes that strengthen resilience at all levels. We also believe that Governments have a duty to request international assistance when the scale of the disaster and the needs of the people affected exceed the capacities of their national authorities.

In that context, the General Assembly has for many years welcomed the work of the IFRC in developing the Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international relief and early recovery assistance, as well as other tools, such as the Model Act for the facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance. Those disaster law programmes and the expertise and experience gained through the past 15 years of working with national authorities have proved to be critically needed and quite beneficial when implemented.

A case in point is the response to Typhoon Haiyan. For several years, the Philippine Red Cross and the IFRC have been working with authorities to develop streamlined rules and procedures for humanitarian relief, drawing on recommendations from international guidelines developed by the IFRC, as well as associated model legislation.

Consistent with those recommendations, the Philippines Government instituted one-stop shop teams in areas affected by the typhoon. Those teams consist of representatives from different national and local Government departments and agencies with oversight authority for the entry of humanitarian goods, equipment and transport in order to speed up the entry of relief. That approach has proved effective after disasters in other countries, including Indonesia and Guatemala, with a significant reduction in bureaucratic delays. Without setting up mechanisms such as those

mentioned above, vital relief can be delayed by the legal requirements imposed on international relief goods and personnel, including customs, tax and immigration procedures.

Richard Gordon, Chairman of the Philippine Red Cross and co-author of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, reflecting on the implementation of those regulations, said: "There is an outpouring of support to people in the Philippines after this enormous disaster" and that "[i]t is our goal to be an effective link between the available aid and all the people in need, and these regulations are critical to making that happen".

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/6, of 16 October 1990, I now call on the observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Mr. Bonamy (International Committee of the Red Cross) (*spoke in French*): This year marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Next year, we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of the adoption of the Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field. Those anniversaries testify to the enduring commitment of States to respect neutral and impartial humanitarian action in wartime.

Today, all States have ratified the four Geneva Conventions of 1949. Other key instruments are making steady progress also towards such universal acceptance. Moreover, there are 189 national societies throughout the world that, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the ICRC, continue to work for the alleviation and prevention of human suffering.

Those anniversaries, however, should not lead us to be complacent. Millions of lives are still affected by armed conflicts that often last years, even decades, and are characterized by extreme violence, disregard for civilian lives and widespread contempt for humanitarian law.

The ICRC is mandated to protect and assist victims of armed conflict, which requires access to the people in need. In a number of contexts, reaching the people affected is becoming increasingly difficult, even impossible in some cases. Parties to armed conflicts sometimes explicitly deny access to certain areas, including places of detention. They may also implicitly deny access by imposing unacceptable restrictions or

putting various administrative obstacles in our way. In other cases, the ICRC is prevented from doing its work or can do it only with great difficulty due to the lack of minimal conditions of security.

Finally, certain approaches that combine humanitarian responses, political measures and military action may give rise to doubts about humanitarian actors' genuine aims and complicate their efforts to gain access to populations in need. The ICRC believes that in contexts that are extremely polarized and politicized, the need for truly neutral and independent humanitarian action is even more crucial to reaching all the people affected.

The ICRC is acutely aware of the political controversies surrounding the question of humanitarian access. As a strictly neutral humanitarian organization, it has no intention of taking part in those controversies. It does, however, regularly raise the issue in its bilateral dialogue with authorities to learn their views on the matter and to find a political consensus on genuinely apolitical humanitarian action.

The destruction of infrastructure, the flight of skilled personnel and the disruption of economic activities essential to the survival of populations are often among the main consequences of armed conflict. When, in such circumstances, access to vulnerable people in need is denied, it causes widespread suffering that can easily result in the loss of life, due primarily to a lack of essential supplies and basic services such as potable water, food, shelter or medical care. If the ICRC is unable to establish a confidential dialogue with military forces, armed groups or civil authorities, it will not be able to act when people are threatened, harassed or put in harm's way because of the hostilities. Because of the ICRC's inability to act, detainees may also be at increased risk of ill-treatment or forced disappearance.

Humanitarian law contains numerous provisions regulating the provision of relief to vulnerable civilians. One element those provisions have in common is that relief activities require the consent of the parties concerned. A State may refuse access to relief, but only for valid reasons, such as imperative considerations of military necessity or if the relief being offered is not considered to be humanitarian or impartial, is not needed or is already being provided by others.

