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UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN
IN MULTILATERAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
GRADUATE STUDIES
OF OTTAWA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS



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INTRODUCTION

With this world's heavy industrialization, its growing population, urban centers and underdeveloped rural regions, it is evident that its inhabitants are becoming more and more vulnerable in an environment prone to disasters. The people that are hit the worst are the poor, because their situation renders them more vulnerable. Certain disaster-prone regions which also have high densities of population tend to experience high death tolls and totally destroyed rural villages, once disasters have struck. For example, the Brundtland Report entitled Our Common Future (1987) which is well known for its arguments in favor of environmentally sound development, states that droughts and floods - disasters caused by widespread deforestation and overcultivation - have known an increase in the numbers of people affected. There were 18.5 million people affected by droughts annually in the 1960s and 24.4 million in the 1970s; 5.2 million people were victims of floods yearly in the 1960s, compared with 15.4 million in the 1970s. Results of the 1980s have not yet been published, but the trend towards increases seems to be continuing with droughts in Africa, India, and Latin America, and floods throughout Asia, and the Andean region of Latin America. 1

It is not very hard to believe that the loss of lives from disasters in the poorest countries is almost one hundred times greater than in industrialized countries, and the damage incurred in these countries, in terms of Gross National Product, is even greater.

One of the reasons for this gap lies in the lack of access to cheap forms of modern technology in disaster-prone countries, as well as insufficient human resources and materials to help with general problems caused by disasters. This can be linked to the fact that the public, in general, is not well enough informed, especially in the area of simple preventative measures. This is perhaps why facilities in poor countries that must deal with disasters are so scattered and unorganized. There is, also, a tendency to believe that a disaster will never occur, and knowing that if one should come about, that the affected country will be able to appeal to the generosity of the international community for relief and reconstruction. Too often, no national organization or ministry has taken charge of mobilizing, directing and coordinating all activities related to a disaster response. 2

Once a disaster strikes, authorities have two kinds of challenges that they must deal with simultaneously. The first, according to Professor A. Ciborowski (a specialist in post-disaster reconstruction),

"is concerned with emergency relief operations, and the second, is reconstruction and long-range development. Solutions to both of these are interdependent; meaning that some emergency decisions made at the beginning of the relief operations may influence and even limit future development patterns and, eventually, the control of vulnerability. On the other hand, long-range options, for instance future degrees of concentration or of density of development, must already be taken into account even during the emergency relief period." 3

Therefore, if relief operations are to take development into account, they should create an awareness of prevention and preparedness measures, so that if a disaster were to re-occur, the population affected would be better able to deal with it.

The United Nations Disaster Relief Office (UNDRO) is the principal UN office created to deal with relief operations, and has projects and programs that are based on three premises: 1) natural disasters are an obstacle to development; 2) most disasters are preventable; and 3) essential preventative measures are the least costly. 4

The Office, however, has been plagued with problems since it first started operations in 1972. Its mandate, as we shall see, is very wide but its funding is marginal in comparison. In theory, its primary concern, or the area in which it could make the most impact, is through education in areas of prevention and preparedness measures, but in practice, only a small percentage of its budget is allocated to this area. In practice, over half of its

budget goes to disaster relief coordination, where it must compete for authority with other UN organizations and agencies that have a larger budget and greater influence.

As mentioned, UNDRD's mandated operations face several obstacles. Among them is a lack of cooperation by some countries that have a tendency to deny that a disaster has had any serious impact on their country, or who even believe that some kind of UN intervention would be an intrusion on their sovereignty. There are also governments receiving assistance which have been known to mis-manage supplies due to corruption or incompetence. However, it is up to governments to make appeals for assistance before any international disaster intervention can take place. UNDRD has recognized in resolution 38/202(1983) that the primary responsibility for administration, relief operations and disaster preparedness lies with the affected countries and that the major part of the material assistance and human effort in disaster relief comes from the governments of those countries. UNDRD must therefore also contend with the fact that governments must first appeal for assistance before it can intervene. 5

It will be the purpose of this thesis to study the roles of most UN organizations and specialized agencies having disaster relief within their mandate. These organizations are: the International Labour Organization (ILO), the International Refugee Organization (IRO), the

International Relief Union (IRU), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the World Food Program (WFP), and the World Health Organization (WHO). Of specific interest to our study is the extent to which each organization focuses on the needs and the role of women in Disaster Management and how this focus has or has not been included in their policies, rules and criteria for disaster-related activities, with the knowledge of existing UN-Economic and Social Council reports and legislation on the special assistance to women in emergency and armed conflict (drafted in the early 1970s).

This focus on women stems from the perception that the role of women in a disaster situation has yet to receive the attention it deserves. Women are a potential resource that must not be overlooked during the three phases of disaster management (preparedness, response and recovery), and should not just be considered simply as victims of a disaster. Historically, the role that women can play in disaster management has been overlooked by the

UN organizations mentioned above. It will be our objective to point out why this oversight exists, and determine what mixture of different factors have caused such a gap. Possible reasons are the lack of cooperation between these organizations; a shortcoming in the definition of the role of women in Disaster Management; the need for a new outlook on the Disaster Management process, one that would integrate women into the system through written legislation drafted at the General Assembly and accepted by all Member States, and translating this outlook into cooperative action through the United Nations program co-ordinating agencies: these agencies include the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee of Co-ordination. There also seems to be a certain lack of accurate statistical data on the role of women in disaster-prone countries. Finally, there seems to be a misconception on the part of the international and national institutions that whatever efforts are made, relief will eventually reach those who need it the most, hoping, also, that the recipient government will manage the relief supplies efficiently and equally, using women's local community groups, organizations and unions.

We will see in which ways women are vulnerable to disasters and what are the capacities they and their collective institutions have to offer to these organizations and local governments in disaster prevention as well as the mitigation of the impact of disasters. The

framework we will use to organize this information will be a Vulnerability/Capacity Analysis, as conceptualized by M.E. Anderson and F.J. Woodrow from the Harvard School of Education's International Relief/Development Project and as published in their book Rising from the Ashes. This framework was designed for non-governmental organizations and others to assist them in determining how to provide emergency assistance so that it supports long-term development. We will use it in this Thesis as a tool to initiate a gender-specific analysis of the impact of disasters on women, in order to assess their capacities to react to, and thereby influence, the Disaster Management process. We look at vulnerabilities in order to "understand why a disaster happened and what its impact has been, why it affected a particular group of people, and how to estimate the risks of future disasters." 6 By capacities, we mean the strengths that exist within a society - especially women - on which future development can be built.

"Only in acknowledging the existence of capacities within the affected population, can we then design and implement disaster responses that are accountable to every victim, and also have some developmental impacts." 7

The relevance of this perspective comes from our growing understanding of the role of women, which has become clearer since the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), and the research that has emerged and been accepted preceding and following the Decade. This research,

as well as studies made on the conditions of refugee women and women in disasters, have shown the same pattern of vulnerability and capacity emerging in a wide variety of areas. Women suffer from unequal conditions within their social traditions, but they cannot be only seen as passive victims. For example, the information provided by the Decade has shown us that women have a double role as the bearers of children and producers of the family income, which exposes them to special physical and a mental health hazards. Women's traditional responsibilities have not been well recognized by the modern health system, since it tends to be managed by male physicians and attuned to high technology and institutional health care. This means that women's special health needs have traditionally received less attention than those of men and boys, and they have often been ignored by health planners. ⁸ Also, women's declining control over land and a lack of access to credit are major barriers to women's adjustment to the change from subsistence agriculture to export-oriented and cash-cropping agriculture. ⁹ Poor sanitation can promote diseases that are linked to high infant mortality, which causes women to refuse family planning measures. ¹⁰ Women also suffer from unequal employment opportunities in the industrial sector, unequal access to proper education, inadequate fuel supplies, and the failure of planners to recognize women's participation in forest management. ¹¹

The Decade for Women called for these inequalities to be corrected in efforts to improve the development process of Third World countries. In disaster situations, women might be able to survive their effects if inequalities in the disaster management process were eliminated and if they are also helped in regards to possible psychological traumas that come about as a result of disasters: namely with the loss of property, family, and the hopelessness that arises after a disaster.

Therefore, researchers agree that in societies we see as developed at the economic level, the recognition of women's participation in the social and organizational structures has not been sufficient at the family, organizational and governmental levels. Although this fact has been recognized within development objectives, we fear that it has not been universally recognized in all three phases of disaster relief, namely: preparedness, response and recovery. Therefore, as M.B. Anderson and P.J. Woodrow point out, when external agency interventions, including national governments and regional institutions, ignore existing strengths and capacities, they undermine them. Only when capacities are recognized, built on and enlarged, will external aid contribute to systematic and long-term development. 12

This thesis will offer some guidelines relating to the involvement of women in disaster management, which can start from the basis of guidelines that have already been created for the integration of women in development. These guidelines and other guidelines - such as those offered at the closing of a November 1989 Conference on the Role of Women in Disaster Management, could be used to raise the level of a community's awareness, its state of preparedness, and improve the community's response in the event of either natural or man-made disasters. International Organizations, national governments, voluntary organizations (such as the League of Red Cross Societies), and regional institutions, should review public policy on disaster management and improve their planning capabilities by integrating women at all levels of disaster management: from the policy level to the field.

HYPOTHESIS

Without a better understanding of women's special needs and an awareness of the potential roles that women should play in disaster management, effectiveness and accountability in disaster management will remain unsatisfactory.

An increased emphasis on disaster preparedness planning that would be initiated in co-operation with national governments and local community groups and organizations (especially those representing women or

consisting only of women), could contribute to easing complex logistical and co-ordination problems attendant to every disaster relief situation.

In order to better understand the topic of Disaster Management, some concepts must be defined.

CONCEPTS

Disaster: Is an acute crisis or event which outstrips the capacity of a society to cope with it. We look at two types of disasters: 1) "human-caused" 13 (as opposed to man-made since we are dealing with a gender-specific subject): civil disorders, wars, refugees, accidents, and poverty that arises as a result of these disasters; 2) natural: meteorological, topological, biological.

Development strategies: These strategies will be an integral part of disaster management goals, but will only help us to establish the criteria that International Organizations must follow in order to make adequate plans that will ensure the integration of women into the disaster management process.

Response: Refers to those activities that occur in the aftermath of a disaster to assist disaster victims and to rehabilitate or reconstruct the physical structures of the society. 14

Preparedness: The attempt to limit the impact of a disaster by structuring the response and effecting a quick

and orderly reaction to the disaster. It addresses actions in both the pre-disaster phase, for example, warning and evacuation, as well as post-disaster phases. 15

Prevention: Activities to prevent a natural phenomenon or a potential hazard from having harmful effects on either persons or property. Disaster prevention includes such activities as cloud seeding to control meteorological patterns, and the construction of dams or dikes to prevent flooding. 16

Hazard Analysis: A study of threatening events such as an earthquake. Primary hazards disrupt human settlements, and secondary hazards occur in the aftermath of a primary hazard and contribute to further suffering and loss.

Vulnerability Analysis: Analysis of vulnerabilities in order to understand why a disaster happened and what its impact has been; why it affected a particular group of people, and how to estimate the risks of further disasters.

Capacity Analysis: Study of the capacities (material, physical, psychological) of disaster victims within a society.

Guidelines: Special rules that must be universally followed by all international organizations having disaster management within their mandate, in the planning of projects that will integrate women in each phase of disaster management.

Disaster Management: Planning and activities undertaken by the international community and local governments, to

mitigate the impacts of disasters, namely, in the preparedness, response and recovery phases.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Our first priority will be to define Disaster Management and to trace the historical evolution of emergency assistance from 1927 to 1987. These dates are significant since they show the real beginning of the disaster management movement, which has culminated in the UN community's 1997 declaration of the 1990s as the International Decade on Natural Hazard Reduction. We shall follow the evolution of the participation of the organizations and specialized agencies that have been and are involved in the Disaster Management process. These organizations include: the International Relief Union, the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, the United Nations Children's Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Food Program, the United Nations Development Program, the World Health Organization and its subsidiary the Pan American Health Organization, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Labour Organization, the UN Disaster Relief Office, and other decentralized organizations: the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the Office for Emergency Relief Operations in Africa.

The purpose of the first chapter will be to determine what are some of the criteria each organization

must follow in the operation of their disaster management activities: for example, what policies are followed by each organization and specialized agency and what are the details of their mandates in this field. These roles will be examined jointly with the United Nations creation of the UN Disaster Relief Office in 1970 as the mobilizer, director, and co-ordinator of the United Nations disaster management process. In comparing the policies and mandates of these organizations and agencies we hope to find where the problems have arisen which have resulted in a duplication of effort, and a lack of cooperation between these organizations and the United Nations Disaster Relief Office, and also, the gender inequality existing at the planning stages, where response activities have tended to favour men, leaving women with little or no resources to help them in the continuation of their traditional roles.

In the second chapter, we will review the United Nations' goals and activities in the promotion and improvement of the status of women, and their conditions in emergencies and armed conflicts, from the creation of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1946 to the end of the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985). We have chosen a gender-specific study because, of a need to limit our discussions on the effects of disasters on society to one group in particular, namely women, since they have been proven by the Women in Development literature as an

essential resource in the development of their communities and also, therefore, in the mitigation of the effects of disasters. In the third chapter we will introduce and define the Vulnerability/Capacity Analysis framework. This analysis will serve as a tool to organize and systematize our knowledge and understanding of women's situation at the disaster level (not the development level), in order to more accurately predict the impact of United Nations interventions on a country's internal resources. This framework should allow us to analyze the merits of a range of possible project activities which have, or should be, implemented by all UN agencies involved in Disaster Management, 17 and establish proper guidelines that, when applied by all actors, will be translated into a more effective disaster management process.

In order to reinforce our argument that the international actors in the disaster management process must integrate women in the administration and implementation of disaster management we will also draw a link between reports of the Secretary General of the Economic and Social Council written in the 1970s on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict originating from General Assembly resolution 1687 and the woman's human right to receive the type of assistance required in times of disaster.

This is why we will be defining and categorizing all the possible roles that women can have at all three levels

of disaster management: 1) Preparedness: education, etc.; 2) response: health, sanitation, food, etc.; 3) recovery: shelter, roads, etc., so that we can introduce the type of guidelines that would be necessary to integrate these capacities into the disaster management process.

The fourth chapter will deal with the problem of co-ordination between organizations and the co-ordinating mechanism within the United Nations. By briefly looking at the mechanisms that have been put into place by the United Nations General Assembly in establishing UNDRO's co-ordinating role: i.e. several memoranda of understanding, the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, we will see where the co-ordination problems lie, and how these problems have contributed to the issue of women in the disaster management process being overlooked.

