



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 & CHINA BY MR ANDRIES OOSTHUIZEN, PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA, ON AGENDA ITEM 69(A), INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN THE FIELD OF NATURAL DISASTERS, FROM RELIEF TO DEVELOPMENT, (NEW YORK, 14 December 2006)

Mr President,

On behalf of the Group of 77 & China, I have the honour to introduce the draft resolution entitled “International cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters, from relief to development”, as contained in document A/61/L.42.

Mr President,

It is well known that natural disasters affects the social and economic development of all countries, but particularly developing countries, the latter who does not always have the capacity to deal with the adverse impacts thereof. Although it may not be possible to completely eliminate the suffering caused by natural disasters, efforts towards relief and development assistance could help in the recovery and long-term rehabilitation of those affected by such disasters.

By introducing this resolution, the G77 & China again highlights the importance of strengthening international cooperation, especially through the effective use of multilateral mechanisms in the provision of humanitarian assistance during all phases of a disaster – from relief and mitigation to development. At the same time it is recognised that the affected State has the primary responsibility in the initiation, organisation, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory. The importance of the principles contained in resolution 46/182, whose annex contains the guiding principles for the strengthening of coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the UN system, are also highlighted in this resolution.

The resolution also recognises the need to continue to explore ways to strengthen rapid response capacities of the international community to provide immediate humanitarian relief, building on existing arrangements and ongoing initiatives. In this regard, the role that information and telecommunication technology can play in disaster response is also highlighted. Emphasis is also placed on the importance of addressing vulnerability and integrating risk reduction into all phases of natural disaster management, post-natural disaster recovery and development planning, while also recognising the value of international cooperation in support of the efforts of affected counties.

Mr President,

The resolution is also mindful of the importance of rapid access to funds to ensure a more predictable and timely United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies, welcoming in this regard the establishment of the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) through resolution 60/124. An appeal is also made that all disasters should receive equal and adequate response, bearing in mind that the allocation of resources should be driven by needs.

Lastly Mr President; the resolution expresses deep concern at the number and scale of natural disasters, and their increasing impact, which result in massive losses of life and property worldwide. It is this concern, together with the recognition that natural disasters impacts negatively on achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development

Goals, which necessitates the continued attention of the international community on this important issue.

As in the past, many countries have co-sponsored this important resolution. In addition to the countries listed in the document, we are happy to announce the names of the following countries that have also co-sponsored the draft resolution: Andorra, Belarus, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, The Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Moldova, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey and the Ukraine.

It is therefore now my privilege as Chair of the G77 & China to request that this august assembly adopts the draft resolution by consensus.

Thank you, Madame President.