The ICRC is constantly negotiating with all parties and seeks to establish a confidential dialogue with each. It does so solely in order to secure acceptance

for its presence and to establish a relationship of trust with all concerned parties in order to persuade them to respect humanitarian law. Our experience has shown that strict adherence to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement's fundamental principles — humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence — is the best way to discharge our mandate and serve the interests of the people affected.

This is no less true for the other entities of the Movement, which also carry out their work in accordance with the same fundamental principles. Our primary partners on the ground are the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, which, because of their intimate knowledge of local conditions and the dedication of their volunteers, often have access where others do not. Such access is invaluable and has to be safeguarded. That is why it is crucial to preserve the neutrality and independence of national societies working in such environments.

For Governments, that means enabling national societies to work with the necessary degree of autonomy. National societies must be free to decide how best to respond to prevailing humanitarian needs. For other organizations active in the field, it also means adapting coordination mechanisms and cooperation agreements in such a way that national societies are not perceived as operating under their control or as serving political or military ends.

Humanitarian action alone cannot prevent or solve humanitarian problems. It is the parties to armed conflicts — States and non-State armed groups — that bear the legal obligation to respect international humanitarian law and to spare civilians unnecessary suffering. We call on all Governments and armed groups to grant and facilitate unhindered access to people in need so that the ICRC and other impartial humanitarian organizations may deliver assistance and protection in a manner that is neutral and independent.

The ICRC is also greatly troubled by the blatant disregard for medical personnel and facilities that it has witnessed all too often. In 2012, the ICRC, with other components of the Movement, began the Health Care in Danger project. Non-exhaustive data from 23 countries revealed that from January 2012 to May 2013, there were more than 1,200 incidents that affected the delivery of and access to health care; 112 medical personnel lost their lives; and approximately 250 of those incidents involved attacks on or denial of access to ambulances delivering emergency, and often life-saving, aid. In

most of those cases, it was local medical workers who were affected.

Mr. Errázuriz (Chile), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Medical personnel and wounded or sick people may avoid medical facilities for fear of arrest, intimidation, harassment, assault or even death. The consequences for the entire population are severe and long-lasting, in particular when they result in the destruction of infrastructure, the flight of skilled personnel and disrupted health systems. This significantly increases the number of indirect victims of armed conflict. We call on Governments to help improve the situation and to take the necessary measures to put an end to those violations of humanitarian law.

In conclusion, we reaffirm that the responsibility for respecting humanitarian law rests primarily with States and other parties to armed conflicts. The ICRC calls on them to show the political will to initiate or actively support efforts to address the urgent humanitarian concerns I have raised and, wherever possible, convince others to do the same.

We hope in that respect that the forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit will lead to tangible improvements in the lives of the many millions enduring the consequences of armed conflicts throughout the world. Building on the emergency assistance system established by the General Assembly more than 20 years ago in resolution 46/182, the Summit should provide impetus for a close analysis of current developments in the globalization of humanitarian action and thereby help to determine fruitful approaches to resolving the problems identified. Our common goal should remain to enhance respect for humanitarian law and effective protection for all victims of armed conflict.

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

Mrs. Klein Solomon (International Organization for Migration): The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is very pleased to take the floor today with reference to the reports of the Secretary-General and the debate on the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations.

Recent and protracted crises have forced millions to flee their homes, either within or outside the borders

of their countries, which calls for the international community to respond collectively. IOM, as the global lead agency on migration, continues to provide essential life-saving assistance to refugees, internally displaced persons and other migrants affected by crises around the world. Based on the comprehensive reports of the Secretary-General, I would like to take up three points for reflection.

First, when we provide humanitarian assistance during crises, our response must take into account the specific needs of migrants, whether they are refugees, internally displaced persons or economic migrants. Recent emergencies have demonstrated the vulnerable situations of people crossing borders and of those who are stranded or unable to leave. Particularly vulnerable among these are women, boys and girls, the disabled and indigenous peoples, who may merit special attention and assistance. Such humanitarian emergencies can often be regarded as migration crises, causing complex and often large-scale migration flows and mobility patterns. They show the need for a rapid and inclusive response that provides immediate life-saving assistance and longer-term life planning and preparedness. IOM's migration crisis operational framework allows for the improvement and systematization of such a multidimensional response.