A second section of this chapter will look at the mechanisms that already exist, and which could be used to accomplish the integration of women in disaster management. The purpose will be to suggest ways in which organizations and specialized agencies could improve the way in which they respond to disasters by accepting the orders of UNDRO as the co-ordinating office when a system-wide response is required, or any other lead agency in the case of disasters needing limited assistance. This would set the groundwork for a new policy on accountability to include women and

their needs. In the end, we hope that these needs as well as women's multiple capacities will be identified by local community groups and organizations and brought to the attention of the international organizations and agencies participating in disaster response and, therefore, reinforce the participation of these local women's groups by making use of them.

Our study is one that is hypothesis-generating, meaning that we are starting out with a more or less vague notion of a possible hypothesis, with the goal being an attempt to formulate definitive hypotheses which could be tested subsequently among a large number of cases. Our objective will be to develop theoretical generalizations in areas where no theory exists as yet. 18

PRACTICAL USE FOR THIS RESEARCH

Our analytical framework is based on the dual concepts of vulnerability and capacity. This will help us set out the categories of factors to be considered and suggests a sequence or order in which to consider them. In essence, this framework helps us map a complex and real situation in order to highlight the crucial factors and to illustrate the relationships among factors that matter most to project effectiveness.

Vulnerability analysis also alerts us to the potential for unwittingly contributing to further vulnerabilities by our own interventions. For example, if dependency increases, then vulnerability increases.

We will also explore capacities in a society in order to know what strengths exist among disaster victims, on which future disaster management and development projects can be built. Acknowledging the capacities of the affected population is important for designing and implementing disaster responses that have development impacts. The resulting equation from this research is that development should be equal to a reduction in vulnerabilities to disasters plus an increase in the recognition and utilization of capacities.

CHAPTER 1
A HISTORY OF THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT
WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

The objective of this chapter will be to introduce the reader to the history of Disaster Management in order to better understand how the system works and, therefore, what are its operational weaknesses, especially in the way it overlooks the issue of women. Our main emphasis, therefore, will be on the co-ordination of the disaster response system.

There are a number of issues that arise in connection with international disaster relief co-ordination. These issues can be grouped in two general categories: the first is the specification of relief activities by numerous donors, that is, operational co-ordination; the second, the relationships between different donors and recipients regarding jurisdiction and authority, in other words, policy co-ordination. 1

This paragraph indicates what the two most important issues facing the disaster management process are. The first - related to operational co-ordination - involves the multiplicity of actors participating in the disaster management process, and the historical factors

that have established and entrenched a certain set of rules that govern their actions. The second issue, policy co-ordination, brings to light the accountability of these actors to the most vulnerable victims of disasters - namely women but who are also one of the essential actors in the relief and rehabilitation process - as well as the efficiency and effectiveness of the disaster management process.

The purpose of this chapter will be to provide a historical review of disaster management, concentrating on short periods of time to make its evolution clearer. We begin with the first institution created by the League of Nations in 1927, the International Relief Union, which dealt with the effects of the First and Second World Wars, through to the creation of the United Nations, and in turn, the establishment of thirteen organizations and specialized agencies, and ending with the declaration of the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction in 1987.

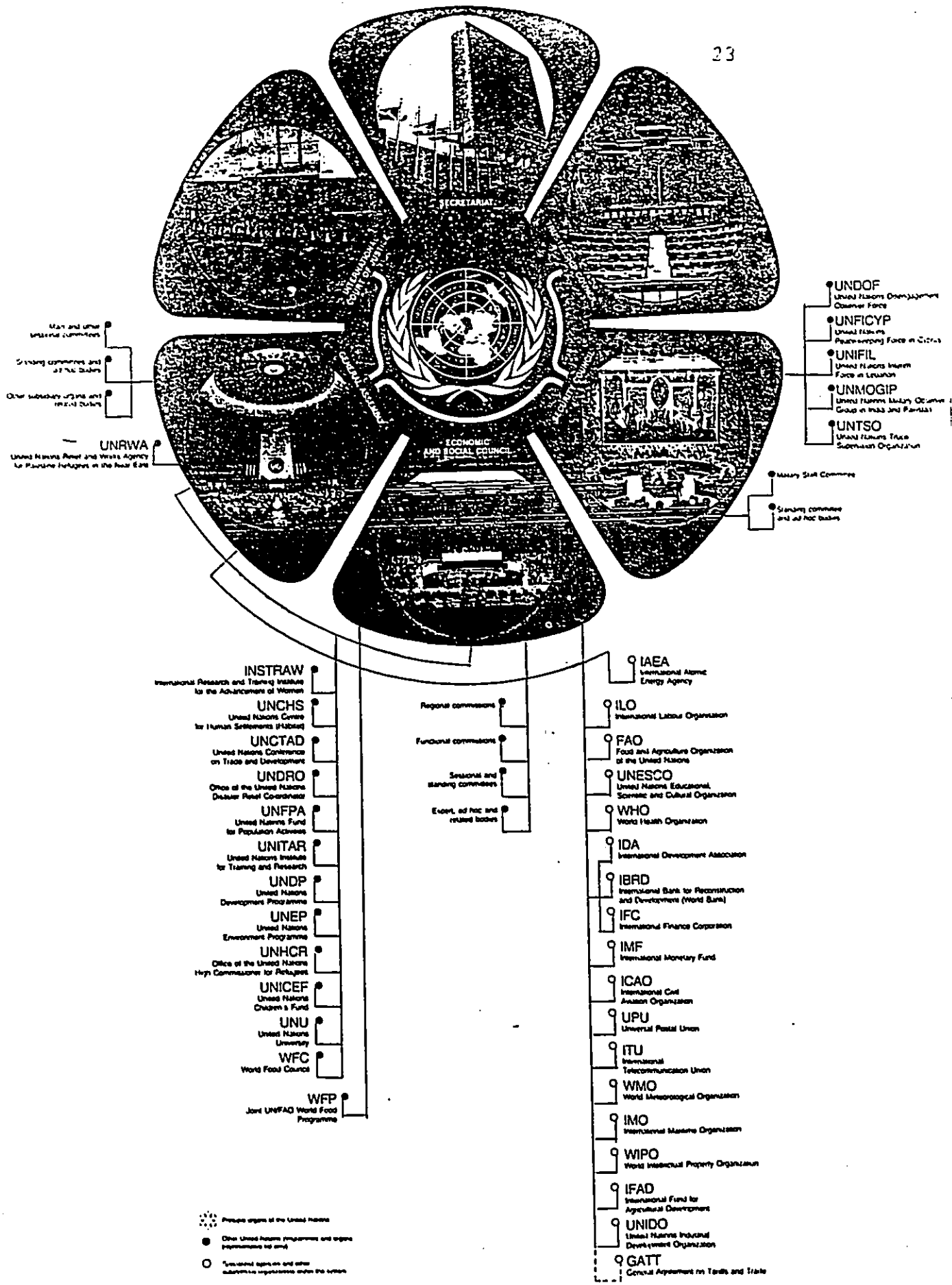
In this chapter we will see that the history of disaster relief efforts initiated by the community of nations began in 1927, when the International Relief Union was established under the aegis of the League of Nations. After the Second World War, relief efforts progressed from assisting nations that had been affected by the war, to the reconstruction of Europe through the Marshall Plan, and then to assisting the newly

created countries that had won, or been given, their independence. Several relief agencies were created by the United Nations, including the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) (which ceased activities in 1947); the International Refugee Organization and its successor the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians in the Near East (UNRWA); and, the United Children's Fund (UNICEF). United Nations operations in Korea, the Congo, the Indian subcontinent and South-East Asia also led to the provision of assistance to displaced civilians. Specialized agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), including the Pan American Health Organization, and the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) have long been active in disaster relief. Finally, although created with a mandate concentrating on development initiatives, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has undertaken disaster preparedness and reconstruction projects since the late 1950s. Other organizations were created as a result of catastrophes, namely the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa, in response to the droughts found in many areas of Africa. Finally, the International Labour Organization, although not conceived to respond to disasters, has become involved in creating emergency

employment programmes and providing labour power to disaster relief and reconstruction operations. 2

In terms of the United Nations accountability structure, the World Food Programme reports to the Economic and Social Council (a UN-programme co-ordinating agency) since it is a joint UN/FAO programme. Programmes initiated by the UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP are put into place by the ECOSOC, which then presents them to the General Assembly for approval. UNRWA is an organization for which the General Assembly is responsible, and initiates projects only for Palestinians in the Near East. The ILO, FAO, and WHO are specialized agencies, whose activities are monitored by the ECOSOC.

The creation of these organizations, and their participation in the disaster management process, arose from internal as well as external forces. With the onset of such external factors as war, decolonization, environmental degradation and natural disasters, the world saw, through reports made by the media, a need for a disaster relief network that would assist disaster-prone governments to prepare for and deal with the destruction caused by disasters. These factors paralleled a need within the United Nations to distinguish the needs of development projects from the provision of appropriate assistance for the countries affected by a disaster as well as for its victims in



order to give these latter operations an identity that would give them more importance within the United Nations system. The driving force behind this change was that the development process of Third World nations saw its future threatened by the increasing occurrence of disasters.

In all, we will trace the historical evolution of the eleven organizations and specialized agencies that are the most active in the disaster management process. We will be reviewing how each of their mandates involve them in the area of disaster management, and what policies, rules and procedures they must adhere to in the field of disaster management. Finally, we hope to define and evaluate the extent of inter-organizational co-operation. However, of greatest importance will be the focus on the conceptual and operational dynamics of the creation of the co-ordinating and mobilizing agency, the UN Disaster Relief Office, an organization created in 1971 with a broad mandate that gives it the power to mobilize, direct and co-ordinate disaster relief in natural and other disaster situations. However, the creation of such a co-ordinating agency, like its predecessors created some controversy and difficulties. As we will see in our research, the co-ordination among equals is frequently difficult to achieve even in the best of circumstances. The situation may worsen in the rush and pressure of efforts to organize to meet sudden

emergencies. It is essential to have a clear definition of the roles of each agency that is called to participate in the disaster management process, because the larger the number of participants, as we will see, the greater the difficulty of co-ordination.

The major themes that will recur in this historical evolution will be the United Nations' attempts to meet the health, employment and food needs of vulnerable groups such as refugees and children as a result of natural and human-caused disasters, and the linkages established between development and disaster management.

HISTORY OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT

I- THE INTER-WAR PERIOD: 1920's-1940's

The First World War produced massive dislocations of population in Europe accompanied by great political changes. The dislocations were caused by political tensions and intolerance, as well as widespread persecution or the fear of persecution. Many people left their native states to seek asylum in neighbouring countries. Between 1918 to 1922, there were approximately 1.5 million Russian refugees stranded, mainly in the north and in the Far East, because of the Bolshevik armies in European Russia in 1919-1920, the Russian famine in 1921, and the breakdown of White Russian

resistance in Siberian Russia in 1922. In addition, an estimated 320,000 Armenian refugees in 1923 scattered throughout the Near East, the Balkans, and other European countries after their escape from persecution and massacres in Asia minor following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey's new policy of nationalism.

3

The governments of receiving countries were already suffering under depreciating currencies, growing unemployment, and political unrest as a result of the war, making reconstruction problems even greater. Therefore, they did not have the resources to deal with the influx of people, creating serious threats to political and economic stability.

Before 1921, the infrastructures that helped refugees were mainly private organizations, or voluntary agencies providing assistance predominantly in the form of relief. At the time, there had been no concerted efforts to integrate refugees permanently into their countries of refuge. This meant that all the funds that had been spent by governments and private voluntary organizations provided only a temporary solution.

Immigration policy had become linked with international relations. Restrictive legislation was dictated not only by local economic conditions but also by political and strategic considerations. 4 Thus, it

was believed that the refugee problem could only be dealt with internationally co-ordinated action.

On August 20, 1921, the League of Nations established the Office of High Commissioner for Refugees, with DR. Fridtjof Nansen as the first High Commissioner. He had previously been the League's High Commissioner for the Repatriation of Prisoners. The Office had to deal with the influx of nearly two million refugees from the Russian Civil War into Eastern and Central Europe. The problem was then multiplied by streams of Greek, Armenian, and Assyrian refugees pouring into Turkey in 1922. A new flow of refugees from the Saar, Austria and Czechoslovakia was produced by Nazi persecution in the 1930s.

However it was difficult for the Office to be very effective because its staff was too small, and its resources were not sufficient. Its meagre budget only allowed it to...

serve as an advocate with governments. Work for uniform standards of legal protection, give advice to national governments, and attempt to coordinate the efforts of public and private agencies engaged in refugee relief. 5

Another League organization, the International Labour Organization (ILO) became a supporting agency in the attempt to integrate displaced people and refugees into the receiving country.

In 1919, the Treaty of Versailles lead to the creation of the permanent court of International Justice

as well as the ILO. The objective of the ILO at that time was the promotion of peace between nations through social justice and the amelioration of conditions of labour.

Aside from dealing with the refugee problem, the League of Nations in 1923 began discussions to create an international organization to assist victims of disasters. The previous years had shown that natural disasters, as well as human-caused disasters such as wars and revolutions, could result in famines, epidemics, or the forced emigration of people. However, what was important was not the development of that knowledge, but rather that something could and should be done at the international level.

The conception of an organization that would deal with disasters meant that they would provide relief to people overtaken by disasters or misfortunes. However, it was believed that any assistance in these cases would encourage administrative negligence. Endemic or periodic calamities were also not considered as disasters needing international assistance, because it was believed that it would lead to indirect interference with the domestic business of certain states. However, if these calamities assumed exceptional proportions, assistance would be provided. "International assistance would also be provided if the life (human and/or economic) of an entire nation was affected." 6

There were also guidelines that were used to determine what kinds of disasters would be eligible for international relief assistance. However, the League of Nations was not in a position to offer too specific a definition, leading to situations where the international organization created would find itself trapped in between too wide a definition and a lack of funds. It was also thought that a broad definition would "lead to injustices, such as if relief was provided too often for the same type of disaster or for the same area." 7

It was often the news media that determined what constituted a disaster; but we will deal with this question later in the chapter.

We can therefore wonder why there appeared to be a need for an international organization to co-ordinate relief assistance? A well known author in the field of disaster relief, Dr. Barbara J. Brown, responds that,

"the League of Nations had already adopted a general principle for the equal rights of all peoples to international assistance. Recurring problems in disaster relief were the lack of preparation or expertise on the part of many well-wishing donors, and the fact that political circumstances could prevent humanitarian assistance from reaching those in need." 8

Therefore, by creating an organization that would function between the source of assistance and the recipients, it was hoped that relief would no longer be seen as an act of pity resulting in dependence and obligation. On the contrary, it was hoped that it would

be seen as an act of humanity, with no obligation, and it was the League's neutrality that was going to assure this.

