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TO THE UNITED NATIONS
New York



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NEW YORK

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STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. MR. SUKHDEV SINGH DHINDSA
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT AND
MEMBER OF THE INDIAN DELEGATION**

**ON BEHALF OF
GOVERNMENT OF SWEDEN
AND
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

ON

**AGENDA ITEM: 65(a)
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN
AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

IN THE

**PLENARY OF THE
63RD SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

NEW YORK

10 NOVEMBER 2008



Mr. President,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Governments of Sweden and India.

We would like to thank the Secretary General for the documentation presented under this item including his Report. We appreciate the introduction provided by Under Secretary-General John Holmes.

Mr President,

India and Sweden recognize that the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance is one of the most important responsibilities of the United Nations. The impartial, voluntary and multilateral nature of United Nations humanitarian assistance is highly valued by both countries.

Sweden and India have noted that the demands for humanitarian assistance are likely to show an increasing trend in the near future. We take note of the fact that there is an increase in the number and impact of natural hazards. We further take note of complex emergency situations and the humanitarian challenges these situations continue to pose.

Mr President,

India and Sweden reiterate that humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law provide the basis for humanitarian assistance. The letter and spirit of these principles need to be scrupulously respected. Sweden and India reaffirm that humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

Mr President,

National governments have primary responsibility for disaster management. It is sometimes difficult for states to tackle emergencies on their own. Nations can and must cooperate amongst themselves to find collective and cooperative solutions to the challenges that disasters represent. The efforts of Member States to come together to promote a more responsive, prompt, fair and need-based humanitarian assistance system must be augmented and strengthened.

Mr President,

India and Sweden believe that the capabilities and role of the United Nations in coordination and delivery of international humanitarian assistance need to be strengthened. This would mean an augmentation of the operational coordination capacities of the Office for Coordination and Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), improved delivery of humanitarian services by relevant UN funds and programmes as well as greater accountability to stakeholders.

Disaster management has to be a holistic process. India and Sweden believe that prevention is better than cure. We must therefore give greater attention and resources to disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness. Disaster risk reduction and preparedness need to be mainstreamed into development policies

Sweden and India also believe that disaster management must be an inclusive process. Communities, civil society and the private sector all have important roles to play. We must act in partnership to exploit and augment synergies.

Cooperation to strengthen local, national and regional capacities in the areas of emergency response, disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness will benefit all. In a globalised world, each nation has capabilities, resources, experiences and knowledge that can be used in partnership by all nations and the international community for their mutual benefit. Mechanisms that tap these capacities and disseminate best practices and knowledge therefore must be given high priority by the United Nations.

Mr President,

The world is going through an unprecedented financial crisis. It is important in these times to highlight the continued requirement for maintaining and augmenting the levels and predictability of funding for humanitarian assistance. In this regard, Sweden and India believe that the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has been a success. The fund has succeeded in mobilizing US\$ 1 billion during its two years of operations. The disbursement of these funds have had a role in accelerating responses to emergency situations and have had a positive impact on the management of these situations.

The institution and operation of the Central Emergency Response Fund has highlighted the collective and shared interests that all Member States have in the humanitarian agenda.

Mr President,

Member States have a common interest in ensuring effective delivery of international humanitarian assistance. The consensus that exists on these common interests can be articulated and strengthened through constructive and informed dialogue. This will reinforce our common ability to face disasters whether natural or man-made.

Thank You

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