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

We are grateful to see Member States recognize, in draft resolution A/68/L.25, on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations, the benefits of engagement and coordination with relevant humanitarian actors to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response. IOM is committed to strengthening partnerships at the global, regional, national and local levels with all relevant actors. IOM highly values the leadership role of national Governments and continues to provide its support to them. Strong and consistent partnerships enable us to build long-term solutions.

Thirdly, as the Secretary-General states in his report on strengthening humanitarian assistance (A/68/84),

given the changing and interconnected drivers of crises, Governments, humanitarian and development actors need to work in ways that reduce and manage the risks of crises, rather than to simply respond to their impact. Long-term development, including through disaster risk reduction initiatives, is crucial to limiting the need for emergency relief in future. For IOM, it is therefore of the utmost importance that humanitarian and development action be linked in order to build national and local preparedness and response capacity and to increase the resilience of affected populations. We therefore support the reference in draft resolution A/68/L.27, on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, to the importance of strengthening international cooperation in the timely provision of humanitarian assistance, through all phases of a disaster, from relief to development.

The multilayered and often long-lasting challenges confronting migrants cannot simply be divided into two stages. People on the move may find themselves in need of both humanitarian and development assistance; one does not preclude the other. Furthermore, to ensure sustainability, we must be aware that the transition is a gradual process that requires both flexibility and inclusiveness. Actors involved in both fields must work together to ensure a smooth transition from relief to development.

In conclusion, let me reiterate IOM's commitment to those who are most vulnerable. To that end, IOM would like to express its full commitment to the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and its preparatory process. We maintain our commitment to strengthening partnerships and coordination and are convinced that, as providers of emergency humanitarian assistance, we can and must continue to contribute to long-term development solutions.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on agenda item 70 and its sub-items (a) to (d) and agenda item 71.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/68/L.21, entitled "Strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster".

I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to

announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/68/L.21, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors: Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chile, Egypt, Iceland, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Norway, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.21?

Draft resolution A/68/L.21 was adopted (resolution 68/99).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.22, entitled "Assistance to the Palestinian people".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/68/L.22, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors: Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Japan, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, Norway, Peru, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.22?

Draft resolution A/68/L.22 was adopted (resolution 68/100).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.24, entitled "Safety and security of humanitarian personnel and protection of United Nations personnel".

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/68/L.24, in addition to those delegations listed in

the document, the following countries have become sponsors: Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Georgia, Guatemala, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia and Tunisia.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.24?

Draft resolution A/68/L.24 was adopted (resolution 68/101).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.25, entitled “Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations”.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, since the submission of draft resolution A/68/L.25, in addition to those delegations listed in the document, the following countries have become sponsors: Andorra, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Georgia, Guatemala, Israel, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.25?

Draft resolution A/68/L.25 was adopted (resolution 68/102).

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/68/L.27, entitled “International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development”.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): I should like to announce that, in addition to those delegations listed in document A/68/L.27 or previously mentioned during the introduction of the draft resolution, the following countries have also become sponsors: Australia, Iceland and New Zealand.

The Acting President: May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/68/L.27?

Draft resolution A/68/L.27 was adopted (resolution 68/103).

The Acting President: I now call on those representatives who have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind delegations that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seat.

I now give the floor to the observer of the Observer State of Palestine.

Mr. AlHantouli (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am speaking in reply to the statement made by the representative of the occupying Power, Israel, yesterday (see A/68/PV.66).

What we heard yesterday, including accounts of Israel’s humanitarian activities, changes nothing about the current reality that Israel is the last military occupying authority of our era. It has the longest list of violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including crimes perpetrated against civilians that can be deemed war crimes. It would therefore be difficult for Israel’s cosmetic activities to alter the reality of the colonialist occupation of Palestinian lands and the Palestinian people.

The sole option remaining to convince the international community that Israel is a normal member of the international community is for it to end its occupation of Palestinian land, including East Jerusalem, and to respect and implement the relevant United Nations resolutions towards the achievement of a just, durable and comprehensive peace. However, it is clear that Israel is unconcerned and that it is not in that country’s interest to adopt such an option. Israel is pursuing and increasing its practices and policies in violation of international law on a daily basis.

The Palestinian people and their leaders adopted a historic decision in 1988 by accepting the two-State solution and the creation of the State of Palestine in an area comprising 22 per cent of the historic territory of Palestine. It would be a State existing side by side with the State of Israel. Ever since, we have been committed to respecting the political process and the negotiations conducted within the framework of the peace process.