This organization, formed in 1927, was named the International Relief Union (IRU). Its central co-ordinator was the League of the Red Cross Societies (LICROSS), and its executing technical agents in each technical area were the National Red Cross Organizations. The IRU was to be responsible for financial administration and technical organization of international relief. Voluntary contributions from Member States were given to the International Relief Fund, and was allocated to Red Cross Societies to assist in disaster preparedness plans, in addition to research on past disasters and suggestions on measures to mitigate their dangers. However, any action by the organization had to be approved by the government of the recipient country.

The League was pleased with the creation of the IRU, since it would legitimize the role of the LICROSS as the international disaster relief co-ordinator, a function it had been performing since 1919. It was also possible for the League to control the amount, kind and destination of relief assistance. Also, Member States preferred the political recognition they were receiving by contributing through the League rather than a non-governmental organization like LICROSS.

However, not much mention has been made about the Union. Experts suspect that financial difficulties prevented the organization from fulfilling its role. With the advent of the Second World War and the decline of the League of Nations, no mention of the IRU was made until 1966 when the United Nations' Economic and Social Council formally transferred to the United Nations the responsibility and assets of the IRU.

Prior to, and during the Second World War, the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees found itself with the very important tasks of co-ordinating the humanitarian work, of promoting resettlement opportunities, and of supervising the application of the various arrangements and Conventions in the field of international protection. But the great difficulties caused by the War and the liquidation of the League of Nations, crippled the activities of the High Commissioner. Its fate was to be resolved after the war. 9

2- POST-WORLD WAR 2 RELIEF OPERATIONS

The Second World War gave rise to an enormous shift of populations. It was estimated that thirty million people had been displaced. It was during this time that the League of Nations and later, the United Nations, were committed to dealing with the reconstruction of devastated areas, to responding to the

world shortage of food, to meeting the needs of displaced persons and especially children who were victims of the war. 10 But we also saw the beginnings of a post-war disaster management system in Europe, where each organization had its own role to play within its own areas of expertise.

The first to work in this field was the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). UNRRA was created on November 9, 1943 by the League of Nations to deal with the problem. It provided...

assistance to war-displaced persons in Germany, Austria, Italy, the Middle East and China in: 1) bringing relief in the form of food, clothing, shelter, medical supplies, etc.; 2) providing rehabilitation materials and services required for the resumption of agricultural and industrial production; and, 3) making preparations and arrangements for the return of prisoners and exiles to their homes. 11

UNRRA was never part of the United Nations, but it functioned like a specialized agency, financed largely by the United States and with its headquarters in Washington, D.C..

With the decline of the League of Nations emerged the establishment of a new world government. On October 24, 1945, the United Nations Charter was written in San Francisco creating the United Nations, which began its operations on January 10, 1946.

On December 31, 1946, the mandate of the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees was terminated, and on January 1, 1947 the Inter-governmental Committee on

Refugees (IGCR) - created in 1938 - assumed its responsibilities. The Committee did not undertake emigration arrangements for refugees as such, nor did it have the funds to do so. Like the Office, the IGCR's activities were limited by the war to diplomatic representations in an effort to find new homes for refugees receiving temporary asylum in European countries.

If the IGCR had received more financial support from its Member States, it could have accomplished a lot more, even during the war itself. The Committee was dissolved in 1947 to be replaced by yet another organization.

REFUGEES

UNRRA: From 1943 to 1949, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA - a specialized agency created by the League of Nations and financed by the United States), as well as military authorities, undertook the responsibility of massive relief and repatriation activities. By 1949, UNRRA had spent almost \$ 4 billion (US) on aid to war-displaced persons, and had repatriated, with the help of military authorities, five out of eight million refugees and displaced persons in Allied-occupied zones at the time of the German surrender, with numerous others being repatriated or resettled. However, in 1949, UNRRA was already feeling the negative effects of the inadequacy of a "hastily

recruited staff, and the incompetence and corruption of some local government officials". 12 The United States Congress terminated UNRRA, by discontinuing the funding of the organization. Its demise left an alarming gap in the institutions for social and economic defence. Some of its functions were to be taken over by some of the other UN agencies. From this the General Assembly took the initiative and established the International Refugee Organization (IRO) in order to deal with the continuing refugee problem.

IRO: The International Refugee Organization was the first international agency created by the United Nations. Its constitution was approved, with some objections by the Soviet Union who believed that repatriation had to be mandatory as opposed to on demand, as the Western powers wanted. Nevertheless, the IRO began its operations in 1947, its activities requiring tremendous resources. For its first year, its budget was \$ 155 million (US), or more than was available for the entire UN specialized agencies combined. For all those who were eligible, the organization provided shelter, food, clothing, health services, hospital care, employment and vocational training, education, individual counselling, child welfare services, and a resettlement programme. 13

UNHCR: At the beginning of the International Refugee Organization's operations in 1947, it was feared that it would be unable to fulfill its task in its initial

mandate of three years. Not only did it have to provide the means for self-support of refugees who were unable to emigrate, but it also had to find an acceptable solution for the waves of displaced persons. The Organization was forced to deal with problems such as the tremendous cost of its financing, as well as the constant change and development of international politics and economic changes. Even if it had succeeded in gaining the co-operation of 18 governments, numerous international and national voluntary agencies, it still could not liquidate the refugee problem. It was hoped that in the next decade some solution would be found, with the creation of another organization, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, in the 1950s. 14

UNRWA: In 1948, the UN mediator on Palestine presented a report to the General Assembly, emphasizing the urgency of the problem of providing assistance to Arab refugees. An appeal for assistance to the International Refugee Organization was met with refusal, since the IRO pointed out that the Arab refugees were not eligible under the IRO constitution. However, even if they had been eligible, the IRO did not have the resources to deal with the refugees. Therefore, the mediator recommended that the UN adopt a plan for assistance which would integrate the activities of specialized agencies (like the World Health Organization and the Food and Agricultural Organization), UNICEF, and voluntary agencies like

LICROSS, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the American Friends Service Committee. In 1948, a Director of the UN Relief for Palestine Refugees was appointed, and the Office itself began operations on December 1, 1948. In 1950, it was replaced by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East, which then organized and directed programmes of public works. 15

CHILDREN

UNICEF: The UN's preoccupation for the needs of millions of children who had fallen victim to the war, was crystallized with the creation of the UN International Children's Emergency Fund on December 11, 1946, following a recommendation by UNRRA (which was finishing its mandate), that a fund be created for children with its remaining funds and voluntary contributions.

In Europe, some six million children left orphaned by the war received a daily supplementary meal through 50,000 centres in 12 countries. Over five million children received clothing and shoes processed from raw materials provided by UNICEF. More than eight million children were vaccinated against tuberculosis and aid was provided for other types of health problems. Milk collection facilities, dairies and milk processing plants were rebuilt with UNICEF assistance. It also provided

health and feeding programmes in China and other Asian countries. 16

FOOD

FAO: Another UN concern was the world food supply. In the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, the Food and Agricultural Organization was created when the relief conditions resulting from famine became a world-wide concern. Its mandate was to bring the developing world as far as possible to food self-sufficiency from the agricultural and fisheries sectors. At the time, it was conceived as a program of technical assistance, training of local experts in Third World countries, as negotiating investments with the World Bank, the UN Development Fund, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

HEALTH

WHO: To the UN Conference in San Francisco in 1945, it was evident that a permanent international mobilization of medical resources was needed. In 1946, representatives of 64 countries adopted a constitution for the World Health Organization (WHO), which was ratified by 26 Member States on April 7, 1948. Its headquarters were in Geneva, and its operations were taken care of by six regional organizations.

Its strategy had eight aims: 1) health education; 2) proper food supply and nutrition; 3) safe water supplies; 4) maternal and child health, including family planning; 5) immunization against major infectious

diseases; 6) prevention and control of local diseases; 7) appropriate treatment of common diseases and injuries; and 8) provision of essential drugs. 17

In July 1948, the First World Health Assembly adopted a program for emergency services, deciding that in cases of serious epidemics, the World Health Organization should be the responsible organization. It was also recommended that a special office should be established to give advice on the purchase of essential drugs, biological products and medical supplies, with special consideration being given to emergencies.

PAHO: Latin America and the Caribbean were given their own health institution by the World Health Organization. What began as the International Sanitary Bureau in 1902, became the Pan American Health Organization in 1947, acting as the WHO's Regional Office in the Americas, where WHO would provide supplementary funding to expand health-related activities in the hemisphere. PAHO has since taken an active role in the control and eradication of communicable diseases, such as smallpox, malaria, and yellow fever, and has made great improvements in nutrition and sanitation services.

As mentioned earlier, before the expiration of the IRD's mandate, the UN General Assembly was discussing the need for a successor. The UN had to deal with the need to establish a universally acceptable set of criteria aimed

at granting refugees the indisputable right to asylum. In December 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed, in which article 14 states that: "Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution." 18

On December 3, 1949, the General Assembly decided to appoint a UN High Commissioner for Refugees. The Statute was promulgated by the General Assembly one year later, and UNHCR was placed under the authority of the General Assembly itself.

3- 1950s

At this time we notice a shift from war rehabilitation in Europe to decolonization and the assisting of newly independent nations in recovering from war, displaced persons, and a lack of agricultural development causing food shortages. Therefore, a new emphasis was placed in disaster management to assist areas of the world affected by war and disasters; to assist the victims of these catastrophes; and to provide the necessary ingredients, such as emergency food supplies, medical equipment, etc., as a new wave of activity on the part of the international community.

WAR

UNKRA: The year 1950 marked, amongst others things, the beginning of the Korean War (1950-1958). In December 1950, the General Assembly established the UN Korean

Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA), in order to mobilize relief operations in the region. At first, UNKRA had a limited mandate, its activities being confined to the provision of technical assistance to the Government of the Republic of Korea, the development of long-range reconstruction programs, and the carrying out of any long-range reconstruction projects, without interfering with military operations.

Almost ninety percent of UNKRA's funding came from the UN Unified Command, totalling \$ 450,000 (US), originating from the United States Government. Before the activities of the Agency were phased out - when direct American aid made up 65 percent of the total budget - UNKRA had spent \$ 150 million (US) for the rehabilitation of the Korean economy and for public services. 19

REFUGEES

UNHCR: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, upon the commencement of its operations in 1951, was responsible to the General Assembly through the UN's Economic and Social Council. This Council was conceptualized in 1938, and was brought to life by the United Nations in 1945. Articles 61 to 72 of the United Nations Charter, provided the Council with an almost unlimited scope of activity, including "international economic, social, cultural, educational, health and related matters." 20 (See annex 2) Its first activity

was to create services that would provide for the care and resettlement of refugees and displaced persons. This task was to be carried out by UNRRA, UNICEF, UNRWA, and UNHCR.

From 1951 onwards, UNHCR became the principal body caring for refugees. The High Commissioner was assigned to provide international protection for refugees and assist governments and voluntary organizations to find permanent solutions through resettlement and integration into the country of asylum. His mandate excluded refugees who were receiving aid from other sources - such as the Palestinian refugees - as well as refugees who had the rights of nationals in the country of asylum.

Although its mandate was planned for a period of three years, the UNHCR was recognized as an exception to the rule for temporary agencies, and so was allowed to collect voluntary funds to be channelled toward a permanent solution to the plight of refugees.

CHILDREN

UNICEF: With the recovery in Europe well under way in the early 1950s, from 1950 to 1953, the General Assembly was becoming aware of the constant emergency situation under which children in developing areas lived. So it was decided to extend the life of the Fund, and to move into a second phase of programmes, that would consist of operating programmes of long-range benefit to children in developing countries. By 1953, the shift was almost

complete, since half of UNICEF aid was going to Asia and about one-fourth to Latin America. Also, long-range programmes accounted for eighty percent of the aid, with the remaining twenty percent being directed towards earthquake, flood and famine relief in various countries, and for aid to Palestine refugee mothers and children.

UNICEF's emergency relief policy consisted of playing a role in meeting the particular needs of children who had been neglected in the rush to provide emergency relief in disaster situations. UNICEF had also been concerned with planning and assisting for the phase of long-term rehabilitation of health, education, and other services for children.

UNICEF underwent changes in its emergency efforts from 1946 to 1959. Firstly, total aid to Europe from 1947 to 1956 was \$ 83,854,000 (US), while the Middle East received \$ 19, 553,000 (US) in aid for emergencies to five countries between 1948 and 1954; three African countries received \$ 830,000 (US) from 1954 to 1962; three Latin American countries received \$ 326,000 (US) from 1949 to 1954; nine Asian countries received \$ 9 million for emergency situations from 1948 to 1959; and China received \$ 1.8 million between 1948 and 1949. 21

However, by the end of the 1950s, as we can see from the Table 1, only five major relief projects were undertaken, compared to 26 in the early 1950s. We can, therefore, notice a marked decline during the 1950s,

especially in the later years, in the relative importance of emergency assistance in UNICEF in terms of the proportion of emergency expenditures to long-term development assistance. The reason for this was that UNICEF had undergone a major change in policy during the late 1950s, stating that it would concentrate on long-range economic and social development programs in developing countries rather than emergency operations. This explains, therefore, the relative decline in importance of disaster relief within the scope of UNICEF activities, as shown in graph 1. 22

FOOD

FAO: In December 1951, the Food and Agricultural Organization convened a Conference that discussed for the first time, FAO's role in meeting emergency food needs in disaster situations. The process for assistance was as follows: when notice was given by a Member State or region that a serious food shortage or famine existed or was likely to develop, and the country was unable to deal with it with its own resources, the Director-General would send FAO officials to investigate the situation. A report on the extent of international assistance that would be required was sent to the United Nations and interested specialized agencies. If in the opinion of the Director-General, there existed an emergency requiring international relief measures, he could, at his discretion, convene a meeting of a council of interested

Governments. The action that would be taken to assist the affected country would be proposed and then taken to the Secretary-General of the UN for transmission to the Economic and Social Council. 23

In a report to the 14th session of the Economic and Social Council in 1952, the Council recommended that "preparatory arrangements be made by governments which might be subject to famine emergencies", and also that "the FAO develop a system of famine detection and that famine emergency relief activities be co-ordinated by the Secretary-General." 24

Since FAO statistics on emergency food operations are hidden in development project figures in its yearly reports, no specific data would help to indicate the magnitude of its relief operations. However, we do know that emergency food needs greatly increased throughout the 1950s, and that its administration became the most financially costly and time consuming of FAO's activities. The magnitude of this assistance was eventually one of the reasons why a new organization was created in 1963 to deal with the problem.

HEALTH

WHO: As was stated earlier, it was after the World Health Assembly in 1948 that WHO's role in emergency health assistance was developed. Its role was to...

