

S T A T E M E N T

by Ms.Ochir Enkhsetseg, Director-General of Department of Multilateral Cooperation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia on agenda item 40 entitled "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance"

" 21" October 2003

Mr. President,

Extent and nature of humanitarian developments and challenges have increasingly become complex over the past few years. Humanitarian emergencies exacerbated by conflicts, both protracted and emerging, epidemics like HIV/AIDS, frequent occurrence of natural disasters in many parts of the world increasingly require an effective, adequate and timely response. In order to ensure provision of such a response we need to elaborate on a number of issues raised by the Secretary-General in his reports under the agenda item (A/58/89-E/2003/85 and A/58/434). Those issues include transition from relief to development, humanitarian financing and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, protection of civilians, emergency preparedness, natural disasters, internally displaced persons, HIV/AIDS in the context of emergencies and others.

My delegation, while associating itself with the statement made earlier by the distinguished representative of Morocco on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, wishes to make a few additional remarks.

Mr. President,

For humanitarian assistance to be adequate it has to be commensurate to the needs of a given emergency, equitably distributed and effectively managed. It seems all three areas are interrelated and all have room for further improvement. As seen from the reports there is no consistency in the way in which humanitarian needs are currently assessed. Assessments exceedingly vary not just between countries but also from year to year. Although assessing the adequacy of humanitarian assistance in relation to need is a complex task, a common tool for analyzing and diagnosing a given situation has to be developed, in our view, and consistently applied. That will help to restore the trust of donors in the value of assessments and contribute toward ensuring a more equitable distribution of humanitarian assistance.

Another area requiring attention is the need to develop definitions that clearly identify eligible flows and provide a qualitative description of humanitarian assistance in order to redress the present disturbing situation when "various uses of

humanitarian assistance lead to a blurring of the distinction between humanitarian assistance and ODA". In this respect, my delegation wishes to emphasize the importance of the call made at ECOSOC this year that humanitarian assistance should be provided in a way that is not to the detriment of resources made available for development cooperation.

My delegation strongly supports further enhancement of the central and unique role of the United Nations in providing leadership for operations and coordination of international humanitarian action. We commend the important role played by OCHA in responding to complex humanitarian crises around the world. Taking this opportunity my delegation wishes to thank former Under-Secretary-General Kenzo Oshima for his indomitable perseverance and able stewardship and welcome his successor Mr. Jan Egeland and wish him well in his onerous responsibilities.

Mr. President,

The frequency and magnitude of natural disasters have considerably increased over the past three decades resulting in enormous human and material loss. On the other hand, it is heartening to note that thanks to developing better knowledge of hazardous conditions and investment in protective measures a dramatic decline has been registered over the same period in the number of deaths from natural disasters. Nonetheless, capacity building, especially in developing countries, to enhance preparedness for and reduce the impact of natural disasters, remains a major challenge. It stands undisputable that the most effective way of mitigating consequences of natural disasters is an adequate capacity at both national and local levels, including efficient and credible early warning system, accurate and speedy assessment of emergencies with active involvement of donors, timely advocacy and coherent coordination and greater synergies among all the major actors.

Mr. President,

For a country with extremely low population density, vast territory and weak infrastructure, high susceptibility of Mongolia to natural disasters assumes an added vulnerability. Mongolia is subject to a number of disasters – droughts, forest fires, floods, earthquakes and dzud, extreme harsh winters with severe snow storms. For the past 4 years Mongolia has been hit hard by successive droughts in summer and dzud in winter. The toll on people has been immense given the devastating economic and social consequences of natural disasters and its impact on a small and vulnerable economy caught in the midst of transition. The first two winters my Government, in collaboration with the United Nations, had to raise international support through emergency appeals. Taking this opportunity my delegation wishes to wholeheartedly thank all our bilateral and multilateral partners for their generous support and assistance to mitigate the consequences of that disaster. Since natural disasters, including dzud, drought, forest fires, would be recurring phenomena my Government has endeavored to develop, in collaboration with UNDP and with support of donors, a longer-term strategy for disaster preparedness and management along with

taking immediate relief measures. Necessary legislative and administrative action has been taken to develop national capacity for disaster preparedness and management, including the move from military to civilian control of disaster management affairs. We look forward to our continued cooperation in strengthening natural disaster preparedness and response capacities at local, national and regional levels.

Mr. President,

Last but not least, my delegation wishes to echo many others who underscored the importance of ensuring safety and security of humanitarian workers, including the United Nations staff. Here, I wish to reiterate once again that Mongolia, along with other nations, resolutely condemned the barbaric attack on the UN headquarters in Baghdad last August. UN staff are emissaries of peace. In every corner of the world, under the most difficult and at times dangerous circumstances, they dedicate their lives to helping people in need. We pay tribute to the late Special Representative Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, his colleagues and many others who have dedicated themselves to the ideals of humanity.