However, more than 25 years later it has become clear that Israel is not concerned with the peace process. It wishes only to safeguard the process itself. It has blocked any serious initiative to achieve peace. When the late Israeli Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin worked in earnest to establish peace, they killed him. When former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert was close to concluding a peace agreement, he was dismissed and banished from political life. That is the reality of Israel. That reality is not going to change if the international community does not take effective measures, as it did to put an end to the apartheid regime in South Africa.

In conclusion, I wish to inform the representative of Israel, the occupying Power, that when we spoke yesterday of the limitations being imposed on the delivery of assistance to the Palestinian people, that reality is reflected in all of the declarations and decisions adopted by the relevant bodies, in particular the United Nations. Regarding the capacity and aspirations of the Palestinian people, we wish to reaffirm the fact that Israel's brutal occupation must end so that we can live in peace and security. Let us live in peace and in security. Then the bounds of our capacities and aspirations will be unlimited.

Mr. Nitzan (Israel): I am compelled to respond to the Palestinian statement that we have just heard. I must say that I was shocked to hear the Palestinian statement, which conveyed a great deal of hypocrisy and cynicism. The statement was full of lies, aggression and accusations against my Government immediately after Israel joined the consensus adoption of resolution 68/100, on assistance to the Palestinian people.

Did we hear even one word from the Palestinians about Israel joining the consensus every year on this resolution? Did we hear a word yesterday about that in their statement (see A/68/PV.66) or today in their reply? We hear not one word. Their statements are determined to exploit a professional and focused debate on humanitarian affairs in order to further their political agenda at the expense of the United Nations membership, and are totally contradictory to the spirit of negotiations and dialogue that we expect to see from our partners.

It is a good question if, in the light of what we have heard right now, we can call them partners to negotiations. It does not reflect the spirit of dialogue and is condemned. The statement given earlier by the Palestinian representative could have been pulled from

the pages of a Palestinian propaganda pamphlet and not a substantive United Nations debate.

While the Palestinians are busy condemning Israel at the United Nations, Israel is busy supporting the Palestinian economy and developing its infrastructure. Israel is right now, at this moment, assisting the Palestinians in Gaza. We heard the Palestinians speak of Gaza yesterday and today. There was not a word on the rule of Hamas in Gaza and Hamas' responsibility for the situation in that area. Of course, that is the language they commonly use in order to attack Israel each and every time, so cynically. Nonetheless, they keep on accusing Israel and exploiting that arena.

Speaking of Gaza, there was not a word about Israel's process of approving the Gaza Marine gas field that will actually contribute to the Palestinian economy. Why is that so? There is such hypocrisy and such cynicism. Before spreading false accusations, I hope that in future the Palestinian delegation will be mindful of the fact that time is also a precious natural resource and we are engaged in negotiations. Let them keep it positive and constructive. Both parties, I believe, aim at achieving peace. Let the Palestinians not exploit the United Nations arena so cynically for the inalienable right own political propaganda.

Mr. Khan (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to reply to the false claims and accusations made by the representative of Syria that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia supports terrorism and is undermining its humanitarian role in supporting its brotherly Syrian people.

First, we have provided \$50 million in support of Syrian internally displaced persons and, through our national campaign of support to our brothers in Syria, we have provided \$552 million in the form of food, medical supplies, tents and supplies for winter, including blankets and other such items. Moreover, the Government has donated \$10 million to Syrian refugees in Jordan. In addition, we have provided \$100 million to support the Syrian people through the conference of the Group of Friends of the Syrian People; at the donors conference that was held in Kuwait, we pledged \$300 million.

Secondly, with regard to Syrian citizens and their access to our territories, we have provided more than 20,000 visas to Syrian citizens.

Thirdly, with regard to the accusation of the Syrian delegation that we are destroying their territories, we

would like the delegation to reconsider that accusation, to see the reality in which Syrians are living, and acknowledge who is really torturing, killing and displacing their people.

This is just a brief statement for clarification. However, we assert that the lies and accusations presented by the Syrian representative are designed to preoccupy the General Assembly and divert its attention from what is happening on the ground. Our delegation sees no point in continuing to reply to such allegations, which only prolong the Assembly's preoccupation with that matter.