"furnish appropriate technical assistance and, in emergencies, necessary aid upon requests or acceptance of Governments."... WHO also assumed the following responsibilities in disaster situations:...

a) the rapid provision of medicaments and other medical supplies needed for the prevention and control of communicable diseases caused or aggravated by the disaster; b) the provision of technical advice and approval of all medical equipment and supplies provided by UNICEF, non-governmental organizations and voluntary agencies; c) the provision of technical assistance and advice on specific areas of public health, such as drinking water and malnutrition; and, d) assuring close collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies, which in different ways play an important role in assisting countries during emergency situations. 25

PAHO: One of the most important changes in the Pan American Health Organization in the post-war period was the establishment of Regional Research Centres throughout the Americas. In the 1950s, PAHO's activities were also undergoing rapid expansion. At the same time, public health workers were also seeking a new concept of health. Instead of defining "health as the absence of disease", health workers were still seeking a newer and more positive definition.

4- 1960-1972

1972 marked the beginning of a focus towards the need for co-operation within the disaster relief network. During this period, we see a division in the internal ideology of the United Nations and its agencies, between the activities concerning the development of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the needs created by the impact of natural and human-caused disasters on the environment as well as on its victims. Therefore, unlike

the three previous decades, the United Nations now focused its external attention on assisting the development process of Third World countries, as opposed to European countries, since the 1960s marked the independence of several nations as well as an increase in the number of Member States in the United Nations. These newly independent countries, in joining the UN, gained a forum through which they could express their demands for international relief assistance. The United Nations internal activities therefore evolved, distinguishing policies attached to development assistance and those attached to disaster assistance.

A rather important force in the advancement of the cause of these new nations requiring special disaster assistance, was the media. Although it is not an actor in the disaster response mechanism, it became, in fact, the 'fourth estate' of the international relief network. We have often seen the media in all its forms - television, press and radio - as the mobilizer and the severest critic of the relief process. Many people, says Roger Kent, author of Anatomy of Disaster Relief: the International Network in Action (1987),

throughout private and governmental relief agencies acknowledge that the first indications that a disaster has occurred have come from the media. They are sensitive to this reporting since the media's account - whether accurate or not - plays a critical role in structuring the relief response. It is the media that is often the key to raising funds; it is television primarily, but also newspapers, journals and radio that promote one cause, abandon another, and in so doing determine priorities. It is also the media, through its relentless search for a handle on a disaster story, that exposes the purported strengths and failings of the relief process, and consequently affects the institutional interests of those with direct or indirect roles in the international relief network. The power of the media to affect the response of the international relief network cannot be over-emphasized; and, given such direct influence, one must ask how effective a 'relief actor' this fourth estate is. 26

Due to an increase in the number of disasters being reported by the media and an improvement of communication skills, the UN's co-ordinating role in international relief was expanded in the 1960s and early 1970s. This expansion included the diversification and specialization of relief services, especially in terms of financial arrangements, further improving the quality of disaster relief operations originating from the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. For example, in April 1960, the ECOSOC first considered measures to be taken in connection with a systematic effort in providing relief to a disaster-stricken area. 27

It was in 1963 that the ECOSOC first involved its Administration Committee on Coordination in a study

concerning the adoption of procedures to coordinate and make effective the specialized agency assistance in disaster situations.

Following the volcanic eruptions in Costa Rica in July 1964, the First Voluntary Emergency Trust Fund for natural disaster relief was established, showing a greater UN financial commitment. Later in the year, the ECOSOC requested that the Secretary-General (then U Thant of Burma) submit a report on the types of assistance which might be appropriate for the UN to provide and the order of magnitude of resources required, as well as alternative methods of providing such resources, including the establishment of a Special United Nations Disaster Fund that would be financed through voluntary contributions. 28

However, the report of the Secretary-General pointed out that even though the UN system could provide substantial assistance at the reconstruction and rehabilitation stages following a disaster, there were almost no resources available for aid during the rescue stage immediately following a disaster. The Secretary General's recommendation was that he should be authorized to draw from a Working Capital Fund of up to \$ 100,000 (US) for emergency aid in any one year with a normal ceiling of \$ 20,000 (US) per country in the case of any one disaster. This, it was believed, would be more appropriate than a UN Disaster Fund. An authorization was

given to the Secretary-General for a three year period, in which the \$ 100,000 (US) limit was never reached. In 1968 the rules were made a little more flexible, in order to permit expenditures regarding preventative and precautionary measures to lessen the effect of disasters in developing areas and administrative arrangements for handling disasters. Also in 1968, a resolution was adopted requesting specialized agencies to offer stand-by relief units or the creation of similar units for service.

However, the demands made on the Working Capital Fund were too great. So the Secretary-General proposed to the General Assembly that the amount to be drawn from the Fund be increased by \$ 50,000 (US) for 1969 and be fixed at \$ 150,000 (US) by 1970. This amount was approved even though it seemed that the UN was one step away from financial disaster itself. 29

The financial demands placed on the Fund were indicative of the other demands placed on the specialized agencies, especially the World Food Programme (WFP) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).

CHILDREN

UNICEF: For UNICEF, the 1960s were a period when emergency assistance became much more flexible. In the past, there were only two ways to finance UNICEF's emergency responses: 1) by using regular allocations

to a country programme; or, 2) by diverting funds for regularly assisted projects. If these responses were impossible or insufficient, special allocations could be made to the stricken country after a "mail poll" taken by the Executive Board Members. 30

There are now three ways to finance emergency situations: 1) a UNICEF representative can, in agreement with the Government, divert \$ 25,000 (US) from the country programme for immediate relief purposes; 2) emergency relief can also be funded from the annual commitment for an emergency reserve fund of \$ 3 million (US), available for use at the discretion of the Executive Director; and, 3) specific-purpose contributions are sought for larger-scale and rehabilitation assistance.

However, by 1965, less than 1.5 percent of expenditures was for assistance in emergency situations. An even lesser amount was used to replenish the emergency reserve for assistance in minor emergencies occurring between Executive Board sessions. In June 1965, the Executive Board of UNICEF established a new criterion for post-disaster aid, by giving preference to the restoration of permanent services for mothers and children (prevention), rather than immediate emergency aid (relief). Even though it appears that UNICEF's commitment to emergency assistance was reduced in the 1960s, in fact, its assistance has remained consistently

low from 1955 through 1972. In 1970, requests for UNICEF emergency relief reached a new high, totalling \$ 5.7 million (US), while expenditures for 1971 totalled \$ 1.6 million (US), and \$ 2.5 million (US) for 1972. 31

FOOD

WFP: FAO's programmes were outstripping the capacity of its funding and the size of the organization in the late 1950s. So, in 1961, the United Nations and the FAO agreed to establish another organization that would take over the food aid responsibilities of the FAO. In 1963, the World Food Programme (WFP) began its operations for an initial three year experimental period, to channel food surpluses to countries in need of development assistance. While the Programme placed more emphasis on development assistance through food aid, it also met emergency food needs in a very significant way.

From 1963 to 1973, fifteen percent of WFP's total expenditures were disbursed as emergency aid. In 1965, a total of \$ 1.6 million (US) had been spent, compared to \$ 19.3 million (US) in 1970. From 1963 to December 1972, Table 2 shows that the WFP had participated in 159 emergency operations in 76 countries of which 64 were in Africa (south of the Sahara), 32 in Asia and the Pacific, six in southern Europe, 23 in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 34 in North Africa and the Near East. Furthermore, forty percent of total WFP commitments went to emergency operations in Asia, while only 24 percent

went to Africa. Latin America received 3 percent, and North Africa and the Near East received 24 percent of disbursements. The largest single commitment of emergency aid was given to emergency situations resulting from drought at 44 percent, with natural disasters receiving 33 percent, and human-caused emergencies, 23 percent.

Emergency resources were made available by the Director-General of the FAO, whose decision was based on the recommendations of the Executive Director of the World Food Programme, after an on-the-scene evaluation by WFP officers. However, repeated disasters of a varying intensity and severity were proving WFP resources to be insufficient. In 1971, two steps were taken to remedy this situation:

- 1) the WFP was given the permission to use surplus food stuffs from development projects, to meet emergency food needs; and, 2) the WFP was allowed, for the first time, to accept donations in response to specific appeals made by the Secretary-General or the Director-General of the FAO for additional food aid for victims of major disasters, which would include freight, insurance, superintendence and associated administrative expenses. 32

FAD: Through the newly created World Food Programme which the United Nations sponsored jointly with the Food and Agricultural Organization, the FAD was involved in disaster-related assistance, in addition to responding to requests for rehabilitation aid in the agricultural sector of disaster-stricken countries. Its emergency services involved the restoration of seeds, provision of

pesticides and other factors relating to productivity rather than the provision of emergency supplies. By the end of the 1960s, FAO's ability to respond was challenged by the increasing demands of the drought situation and its effect on its victims in the Sahel and Ethiopia. Once again, the solution was to create, in 1973, yet another organization to deal with the problem, as we will see later. 33

HEALTH

WHO: In all relief operations, the World Health Organization (WHO) developed its activities to the extent that it is now the overall focal point for health and medical assistance. Its Emergency Relief Operations Office is the functional centre for emergency operations. The WHO is also the UN Agency responsible for providing health assistance at times of disasters caused by toxicity from chemicals, food poisoning and health hazards caused by air pollution, water pollution or by the massive use of insecticides.

It co-operates with national health authorities and voluntary agencies, including the National Red Cross Societies.

REFUGEES

UNHCR: The July 28, 1951 adoption of the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, which had taken place at the end of a Conference of Plenipotentiaries in Geneva the same month, was clearly becoming obsolete by the

1960s with the emergence of new refugees, especially in Africa. The 1951 Convention had only discussed the question of refugees and stateless persons following the Second World War. Therefore, in 1967, the

"dateline anomaly was removed by the General Assembly with the adoption of a Protocol - the 1967 Protocol - thus rendering the Convention potentially applicable to all refugee situations the world over." 34

DEVELOPMENT/DISASTER MANAGEMENT

UNDP: An increased emphasis on assisting the overall development of newly independent countries, together with a commitment by the General Assembly to assure this assistance, resulted in the creation by the General Assembly of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 1965. This new organization was to act as the principal channel for the movement of technical assistance funds, expert personnel, and needed equipment through the United Nations System to the developing countries. However, its role in disaster management began only in 1970 with an invitation by the General Assembly, in resolution 2717, "Assistance in cases of disaster". In this resolution, the General Assembly invited the UNDP

to seriously take into consideration the possibility of responding to the demands for assistance that may be made by countries affected by natural disasters, in order to reorganize and develop the disaster-stricken areas, without affecting the funds already channelled to the development projects of the Program. 35

It was the 1970 earthquake in Peru that initiated the idea of a mechanism that would be able to respond to

natural and human-caused disasters. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution E/1533 "Proposal for the establishment of an emergency fund for disasters", (23 July, 1970), recommended that Member States of the United Nations establish an emergency fund for disasters to be made up of voluntary contributions by all State Members of the UN and Members of the specialized agencies. 36 The first task of this fund was to provide Peru, through the Secretary-General, with resources of all kinds - including technical assistance - needed for the reconstruction of the devastated area.

Further attention was given to the contribution of the UNDP, in ECOSOC resolution 4908, in providing technical assistance to disaster relief preparations. The role of the Resident Representatives, who are UNDP officials placed in developing countries to co-ordinate UNDP and local development projects, was to undertake preliminary assessments of the extent of the damage of a natural disaster, as well as to stay in constant consultation with the Government concerned on the need for a special resident co-ordinator to deal with international disaster relief.

Yet, it was added that special attention had to be given:

in distinguishing special arrangements for the co-ordination of assistance during the emergency phase of natural disasters, and the subsequent co-ordination of further assistance for reconstruction and rehabilitation; and, b) that possible improvements had to be explored in co-ordination at the national and international level of prior arrangements both for the giving and receiving of emergency assistance to disaster-affected areas, in order to help the initiatives of relief-giving organizations. 37

Creation of the United Nations Disaster Relief Office

It was obvious to the General Assembly that the UN system needed a permanent UN office for disaster assistance. The basis for a new organization came from the fact that in the immediate post-war period, natural disasters were considered to be within the competence of the League of Red Cross Societies and other voluntary agencies. None of the United Nations relief agencies received a specific mandate to handle them. But gradually, with the creation of UNRRA and the IRO, it came to be recognized that the UN system had a role to play. In 1965 the General Assembly approved a proposal by the Secretary-General that a Working Capital Fund be established within the United Nations budget, to be used to provide funds for emergency relief. The Secretary-General also reported on the importance of pre-disaster planning in disaster-prone countries. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, a series of unconnected disasters took a great number of lives and caused extensive damage around the world. These included earthquakes in Nicaragua and Peru, drought in

Afghanistan, floods in Hungary, Jordan, Malaysia and Romania, and a cyclone and tidal wave in, what is now known as, Bangladesh.

The international community responded to these emergencies with vast quantities of relief aid. In 1970 the Office of Inter-Agency Affairs was designated to be the focal point for co-ordination of relief from the UN system during emergency relief operations. Still, at the scene of many emergencies, relief agencies reported that aid too often failed to achieve the purposes for which it was sent. Sometimes, supplies arrived in duplicate, or were too late. Relief donors were unable to find reliable information on requirements or to obtain assurances that supplies could be handled and distributed to those in need.

A new organization would help co-ordinate and stimulate action by the UN system as well as to provide information on relief needs to Governments and concerned organizations, and approach potential donors, whether they be Governments or organizations, for information on relief needs or the assistance they might be able to provide. Their efforts would also facilitate transport and other arrangements for channelling relief, supporting rather than duplicating bilateral aid. This would be appropriate for sudden or unpredictable disasters such as volcano eruptions, floods, typhoons and tidal waves, but action would not be taken in cases of local disasters or

for long-range or slow-developing disasters such as drought.

Although the recovery stage after a disaster was to be taken care of by such specialized agencies as UNDP, it was in the area of immediate post-disaster relief that some form of contingency planning had to be rapidly implemented. On a more personal level, we may quote the Secretary-General in saying that

...it is time for head and heart to co-operate in seeing that relief was more effectively organized on a global basis, and that the yearning to help was translated into terms immediately related to the stricken people's needs. 38

On December 14, 1971, the General Assembly adopted, by a record vote of 86 in favour, none against, and ten abstentions, a resolution on "Assistance in cases of natural disaster and other disaster situations", recommended by the Third Committee of the UN. The Assembly called upon the Secretary-General to appoint a disaster relief co-ordinator, who would report directly to him and would be authorized, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to co-ordinate all international assistance provided in cases of natural and other disasters.

The Assembly also recommended that UN assistance should be co-ordinated with the help of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in particular the International Red Cross. The Secretary-General was given authorization by the Assembly to draw on the Working

Capital Fund in the amount of \$ 200,000 (US), for emergency assistance in one year, with a normal ceiling of \$ 20,000 (US) per country in the case of any one disaster. 39

It was by General Assembly resolution 2816, that a single central office, the UN Disaster Relief Office, was established within the UN system to co-ordinate and strengthen relief efforts, even though it had been challenged by the Soviet Union as involving unnecessary expenses.

The UN Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, then Mr. Berkhol (and now Mr. Essaafi), would have three broad functions: 1) the co-ordination of relief; 2) the provision of assistance in pre-disaster planning and disaster preparedness; and, 3) the promotion of disaster prevention. (See next two pages).

It was hoped that the office could overcome the previous characteristics of disaster relief co-ordination, those being: an assistance that was uncoordinated and inadequate and where the assistance given by the international community was frequently used ineffectively.

From the beginning of its activities on March 1, 1972, problems of jurisdiction with other UN organizations and the sovereignty of disaster-stricken nations already plagued the new Office.



⊙ To establish and maintain the closest co-operation with all organizations concerned, and to make all feasible advance arrangements with them to ensure the most effective assistance:

⊙ To mobilize, direct and co-ordinate the relief activities of the various organizations of the United Nations system in response to a request for disaster assistance from a stricken State;

⊙ To co-ordinate United Nations assistance with that given by intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in particular by the International Red Cross;

⊙ To receive, on behalf of the Secretary-General, contributions offered to him for disaster relief assistance to be carried out by the United Nations, its agencies and programmes for particular emergency situations;

⊙ To assist the Government of the stricken country to assess its relief and other needs and to evaluate the priority of those needs, to disseminate that information to prospective donors and others concerned, and to serve as a clearing-house for assistance extended or planned by all sources of external aid;

⊙ To promote the study, prevention, control and prediction of natural disasters, including the collection and dissemination of information concerning technological developments;

⊙ To assist in providing advice to Governments on pre-disaster planning in association with relevant voluntary organizations, particularly with the League of Red Cross Societies, and to draw upon United Nations resources available for such purposes;

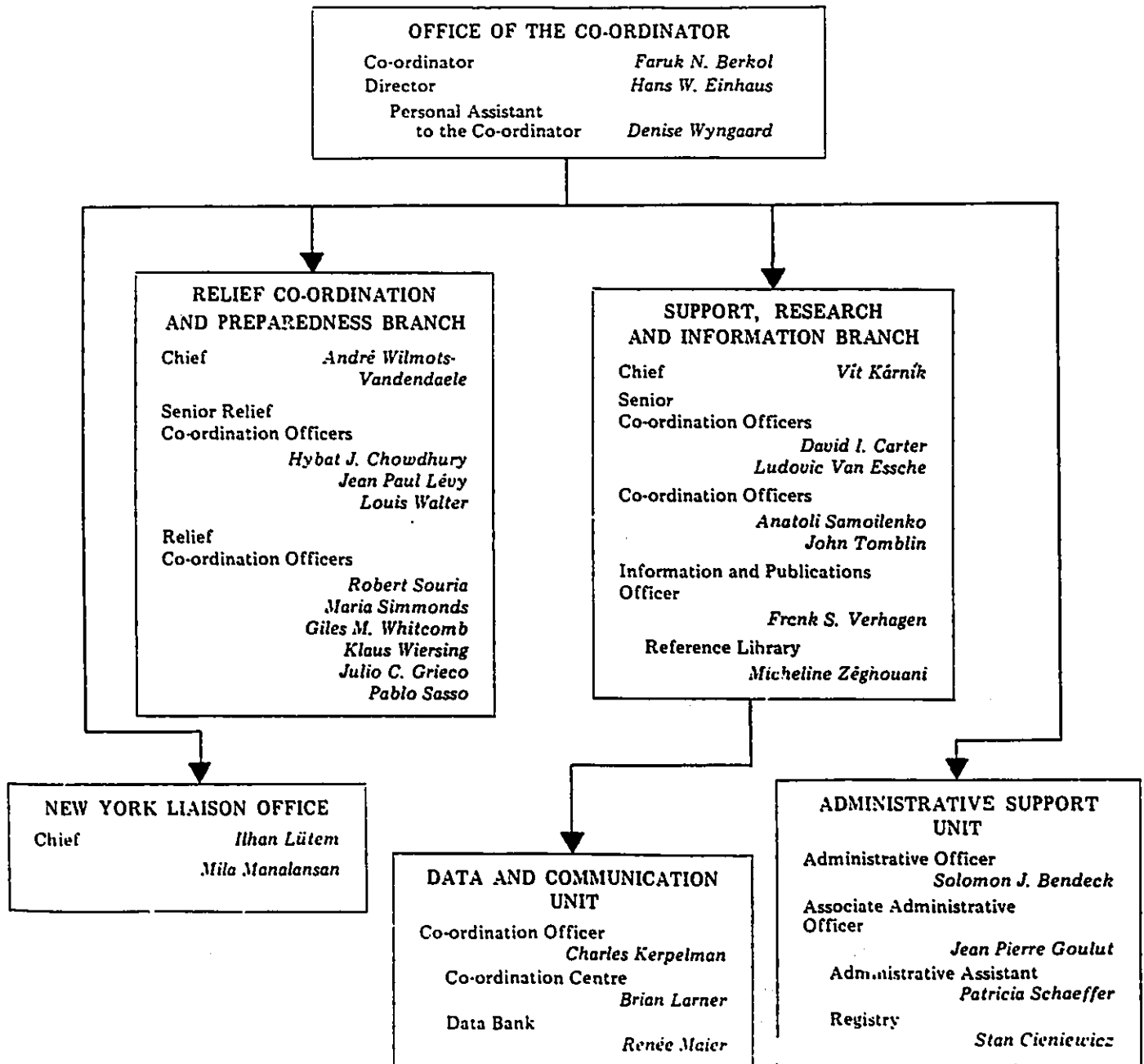
⊙ To acquire and disseminate information relevant to planning and co-ordinating relief for disasters, including the improvement and establishment of stockpiles in disaster-prone areas, and to prepare suggestions to ensure the most effective use of available resources;

⊙ To phase out relief operations under his aegis as the stricken country moves into the stage of rehabilitation and reconstruction, but to continue to interest himself, within the framework of his responsibilities for relief, in the activities of the United Nations agencies concerned with rehabilitation and reconstruction;

⊙ To prepare an annual report for the Secretary-General, to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council and to the General Assembly;

Source: "When disaster strikes: the United Nations response to natural disasters", UN Chronicle, Vol. 22(8), 1983,

Organizational Structure of UNDRRO



5- 1972-1987

UNDRO's headquarters was to be in Geneva, since most of the specialized agencies are based in Geneva or in Europe. At this location, more governmental capitals were relatively easier to reach than New York, also the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies were all located in Geneva. It was believed that the Office should be near the majority of people likely to contribute aid and the majority of Organizations concerned. Still, a representative exists in New York, keeping the Secretary-General informed about its activities.

From the beginning of its activities in March 1972, the Office was understaffed and underfunded. Several areas of its mandate had been questioned. Some interpretations of the mandate itself arose concerning its activities in the area of 'other disaster situations'. It was not clear whether this included human-caused disasters; 'creeping' disasters, such as droughts, epidemics, famines; or 'accidental' disasters, such as maritime, industrial, or nuclear catastrophes. It was also not clear what the proper balance in its allocations should be between prevention, preparedness and pre-disaster planning functions, or how much of an operational role it should play in supplying relief, and where the critical "emergency" phase ended, and where

rehabilitation began. Its operational weakness failed to respond to the severest criticism of the system as a whole: that the co-ordination of disaster relief operations initiated by all participating organizations and specialized agencies would still not be resolved by the creation of UNDR0.

UNDR0 tried to reconcile these functions throughout the next decade, at the same time assessing its performance, improving its methods and strengthening its capacity and effectiveness, and drawing up guidelines for organizations and specialized agencies to follow concerning not only the method of their interventions but their accountability to the victims of disasters.

Late in 1974, the General Assembly established a Trust Fund with the intention of strengthening UNDR0, increasing the number of staff members and funding for additional expenses, such as travelling. The amount of total commitments to emergencies increased from \$ 179,000(US) in 1972 to \$ 207,872(US) in 1974, and to \$ 231,248(US) in 1975, with Africa receiving the highest percentage of commitments at 35.4 percent and Europe receiving the lowest at 4 percent. Natural disasters received 68 percent of commitments, while drought and human-caused disasters received 22 percent and 10 percent respectively.

Trust Fund received a total of \$ 1.4 million (US) in 1974-75, reaching \$ 1.6 million(US) for 1976-77, and \$

887,563 (US) in 1980-81, a considerable reduction. In 1982-83, the Fund received \$ 1.0 million (US), \$ 1.39 million (US) in 1984-85, and \$ 675,746 (US) in 1986.

By 1979, UNDR0 mobilized and co-ordinated relief, and/or sent an officer to the scene, and/or made a grant from its own emergency funds to 21 countries. 40

By 1980, the General Assembly again reaffirmed UNDR0's mandate, adding new responsibilities, and called for further steps to improve the capacity and the effectiveness of the Office. Individual agreements were made with other agencies within the United Nations System, each defining the respective responsibilities of the parties according to their mandates. Detailed guidelines were developed under which, in cases of exceptional or complex natural disasters, a United Nations "lead agency" would be selected by the Secretary-General after consultations at the international level. 41 For UNDR0 this meant that in the case where a disaster required system-wide participation, UNDR0 would remain as the primary co-ordinating agency. But, in the event of a disaster requiring the assistance of only one or two organizations, then the organization or agency with the expertise required would be the lead agency, while UNDR0 would provide information as to what type of assistance is required, and how it could best be implemented (which to many seems to be UNDR0's only purpose)..

In the twelve-month period between April 1982 and March 1983, there were 45 appeals by 43 countries made to UNDR0 for disasters ranging from drought, civil strife, cyclones, floods, earthquakes, volcano eruptions and displaced persons. Total contributions amounted to \$ 385 million (US) compared to \$ 152 million (US) in the previous twelve-month period, thus indicating a steep rise in activities, especially in Angola, Chad, Lebanon and West Africa.

By this time, UNDR0 could withdraw \$ 600,000 (US) from the Trust Fund, with a normal ceiling of \$ 50,000 (US) per country for a single disaster.

UNDR0's increase in activities continued well into 1983, not only in disaster-relief co-ordination, but also in disaster preparedness and prevention in such countries as Benin, Chad, Indonesia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania, Tonga, and Western Somalia. Considerable emphasis had also been given to the assessment and mitigation of earthquake prediction, and insurance policies to determine ways of recovering the ever-increasing losses from disasters. 42

With the mounting number of disasters, especially the drought in Africa causing famine; the chemical disaster in Bhopal, India on December 3, 1985; recurrent cyclones and floods in Bangladesh; cyclones in the Caribbean; earthquakes in Latin America, it is essential

that the United Nations System be able to mobilize and co-ordinate, in the quickest and most effective manner, the relief that emanates from UNDRD appeals to UN agencies, organizations, voluntary agencies and governments. Yet, the introduction of a mobilizing and co-ordinating agency like UNDRD seems to have caused a complex form of issues, as we will see in the following pages.

CHILDREN

UNICEF: Although UNICEF's new policies in the early 1970s were concentrated in the area of development, and of the material, intellectual, emotional and vocational needs of children and mothers, it still believed that it had a unique role to play in disaster relief.

In the event of a disaster, UNICEF field staff were responsible for alerting headquarters of the emergency. Once on the field, the officers usually assisted the government in an assessment of the emergency needs of mothers and children, followed by a close co-operation with other UN agency representatives, to identify the needs and respond to the request for assistance submitted by the Government.

Following a request for assistance, UNICEF drew supplies from a warehouse it maintained in Copenhagen, consisting of a variety of drugs, medical equipment and related supplies for children and mothers. Also, the field representative could spend \$ 25,000 (US) or divert

supplies and equipment already in the country, up to this amount, without reference, as well as financing from the sources already mentioned.

Since 1975, all of UNICEF's emergency activities were co-ordinated through the office of the Co-ordinator of Emergency Operations at UNICEF headquarters. The Co-ordinator, in the event of an emergency, was responsible for ensuring co-ordination between involved field offices and supporting UNICEF headquarters divisions. He must also maintain effective working relationships with concerned UN agencies and organizations and other involved bilateral, voluntary and non-governmental agencies.

UNICEF was also involved in joint projects with other organizations, such as nutritional surveillance projects with the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Health Organization.

However, when UNDRO was established, UNICEF's strongest objections regarding UNDRO's responsibilities concerned its operational functions. UNICEF agreed in principle to a co-ordinating agent, but without the capacity to launch operational activities of its own. It regarded the establishment as competition for public funds for disaster relief and a threat to UNICEF operations. UNICEF's strongest fear was that an operational UN agency would jeopardize UNICEF's domain of

assistance to children and mothers. This same feeling was to reoccur in other organizations. 43

FOOD

FAO: The challenge that the Sahelian and Ethiopian drought posed to the efforts of the FAO and the World Food Program, brought the FAO to respond with the creation of yet another organization, the Office for Sahelian Relief Operations (OSRO) in 1973, which became the focal point for the entire UN relief efforts in that area.

In 1975, OSRO's mandate was expanded to include emergency operations all over the world, which fell within FAO's specific fields of action. It provided agricultural input and technical assistance where needed for sudden disasters, and in emergencies of long-term consequences. Its operations were based on voluntary contributions from the UN system for specific projects having a direct bearing on the increase of food production.

The Office was also involved in disaster prevention and preparedness, for example, in the Desert Locust Control Program that detected and destroyed locusts before they achieved a plague status; the World Livestock Disease Reporting Scheme; the Remote Sensing Unit; the Global Information and Early Warning System; the International Fertilizer Supply Scheme established in 1973 to alert the world of the disastrous consequences of

a shortage in fertilizers; the Global Nutritional Surveillance System established in 1974 by the FAO, UNICEF and WHO; and the World Food Security Assistance Scheme, established in 1976 following a World Food Conference that promoted the cooperation of Governments to avoid acute food shortages in the event of widespread agricultural failures or natural disasters.

The growing refugee population problem added to the exceptionally fragile situation in which consecutive crop failures in major cereal-producing areas, or in heavily populated regions, plagued further by the destruction of crops from natural or human-caused disasters, multiplied even further the human tragedy.

The creation of UNDRO as an agency with a mandate to direct and co-ordinate relief efforts also seemed to be a potential threat to the autonomy of the FAO. 44

WFP: The same problems faced by the FAO were being faced by the World Food Program (WFP). Its initial budget of \$ 10 million (US) was increased to \$ 40 million (US) annually with yearly revisions, in addition to access to the International Emergency Food Reserve, established in 1975, providing 500,000 tons of food stocks, or the equivalent in funds, to use in disaster situations or other emergencies.

In 1975, the WFP established its Committee on Food Aid Policies, whose function was to assess emergency requirements and co-ordinate WFP aid with other

multilateral and bilateral food assistance, to participate in immediate emergency post-disaster assistance and reconstruction programmes, and to ensure that the development process was not disrupted by the disaster.

The WFP also initiated preventative measures, such as flood control, soil conservation, land reclamation, canal lining, access roads, the building up of national food supplies, and the provision of food to victims, beyond the immediate emergency period.