Ms. Alsaleh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to apologize for requesting the floor in response to the statement in right of reply just made by the representative of the Saudi regime.

Before I begin my right of reply, I would like to put a question to the representative of Saudi Arabia. Is he confident that the funds he has cited have been provided by his Government to support humanitarian efforts for the Syrian people, or were they just to finance the purchase of weapons and military equipment for the terrorists, who have used them to kill Syrians?

The flagrant, barbarian Saudi intervention in Syrian affairs has become quite evident, especially since the Saudi Minister for Foreign Affairs openly stated that his country is providing assistance to the terrorists so that they can kill Syrians and literally eat their livers. The Saudi intelligence apparatus is recruiting terrorist extremists, especially those of different nationalities who were incarcerated in Saudi prisons. They are criminals and members of Al-Qaida, and were released from jail with the objective of sending them to kill Syrians.

All of this has come to light in statements issued by the Saudi regime, yet now the representative of that regime tells us that his Government is providing millions of dollars in assistance to the Syrian people. Given the silence of the international community, what sheer ignorance it is, and what a violation of the rules of international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, when a Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia tells the world that it is quite evident that the Saudi regime is providing the Syrian opposition with weapons.

Mr. Özkaya (Turkey): This platform has been abused once again for utter misrepresentations that have already been categorically rejected by Turkey. We

reject once again the baseless accusations expressed by one delegation.

Turkey's position and contribution to the efforts of the international community in extending a helping hand to the Syrian people is well known. We will continue to stand by the Syrian nation during this dire period.

Mr. AlHantouli (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to say that I do not find the reaction of Israel, the occupying State, to be strange. It is the reaction of any criminal who is exposed and scandalized before the world and the international community.

I just want to conclude by reading some verses of poetry by the deceased poet Mahmoud Darwish, in which he speaks of the Israeli occupation.

(*spoke in English*)

"It is time for you to be gone...
For we have work to do on our land
We have a past here
We have the first cry of life
We have the present, the present and a future
We have the world here and the hereafter
So leave our country
Our land, our sea
Our wheat, our salt, our wounds
Everything, and leave
The memories of memory".

Ms. Alsaleh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for requesting the floor again, but I wish to reply to the statement just made by the representative of Turkey.

It is quite shameful that the representative of Turkey should express such apparent sympathy for the suffering of the Syrian people given the aggressive, terroristic policies of his country towards Syria. Turkish and international newspapers report on what the Turkish Government has done to its own people and neighbouring countries. Turkey is now a base for Al-Qaida and for many terrorist organizations. I would refer to one report that hundreds of Turkish citizens have joined the fight alongside Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups working in Syria, with the knowledge of the Turkish Government at various levels. Turkish support for terrorism is not limited to Syria but extends to Libya, Tunisia and Egypt. There are reports indicating that the Turkish authorities have supervised the smuggling of weapons to terrorist groups in Sinai,

in the sisterly Arab Republic of Egypt. These are but a few of the examples I could cite.

I hope that the Turkish representative will represent the interests of the brotherly people of Turkey, who are deeply opposed to the regional policies of his Government, and to advise his Government to work to establish peace and security in the region, instead of spreading chaos and terrorism. I would also remind him that Syria is the main reason for his Government's increased role in the region, but it has exploited that role to stab friends in the back and conspire against Syria. Turkey's conspiracy against Syria is the main reason why the role of the Government has become scandalous, to the detriment of good-neighbourly relations and to the interests of the people of Turkey.

Mr. Nitzan (Israel): I apologize that I have to take the floor again to reply to the second statement by the Palestinian representative. I wish we had heard something new from the Palestinian representative in his second statement other than empty political words. Telling lies over and over again does not make them true.

All aspects should and will be addressed and negotiated in the context of direct bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. We are engaged in those negotiations and we are committed to that dialogue. Whatever lies are spread here will not change the truth. Israel is engaged and committed to the engagement and to direct dialogue between Israel and the Palestinians.

Unfortunately, the Palestinian delegation took the floor once again without actually addressing my questions or mentioning, for example, that in the surreal world of the General Assembly, Israel has actually joined the consensus on a resolution to assist the Palestinian people. Yet, we hear such cynical, aggressive, violent language used by the Palestinian delegation. That is something I cannot comprehend, and I think that we should all condemn their words and their tone in doing that.

The Acting President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 70 and its sub-items (a) to (d) and agenda item 71.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.