The World Food Program has responded to a total of 597 emergency operations from 1970 to 1982, in 96 countries, at a total cost of \$ 1 billion (US). (See next two pages).

Human-caused disasters accounted for almost three-fourths of the international emergency food aid approved in 1981. Out of 53 emergency food aid operations totalling \$ 178.3 million (US) in 1981, almost three-quarters, or \$ 138.8 million (US) were used to help refugees, displaced persons, and others affected by civil disturbances. The aid was largely to Afghan refugees in Pakistan, for homeless and displaced persons in Somalia and for Kampuchean operations. The remainder was for help in the wake of natural disasters, such as floods or droughts. 45

The WFP co-ordinated its efforts with other UN organizations and with non-governmental organizations,

WFP CONTRIBUTIONS TO EMERGENCY OPERATIONS
1970-1982

Date	No. of operations		No. of countries	\$ million	
	increase	total		increase	total
Feb. 1970	4	106	61	1.8	83.2
April 1970	1	107	62	.05	82.5
June 1970	5	112	65	5.6	88.2
August 1970	2	113	65	5.0	89.4
Oct. 1970	5	118	66	2.8	91.6
Dec. 1970	3	122	67	6.65	96.9
Feb 1971	6	128	68	3.0	99.3
April 1971	6	133	70	1.5	101.1
June 1971	5	138	70	8.3	104.7
Aug. 1971	3	142	70	5.0	106.3
Oct. 1971	2	144	70	2.0	107.5
Dec. 1971	4	148	70	5.0	112.6
Feb. 1972	4	149	70	5.0	114.1
April 1972	2	151	71	1.8	114.6
Dec. 1972	7	161	74	8.0	121.8
April 1973	8	167	74	6.8	127.7
June 1973	4	171	74	3.0	129.6
Aug. 1973	1	172	74	1.0	130.5
Feb. 1974	4	178	74	1.6	135.9
April 1974	-	-	-		137.2
June 1974	3	181	74	1.8	139.6
Aug. 1974	2	183	75	2.4	142.0
Oct. 1974	2	185	76	1.7	142.9
Dec. 1974	7	191	76	7.0	153.1
June 1975	5	233	79	9.5	163.0
Sept. 1975	11	241	81	14.4	177.5
Dec. 1975	13	255	86	27.7	208.0
March 1976	6	261	87	11.0	216.7
June 1976	6	268	88	9.0	226.3
Sept. 1976	3	275	88	3.6	233.0
Dec. 1976	8	290	88	19.0	250.0
March 1977	9	297	88	9.5	260.7
June 1977	8	309	88	17.2	277.7
Sept. 1977	8	319	91	18.0	295.9
Dec. 1977	8	338	91	10.5	333.9
March 1978	12	352	93	20.5	353.5
May 1978	13	367	93	21.3	376.7
Sept. 1978	9	388	93	18.8	391.0
Dec. 1978	12	411	93	14.0	415.5
March 1979	3	418	93	3.0	419.6
Dec. 1978	12	411	93	14.0	415.5
March 1979	3	418	93	3.0	419.6
June 1979	21	401	93	32.0	450.8
Sept. 1979	17	422	93	31.0	489.0
Dec. 1979	20	445	93	40.0	539.8
March 1980	10	456	93	37.0	573.9
May 1980	7	466	93	22.2	591.2

Sept. 1980	21	494	94	68.6	657.1
Dec. 198-	20	503	94	62.8	713.9
March 1981	16	520	94	47.8	766.3
June 1981	14	532	95	55.6	798.6
Sept. 1981	12	542	95	32.1	835.0
Dec. 1981	12	555	95	47.8	884.5
March 1982	13	567	95	49.6	940.2
June 1982	20	584	95	82.8	1,075.
Sep. 1982	11	597	96	8.3	1,026.

 Source: World Food Program News, 1970 to 1982 issues.

so avoiding duplication of efforts and at the same time providing supplies the most economically from the nearest source. In particular, it maintained constant contact with the office of the UN Disaster Relief Co-ordinator in Geneva.

OEDA: The rapidly worsening situation in Ethiopia, culminated in 1984 in a drought that affected more than 35 million people, of which 10 million had to leave their homes in search of water and food. Yet ecological deterioration and demographic pressures, were not the only factors to blame. There was also a prolonged and general recession in the industrialized countries that resulted in a reduction in aid flows to African countries. In addition, there was a growing burden of foreign debt-servicing, lower returns from the export of agricultural and other basic commodities whose world market prices kept on falling while the cost of import fuel and manufactured goods kept on rising.

In December 1984, the Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar established the Office for Emergency Operations in Africa (OEDA). The creation of such an office would ensure that the United Nations would respond to the emergency needs of African nations in a way that would be timely and effective.

The mandate of the Office was to promote co-ordination in the response of the UN system to the African Emergency crisis; to facilitate the gathering of

up-to-date, coherent and comprehensive information on the scope and evolution of the emergency; to promote and support resource mobilization efforts on behalf of the affected countries; and, to help expedite the delivery of emergency supplies by the entire international donor community, including non-governmental organizations, to the affected African Governments. Through its regular contacts with the media, OEQA also helped to keep the world's attention focused on the African emergency. 46

OEQA's operational effectiveness in performing its coordination functions came from its collaboration agreements worked out with the other principal UN organizations and agencies concerned with the African emergency, through the African Emergency Task Force (AETF). The Task Force comprised representatives from the FAO, UNDP, UNDRO, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and others. Although the AETF was administratively independent of OEQA, it was still closely related to it, providing an ongoing and direct channel of communication between OEQA and the other concerned organizations and agencies.

OEQA also maintained close co-operation with governments and non-governmental and private sector organizations.

However, there were some serious problems to be dealt with.

"The resource mobilization process was not a success in every respect. Donors proved to be far more responsive to needs for food aid and equipment that could be provided from existing stocks, than to requests for funds for critically needed medical and health supplies, drinking water and sanitation facilities, international logistics and transport requirements and essential agricultural and pastoral inputs. As a result of continuing deficiencies in the response to these vital needs, widespread suffering and debilitation has continued to prevail in many areas, and large sections of the population in the countries still affected, especially children.../and women/... remaining highly vulnerable." 47

These were amongst OEQA's principal preoccupations. However, despite its efforts, even though the situation in 1986 was better than a year ago, substantial relief was still required. Several countries, notably Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique and the Sudan, continued to face severe emergency conditions, even though the drought-related famine had virtually come to an end as a result of two years of reasonably good rains.

In light of these improvements, the Secretary-General decided on May 1, 1986 that, if this trend continued, that the OEQA would close as a separate office of the United Nations on October 31, 1986, when the UN would take over its remaining responsibilities.

HEALTH

WHO: In May 1974, the World Health Assembly directed the World Health Organization to take steps to meet more readily the urgent needs of countries stricken by disasters, or natural catastrophes. 48

In June of the same year, the Director-General established the Intra-Secretariat Coordination Committee on Early Warning System; and in November 1974, an Officer in the Division of Co-ordination was designated as the Responsible Officer for WHO Emergency Relief Operations. In May 1975, the Assembly requested the Director-General of WHO to

continue to develop further the Organization's capacity for providing health assistance to disaster-stricken people, and to ensure that the Organization continues to play an active role in the joint relief and rehabilitation efforts undertaken by the system and the League of Red Cross Societies with respect to disasters and natural catastrophes. 49

Since July 1975, the Responsible Officer for Emergency Relief Operations has reported directly to the Deputy Director-General. He is also the liaison officer for WHO with the national liberation movements; those which were recognized by the Organization for African Unity (OAU).

WHO's funds for disaster relief activities is the Special Account for Disaster and Natural Catastrophes of the Voluntary Fund for Health Promotion, which was established in 1975. The Organization can act as a donor in a disaster situation rather than distributing donor's assistance. During the first year of the Fund's experience, only \$ 55,000 (US) was allotted for the disaster account. A \$ 20,000 (US) limit for each disaster has been used as a guideline. 50

Examples of its activities, were the immediate public health needs of people in the drought-stricken regions of the Sudano-Sahelian region in Africa, as well as medium and long-term programmes in nutrition, communicable diseases, environmental health, and the establishment of health infrastructures in the regions affected.

WHO, as with the FAO, saw the potential threat to its disaster relief autonomy from the creation of UNDRR.

PAHO: In March 1979, a permanent unit for Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief Co-ordination was established at PAHO headquarters in Washington, D.C.. Its main activities were: 1) the preparation of PAHO to respond to an emergency in a member country; 2) emergency preparedness in Member States; and, 3) training and research.

PAHO's disaster relief assistance was financed by the Emergency Revolving Fund available for the immediate financing of emergency relief supplies, subject to a commitment by the Government to reimburse the amount. Also, a National Disaster Relief Voluntary Fund, established in 1976, could finance PAHO's activities with a) the provisions of essential relief supplies, and b) technical assistance in carrying out a realistic assessment of the relief needs and improving management and co-operation of international assistance. This Fund has resources of approximately \$ 100,000(US) per

year. 51

Funds for preparedness activities are still very limited, but overall, PAHO would remain as WHO's only regional office with a special emergency unit.

DEVELOPMENT/DISASTER MANAGEMENT

UNDP: In General Assembly resolution 2816, the one establishing UNDRO, the role of the Resident Representative of UNDP was noted as the key to the co-ordination of local relief operations. The role of the UNDP in regard to disasters fell into two categories: 1) relief, reconstruction; and, 2) disaster planning and preparedness. As UNDRO's arm in the field, the Resident Representative was responsible for the receipt of requests for assistance from Governments following a disaster, as well as for assistance in preparing pre-disaster prevention and preparedness plans.

UNDRO asked the Resident Representatives to create an ad-hoc task force, which would be comprised of representatives of the UN and other relevant agencies in the area. It was recommended that this task force be established permanently as a standing UN Disaster Team. This Team would elaborate details of co-operation for disaster emergencies, and identify personnel, supplies and vehicles which, in critical situations, could be temporarily diverted to the needs of disaster relief.

UNDRO also established guidelines for the activities of the Representatives in the field of

preparedness and prevention. These guidelines suggested that government authorities should be sensitized to three factors when planning country programmes of technical co-operation:

"1) natural disasters have a severe impact on development; 2) most natural disasters can be prevented or mitigated; and, 3) some of the most basic and effective preventive measures are also among the least costly." 52

Yet, funds for disaster preparedness programs in disaster-prone countries have not been sufficient. This was most apparent during the ongoing Sahelian and Ethiopian drought, where a shortage of logistical equipment and trained personnel remain a critical problem in many relief operations. One way to solve the problem of untrained personnel would be to make better use of local human resources by training them, thereby promoting popular participation in the disaster management process.

EMERGENCY EMPLOYMENT

ILO: It is through the International Labour Organization that advice has been introduced into the disaster-prone country, on the prevention of natural disasters and for reconstruction in organizing labour-intensive work programs for disaster prevention and in assessing needs for employment, training and rehabilitation. Activities have included vocational training for construction, transport, civil engineering, and public works; vocational rehabilitation of the

disabled; and development of the managerial activities of small-scale industrialists and leaders of co-operatives.

Because there are large numbers of people that may be temporarily out of work following a disaster, there should be a stockpile of readily designed projects that are ready to be implemented, and that can be implemented at short notice, thereby alleviating some of the strain put on the governmental administrative and design capacity. 53

Therefore, the ILO is the labour mobilizing organization, promoting the participation of labour as the key to success for any disaster preparedness effort.

REFUGEES

UNRWA: Although the General Assembly has called for governments to provide humanitarian assistance as far as possible, on an emergency basis and as a temporary measure to all displaced persons in the area of Palestine and the Near East, the financial response has not been as generous as the political support.

UNBRO: The United Nations Border Relief Operation (UNBRO) was set up in 1982 under the Secretary General's Office. The operation dealt with Kmer, Laotian and Vietnamese refugees and displaced persons. It was headed by the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Humanitarian Assistance to the Kampuchean People. Its responsibilities have included the provision of services to the camps, with the help of

Non-governmental Organizations, as well as providing services to all United Nations agencies and other international entities involved; and providing protective services to those in the camps, from fighting factions and from interference from the Thai government and military. In 1986 UNBRO was administering eight camps housing approximately 250,000 people. The main source of income from people in the camps was the food ration distributed on a per capita basis by UNBRO. However, the issue of population figures for the camps was highly controversial and politicized since camp residents tried to exaggerate the numbers while UNBRO and the Thai government tended to underestimate them. 53

The main administrative agency for UNBRO was the World Food Programme until the responsibility was transferred to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1988.

A final element to this historical review of disaster management is the naming in 1987 of the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. What this step means for the process of disaster management is an ongoing and dynamic force sharing the UN's commitment to the UN Disaster Relief Office. (We shall give more details about the Decade in the final chapter).

As we have seen from this historical review of Disaster Management, organizations such as UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, WHO, and ILO have had a long record of disaster relief activities and post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction work in their areas of competence.

Additional organizations were established throughout the years, such as the WFP, OEOA, UNRWA, and PAHO, all having some form of contingency planning for emergencies within their mandates. But it was in 1971, with the creation of UNDRD, that the effectiveness in the co-ordination of all these activities had been re-examined, and hopefully facilitated. However, effective inter-agency co-ordination obviously depended very heavily on the capacity of the individual agencies in the team to implement their particular tasks.

Since 1971, the capabilities of individual agencies to do their part in meeting emergency situations have been substantially greater. The improvement may be thanks to the creation of UNDRD and the International Emergency Food Reserve. The increase in volumes of emergency aid which the agencies have been able to mobilize thanks to the generosity of governments and the additional experience which agencies have acquired over the last decade as they have faced and successfully overcome, in large part, the difficulties inherent in

coping with sudden, frequently chaotic, emergency situations.

In a report by the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council (E/1981/16) on "Special Economic, Humanitarian and Disaster-Relief Assistance", interagency co-ordination was not an end in itself; in fact as long as the emergency situation was relatively simple in nature, there was only need for the response of one single major agency, or at most one or two other supporting agencies. The problem of interagency co-ordination need not occasion great concern or call for elaborate procedures to ensure effective co-ordination. This was in fact the situation with most humanitarian emergencies of normal size and complexity. For example, where refugees are concerned, it was clear that the major responsibility belonged to the UNHCR; in case of an epidemic or health emergency in some other form, WHO was obviously the agency primarily concerned; large-scale emergency food requirements resulting from the uprooting of masses of population, with the consequent disruption of local food production clearly involved the twin capacities of FAO and WFP. 55

Co-ordination :

Therefore, where one particular agency would be clearly responsible it should take the lead, and the others (usually a number of smaller intergovernmental or

voluntary agencies) should provide supplementary support services to those provided by the leading agencies. In cases where there would be political factors involved and a multiplicity of agencies, then the real need for effective co-ordinating mechanisms arises.

It is here that the UN faces its greatest challenge - to work effectively as a team, and not as an aggregate of agencies.

Co-ordination among equals is frequently difficult to achieve, even in the best of circumstances. It is even likelier to be true in the rush and pressure of efforts to organize to meet sudden emergencies. It is essential to have a clear definition of the roles of all agencies and organizations that are called to participate, because the larger the number of participants, the greater the difficulty of co-ordination.

In an effort to ensure a better understanding of their respective roles, UNDR0 and UNDP, in December 1979, agreed upon and issued revised instructions for UNDP Resident Representatives regarding their duties as representatives ex officio of UNDR0 in the event of a natural disaster. The principles embodied in this agreement, while limited to natural disasters, could readily be extended with adaptations, if necessary, to other disaster situations. 56

In addition to the UNDR0-UNDP revised agreement of 1979, Memoranda of Understanding have also been signed

between UNDRD and most, if not all, of the specialized agencies concerned with disaster situations. These Memoranda set the ground rules for the co-ordination of their functions and activities on a bilateral basis. Agreements have been made with WFP, UNHCR, and UNICEF. Less formal agreements have been made with the League of Red Cross Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross, and a number of voluntary agencies which have been the most difficult to deal with because of their philosophical and religious differences, as well as differences in expertise and geographical involvement, and vast differences in the size of their operations and their budgets. Competition for funding and recognition is a major problem in the co-ordination process.

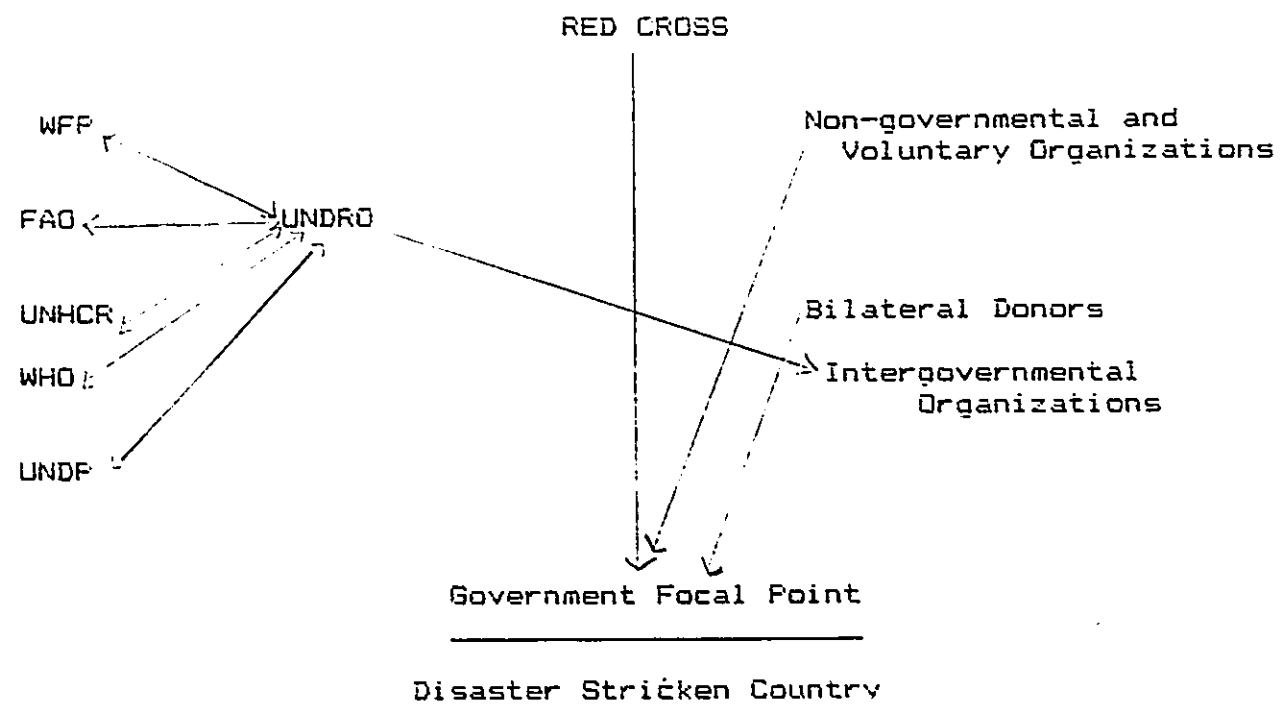
Memoranda aside, UNDRD's problems have come about as a result of too wide a mandate with too small a budget and staff. Problems in fulfilling its co-ordinating mandate have arisen due to a lack of co-operation on the part of the other larger organizations and agencies, but also due to the fact that some governments have tended to make appeals not only to the UNDP Resident Representative in their countries, but also directly to other agencies (without consulting UNDRD). Also, some Governments, although they have established emergency plans within their governmental structure, they have yet to provide their municipalities with a plan that would be parallel to its own. Not only does this cause problems for

inter-organizational co-ordination and inter-governmental co-ordination, but it means that local coping mechanisms, such as various women's groups in this case, are not utilized to their fullest extent, thereby underestimating a government's capacity to deal with a disaster and in-coming assistance.

But, generally, when the system is properly utilized, an appeal is made to the Resident Representative and then transmitted to UNDR0. Confirmation of initial requests and damage surveys involves exchanges with each agency's field representative, the respective headquarters, and UNDP in the field. Response from the UNDP field office is evaluated, and the appropriate agency representative is consulted. This opinion is then relayed to headquarters, reevaluated, and submitted to UNDR0. UNDR0 coordinates each agency's response with other relief donors and informs the disaster-stricken government through the UNDP field office. The UNDP Resident Representative then coordinates relief activities at the field level. (See next page).

It is also important to underline that effective collaboration cannot be achieved simply by formulas or mechanisms alone. There are attitudes and personalities that must be reconciled with a disposition to work together as a team and to voluntarily submerge individual as well as institutional identity, if necessary, in a

INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF SYSTEM



Source: Brown, B.J., United Nations and Disaster Relief in the Sahel, International Universal Microfilms, 1977, p.182

common interest. Since discussions in interagency or intergovernmental forums may occasionally expose conceptual, philosophical or doctrinal differences of opinion, effectiveness will, therefore, depend on the practical working arrangements at the headquarters of the respective agencies, and above all in the field.

Hopefully, the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction will bring to the surface the organizational difficulties present in the disaster management process, and create in the system a new sense of accountability to disaster-prone countries and the disaster victims.

It is this sense of accountability to the potential and actual capabilities of those people affected by disasters, namely women, that we wish to introduce, because it is believed to be the only way that a new gender-focused disaster management process can take root. But first we must review the dynamics of the United Nations interest in women and their overall conditions in order to better explain how this accountability can take root in the United Nations Disaster Management system.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this historical review of Disaster Management was to show that although the preoccupation with the needs of refugees during both world wars and then of victims of natural and human-caused disasters

did and does exist in the minds of UN Members, many problems have yet to be resolved. Firstly, the rights of a sovereign disaster-prone country's government must be outlined; a tighter co-operation between UN organizations and specialized agencies with the UN Disaster Relief Office must be reinforced with General Assembly resolutions and decisions; funding to UNDRR must be increased for it to be able to meet all aspects of its mandate, especially prevention and preparedness; a new outlook must be promoted in UN organizations and specialized agencies that would work to be accountable to those affected by a disaster instead of to the agencies and donors. The media must also help by being less thorough in complimenting donors and agencies for their work, which encourages these agents to seek recognition and more money, and by turning their attention to the response to victims' needs long after the disaster has passed. Therefore the agencies' emphasis on prestige must be changed to that of accountability to those affected by disasters with a gender-specific focus in the establishment of guidelines leading to a system-wide policy that would assure the integration of women in the Disaster Management process primarily through regional mechanisms followed by international mechanisms.

CHAPTER 2

THE UNITED NATIONS AND WOMEN

In this section, we will review the dynamics of the United Nations' interest in women's issues. As mentioned, although women are seen as crucial actors in the development process of their communities, women remain the most vulnerable group in the wake of natural or "human-caused" (1) disasters because of the low status they possess in the traditional values of many developing and some developed countries.

The United Nations interest in the status of women began with the creation of the Commission on the Status of Women by the UN's Economic and Social Council in 1946, followed by the efforts made to promote the equality between men and women in the world and within the UN system in the 1950s and 1960s, followed by the promotion of the integration of women in the Third World development process, leading to the International Women's Year in 1975 and the UN Decade for Women from 1976 to 1985.

We are not arguing that the two dynamics, the establishment and operations of UNDR0 and the UN's interest in women, follow the same logic, even though they do occur at about the same time; But we hope to link in the third and fourth chapters the importance of improving the disaster management co-ordinating mechanism among UN

organizations, agencies, voluntary agencies, national governments and their national and regional disaster plans, and the implementation of a system-wide integration of women in disaster management.

1940-1959 - The recognition of women's rights

The Economic and Social Council, a UN program co-ordinating agency also involved in hearing proposals for disaster management operations, has the quasi-legislative role of drafting conventions, because it is often involved in the early phases of consensus building for many UN-sponsored treaties. One such convention, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, serves as an example of what can be accomplished in the form of international legislation when states find ground for agreement. Such a consensus, however, was not easily developed. Women's groups from many countries, banding together as an international pressure group, demanded and obtained from ECOSOC a Commission on the Status of Women in June 1946. They followed this up by pushing the idea of feminine political equality through the Commission, ECOSOC, General Assembly, and national ratification stages. The Convention guarantees women the right to vote and to hold public office. 2

The Commission's guiding principles, as set out by the Sub-Commission on the Status of Women, were that:...

freedom and equality are essential to human development. Woman is as much a human being as man, and therefore, entitled to share them with him; well-being and progress of society depend on the extent to which both men and women are able to develop their full personality and are recognized for their responsibilities to themselves and to each other; women have thus a definite role to play in the building of a free, healthy, prosperous and moral society, and they can fulfill this obligation only as a free and responsible member. 3

For the next decade, the Commission would concentrate on fulfilling its guiding principles: to stimulate public opinion in favour of raising the status of women as an instrument to further human rights and peace. The Commission also looked for the full collaboration and support of the governments of all the UN in their endeavors to raise the status of women throughout the world; and secondly, to collaborate with UN organs, specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations, governments, and any experts deemed necessary. 4

1960-1969 - Implementation of priorities

At the Commission's twenty-second session in 1968, a significant development occurred with respect to the status of women. There was a unanimous adoption by the Commission on the Status of Women of a resolution on the implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

The ECOSOC, in resolution 1133, requested the Secretary-General to draw up and communicate to Governments and non-governmental organizations in consultative status

concerned with the subject, a questionnaire seeking their views on the role which women can play in the economic and social development of their countries, the degrees of priority which should be given to the contribution of women to the various areas of national economic and social development, the problems encountered in those areas, the possible ways of overcoming these problems, and the kind of assistance that might be required. The Council invited the the Commission to consider the replies to the questionnaire in conjunction with the Secretary-General's report on the UN assistance for the advancement of women with a view to establishing guidelines for a unified long-term UN program in this field. 5

On a different scale, taking note of the resolutions adopted by the International Conference on Human Rights and the General Assembly resolutions 2443 and 2444 concerning respect for and implementation of human rights in occupied territories in the Middle East and human rights in armed conflicts, the Commission recommended that the protection of women and children against inhuman practices in time of armed conflict or occupation should

more than ever receive the attention of the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the UN Children's Fund, which should render greater assistance to them and to women and children in territories struck by natural disasters. In this connection, the Commission expressed the hope that women in increasing numbers would be consulted or sent on missions by the International Committee of the Red Cross in occupied territories ravaged by war or struck by natural disasters, and solemnly appealed to all women throughout the world to make every effort to contribute to the establishment of peace and justice and towards finding a just solution to armed conflicts. 6

This was reinforced by ECOSOC resolution 1515, which requested the Secretary-General to give particular attention to the protection of women and children in emergency or war time, and promoting throughout the world a wider knowledge of the plight of women and children. 7

1970-1979 - Protection in disaster situations

Resolution 3318 (1970) on the "Declaration on the protection of women and children in emergency and armed conflict" stated the following:

Women and children belonging to the civilian population and finding themselves in circumstances of emergency and armed conflict in the struggle for peace, self-determination, national liberation, independence, or who live in occupied territories, shall not be deprived of shelter, food, medical aid or other inalienable rights, in accordance with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and other instruments of international law. 8

In 1971, the resolution on a program of concerted action for the advancement of women, resolution 2716, was adopted in the General Assembly by 114 votes in favour to

none against for a recommendation that regional and international conferences be organized to consider ways of improving the status of women within the framework of over-all development.

In 1972, under the General Assembly agenda item "Programme of concerted action to promote the advancement of women and to increase their contribution to the development of their countries", a resolution was unanimously adopted where the Commission for the Status of Women requested the Economic and Social Council to transmit the General Assembly a draft resolution under which the Assembly would proclaim 1975 as International Women's Year, devoting the year to intensify action to promote equality between men and women and to increase women's contribution to national and international development. It invited all Member States and all interested organizations to take steps to ensure the full realization of the rights of women and their advancement on the basis of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

This draft was meant to set in motion dynamic national, regional and international activities to improve the conditions of women and ensure their integration in all sectors of national life.

During the General Assembly 27th session, resolution 3010, "International Women's Year" was adopted without objection in 1973, the Assembly proclaimed the year 1975 International Women's Year for increased action in the

promotion of equality between men and women, and to insure the full integration of women in the total development effort, particularly during the Second Development Decade in the 1970s.

General Assembly Resolution 3524 on December 15, 1975, on the "Measures for the Integration of Women in Development" recommended that organs of the UN Development Program and the specialized agencies, and other international technical and financial assistance programmes and agencies should:

- a) Give sustained attention to the integration of women in the formulation, design and implementation of development projects and programmes; and b) assist Governments that so request to incorporate in their development plans, their programme and project documents an impact statement of how such proposed programmes will affect women as participants and beneficiaries. 9

The World Conference of the International Women's Year took place in Mexico City from 19 June to 2 July, 1975. One of the most important results of the Conference was the establishment of a World Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Objectives of the Year and related solutions. The Plan of Action called for certain efforts to be achieved following the Year and up to the year 2000. These efforts were:

1) achieving full equality before the law; 2) meeting the health needs of women and girls; 3) eliminating inequality of educational opportunities; 4) providing training for women in all fields; 5) providing proper guidance and counselling; 6) ensuring equality of economic rights; 7) improving working and living conditions; 8) improving quality of rural life; 9) providing social services; 10) protection of maternity; 11) expanding freedom of choice; 12) providing equality of rights and responsibilities in the family; 13) ensuring equal participation in decision-making in development planning, disarmament questions, and the strengthening of friendly relations with the United States. 10

A second result of the Conference, was the proclamation, stated in resolution 3520, of the period 1976 to 1985 as the UN Decade for Women, concentrating on three factors: 1) equality; 2) development; and 3) peace. Governments were called upon to examine the recommendations found in the World Plan of Action and related resolutions, to adopt national strategies, plans and programmes for the implementation of the recommendations within the framework of over-all development plans, policies and programmes. Organizations in the UN system were also invited to submit proposals and suggestions for implementing the World Plan of Action and related resolutions of the Conference during the UN Decade for Women.

It was suggested that a system-wide review and appraisal of the World Plan of Action should be undertaken biennially as an input to the process of review and appraisal of the International Development Strategy for the Second UN Development Decade, taking into account the

Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order.

Since 1980 - Program Adjustments

A second Conference took place in Copenhagen in 1980 to review and evaluate the progress made in implementing the objectives of the International Women's Year, and found it necessary to readjust existing programmes in the light of new data and research available.

A new emphasis was placed on employment, health and education, where different organizations, such as the ILO, WHO, WFP, UNRWA and others would co-operate with each other to create programmes to meet the needs of women in these areas.

A year following the Conference, emphasis was also placed on the importance of an International Development Strategy for the Third UN Development Decade to improve the status of women and ensure their full participation in the development process as agents and beneficiaries of development.

Research coming out as a result of the UN Decade for Women revealed that the development process had not always benefitted women, even though women had and have always contributed to development, and that their actions received no remuneration nor any recognition.

From the point of view of the Decade, women's contributions to the development process of their countries

had to be recognized and women also required that their needs and capacities be integrated into these areas of rural development planning: the provision of new energy resources and fuel wood; the improvement of human settlements by taking into consideration the needs of women as the head of many Third World and developed world households - not limiting the plan to the context of the family; the penetration of women into management in industrial production; equality on the access to credit; and, improvement in national and international migration. 11

Therefore, from the point of view of the development process, the principal objectives of the Decade were the recognition of women's contributions in all the sectors we have outlined above. Progress has been noted in some spheres, but challenges remain in others. The goal of the Decade will require continuing and heightened efforts in the remainder of the century, particularly in the implementation of policies to advance women that have been initiated during that period. 12

It is said that the influence of the United Nations activities in support of women's advancement has been catalytic, and its Decade for Women has created great interest in women's roles and contributions and has had a wide influence on women around the world. One important feature has been the expansion of research and writing

about women, as well as a growth in the world-wide "networking" of women through conferences, new journals, technical assistance co-operation, and exchange of persons.

The final Conference in Nairobi, Kenya from July 15 to July 26, 1985, invited UN bodies, regional commissions, and specialized agencies to develop and implement comprehensive policies for women and development and to incorporate them into their medium term plans, statement of objectives, programmes and other major policy statements. It was recommended that in formulating programmes and projects, it should be explicitly indicated where women constitute a significant proportion of the intended beneficiaries. 13

As a result of the Conference, ninety percent of governments have official bodies dedicated to the advancement of women and fifty percent of these had been set up during the Decade. Sixty five governments have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, 62 have special programmes for women in their national development plans and 45 now provide free legal advice to help women fight for their rights. 14

Yet, still more has to be done. The Commission on the Status of Women has called upon governments of the Member States to find further ways of implementing the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the year 2000. The Commission's 32 Members have

been asked by the General Assembly to monitor the implementation of the strategies, stressing the need for all countries to redouble their efforts to enable women to wield more power in and to reap more benefits from society. According to the report of the Secretary-General on the Forward Looking Strategies,

Governments should institutionalize women's issues at the national level by establishing or strengthening appropriate machinery in all areas and sectors of development, and direct specific attention to effecting a positive change in the attitude of male decision-makers. Ultimately, this should ensure the establishment and implementation of legislation and mobilize communications and information systems to create social awareness of the legal rights of women to participate in all aspects of development at all levels. In addition, national resources should be directed to providing the machinery in charge of women's issues with political, financial and technical resources, strengthening intersectoral co-ordination in promoting women's participation and establish institutional mechanisms to address the needs of especially vulnerable groups of women. Finally, Governments should compile gender-specific statistics and information as well as develop or reorganize an information system to take decisions and action on the advancement of women. They should also support local research activities and local experts to help identify mechanisms for the advancement of women focusing on self-reliant, self-sustaining and self-generating social, economic and political development of women. Finally, this mechanism should be monitored and evaluated for its effectiveness. 15

UNIFEM and INSTRAW are other institutions that must play a role in the promotion of discussion and legislation that would help in improving the UNs accountability to disaster victims. UNIFEM, is one of the six associated programmes of the UNDP. In July of 1985, the former Voluntary Fund for the UN Decade for Women was re-named the

United Nations Development Fund for Women with the acronym UNIFEM. It was established in autonomous association with the UNDP in order to preserve its separate identity as the only Fund in the UN system established to provide specialized technical co-operation assistance to women. UNIFEM was given an expanded mandate by the General Assembly Resolution 39/125 where its resources would be used for the following activities:

- 1) to serve as a catalyst with the goal of ensuring the appropriate involvement of women in mainstream development activities as often as possible at the pre-investment stages; b) to support innovative and experimental activities benefitting women in line with national and regional priorities. 16

INSTRAW stands for the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women. Its mandate is to ensure that sustained attention is given to the integration of women into development activities at all levels. The Institute undertakes research activities by collecting, classifying and analysing, on a continuous basis, information on research programmes on women and making it available to professionals within and outside the United Nations system and to the general public. It also sponsors and/or undertakes research in the area of socio-economic development.

Through its information, documentation and communication activities, the Institute seeks to enhance women's access to information. It endeavors to collect and disseminate information on the roles and the status of women in society, as well as on institutions providing information on the means available for improving women's position, and on the steps taken at the national, regional and international levels to improve the condition of women. 17

At the international level, the Commission on the Status of Women wrote that effective consultative and reporting arrangements are required to collect information on action taken to implement the forward-looking strategies and on successful ways and means used to overcome obstacles.

Monitoring should, therefore, be carried out at international and regional levels based on national-level monitoring including input from non-governmental organizations. The special needs of women should be periodically assessed and methods developed to integrate women's concerns into the planning and evaluation of development activities. Finally, international institutional co-ordination should be strengthened, particularly in relation to the exchange of information on the advancement of women and the establishment of collaborative arrangements to undertake activities with interrelated components. 18

The same strategies should be applicable to women in Disaster Management.

CONCLUSION

The growing preoccupation with the fate of women in the development process, has occurred in the midst of a rapidly changing international system. In fact, it is as a result of these changes that concern about women is even articulated.

This new attitude is the result of forty years of work by the Commission on the Status of Women, created in 1946 to promote the advancement of women on all social

levels, especially in bridging the gap between words and actions in the principle of equality between the sexes.

Yet, at the end of the 1980s, there is still more work to be done, not only in the advancement of the status of women throughout the world, but also in spheres such as disarmament, the environment, population growth, and in disaster management.

The greatest barriers to the advancement of women are the traditional beliefs that still dominate men's views of the role of women in society. For Disaster Management, the greatest barrier is the functional co-operation of the different agents that are involved: governments, UN organizations and specialized agencies, and individuals. Yet these barriers are not organizational, rather, they are political. General awareness of the conditions of women in disasters, as well as their involvement in the technical operations of social infrastructures must be increased leading, hopefully, to a greater political will on the part of United Nations Secretariats as policy makers to integrate women in the Disaster Management process.

CHAPTER 3
VULNERABILITIES AND CAPACITIES
OF WOMEN IN NATURAL AND HUMAN-CAUSED DISASTERS

The theme of this chapter is centered around the need for guidelines relating to the involvement of women worldwide in international Disaster Management. However, so far, the issue of women and their role in Disaster Management has been overlooked. In raising the issue, we hope to demonstrate how the international community could take additional measures to ensure that their disaster recovery, response and preparedness operations take women's needs into account. By establishing these operational guidelines, and by following them, the level of a community's awareness would be raised, as well as its state of preparedness, and would improve the community's response in the event of either natural or human-caused disasters. At the international level, the creation of such guidelines by a co-ordinating agency (the UN Disaster Relief Office), would greatly improve and facilitate the co-ordination of disaster management operations between all United Nations organizations and agencies having Disaster Management within their mandates.

Before we can establish guidelines for the integration of women in disaster management, it is essential that we establish a general inventory of women's

roles in every society, developed or developing, by using an analytical framework. This framework will develop an overview of the contemporary status of women, classifying their roles in terms of their vulnerabilities and capacities within their social environments. Our objective is simply to show in general terms what are some of the conditions women must live with. Consequently, we will be in a better position to determine what women's vulnerabilities and capacities are during natural and human-caused disasters.

We are already familiar with views about the status of women, such as that articulated by the World Plan of Action in 1980, that

...the roots of inequality between women and men are directly linked with a complex historical process. The inequality also derives from political, economic, social and cultural factors. The form in which this inequality manifests itself is as varied as the economic, social and economic conditions of the world community. 1

This inequality between men and women in most societies is the result of

mass poverty and general backwardness of the majority of the world's population. This poverty and backwardness were caused by underdevelopment which is a product of imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and also of unjust international economic relations. ...In many countries, the unfavourable status of women, in both developed and developing countries, is aggravated by de-facto discrimination on the grounds of sex. 2

We do know that women's conditions in the rural areas of the Third World have one thing in common: poverty.

...roughly 75 per cent of the world's population are among the poorest, and women make up the majority of the poor. Secondly, where ever they live, they are bound together by the common fact of their tremendous work burden. Time-budget studies show that women not only perform physically heavier work, but also work longer hours than men. 3

Studies have also pointed out that survival tasks, those essential for daily life, are the responsibility of women; activities in the home are almost exclusively the responsibility of women, with some help from their children; and, throughout the developing countries, women contribute substantially to the family budget through income-generating activities. On the whole, women must bear the burden of having three roles in their society: a reproductive role, a productive role, and a community management role where women are forced to take responsibility for allocating limited basic resources to ensure their family's survival. 4

Following a study of women's roles throughout the world we will be in a better position to determine women's vulnerabilities and capacities during natural or human-caused disasters. We will see that within their capacities in a disaster situation, there are ways in which women can contribute to the three phases of disaster management: 1) the preparedness phase; 2) the response phase; and 3) the recovery phase, as proposed by Audrey Mullings (LRCS), Gloria Noel (PAHO), and the staff members of the Pan Caribbean Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Project.

Finally, we will be looking at some of the objectives that international organizations should have in taking advantage of women's capacities in disaster situations. We will be using the "Checklist for Participation of Women in Development Projects" found in a book by H. Ware, Women, Demography and Development, and tailor it to women in disaster management. These may be considered as possible questions which each organization, agency, NGO or government involved in disaster management should ask themselves in order to ensure that their operations and plans are accountable to the most vulnerable victims of disasters, but also the most essential actors: women.

We will also offer a set of draft guidelines by which these mechanisms should act. They were drawn up during a Conference on the Role of Women in Disaster Management that took place from November 13-15, 1989 in Trinidad and Tobago.

PART 1 Vulnerability/Capacity Analysis Framework

In an effort to investigate how disaster management institutions can provide emergency aid that meets immediate needs and, at the same time, contribute to self-reliance and long-term development, the International Relief/Development Project of the Harvard School of Education constructed a framework for analysis. This framework is meant to "provide a straightforward system for

considering the factors that are critical to the design and implementation of effective relief projects." 5

The framework is based on the dual concepts of Vulnerabilities and Capacities (V/C). It is the most appropriate to this type of gender-specific study, because the V/C analysis will allow us to make a link between what women's conditions generally are in a disaster situation and what they should be following the use of guidelines to integrate women into the Disaster Management process. This link makes sense because, as we will see from a study of women's general roles (in developing as well as developed countries), women are the essential linchpin to the survival of the family and organizational structure before, during and after a disaster.

This analytical framework was constructed as a tool to help United Nations agencies, governments, and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) design and evaluate relief projects. Because it is difficult to take account of the specifics of every situation and then develop generalizations that are valid in multiple situations, this analytical framework will help us set out categories of factors to be considered, suggesting a sequence in which they may be considered. Therefore, by highlighting women's general roles and relating them to their vulnerabilities and capacities in disaster situations, we hope to be able to define factors that matter the most to the effectiveness

of their Disaster Management operations initiated by the international community and the governmental mechanisms.

But what do these two concepts mean ? First of all,

...Vulnerabilities are explored in order to understand why a disaster happened and what its impact has been, why it affected a particular group of people, and how to estimate the risks of future disasters. 6

Prof. Adolf Ciborowski, Director of the Institute on Urban Design and Physical Planning of Warsaw, defines vulnerability

as the degree of susceptibility of the environment to a hazard. Vulnerability takes into account physical (i.e. material), social, economic and cultural aspects of the human environment. The human environment is understood as the combination of both the natural and 'human-caused' environments, or in other words as an environment consisting of natural and 'human-caused' components. When analysing vulnerability, all components of a human environment have to be taken into account, but special attention obviously must be paid to the 'human-caused' components which serve basic human needs. 7

To understand this concept, experts in the field of natural and human-caused disasters agree, for example, that the actual number of disasters has not increased in the 20th century, yet the vulnerability of the world population to natural and human-caused disasters is growing, due partly to the steady population growth, an increase in the number of ghettos and cities in disaster-prone areas, and also to the apparent neglect of the key element in the drive to reduce disaster-induced casualties: preparedness and prevention programmes. 8

Vulnerability can also be created by a shortfall in local resources (agriculture, etc.), the regional situation (war-torn, disaster-prone, drought, desertification, etc.), the influx of refugees, military dictatorships controlling movement (of people, of markets, etc.), poverty, scarcity of arable land, etc..

Anderson and Woodrow believe that vulnerabilities analysis can

help prevent pitfalls of relief work. First, it calls into question any post-disaster attempts simply to 'get things back to normal', because by raising awareness of the factors that contribute to this disaster, it shows that 'normalcy' involved vulnerabilities that, if not changed, may lead to future disasters. Second, it alerts relief workers to the potential of unwittingly contributing to future vulnerabilities by their interpretations. Much of so-called 'development' actually increases vulnerabilities. Examples include construction of high-rise buildings in earthquake zones without using earthquake-resistant techniques or building commercial or residential units on flood plains. 9

Frederick Cuny, in his book Disasters and Development (1983), believes that in order to reduce the harmful effects of natural disasters, action must be taken on three fronts:

1) reducing vulnerability of the physical settlements and houses; 2) reducing vulnerability of the economy; and, 3) the strengthening of the social structure of a community, so that coping mechanisms can help absorb the shock of a disaster and promote rapid recovery. 10

However, Anderson and Woodrow offer their own perspective which point out that, in order to avoid increasing vulnerabilities it will be necessary to identify capacities in order to know what strengths exist within a

society - even among disaster victims - on which future development can be built. 11 Therefore, in order to design and implement disaster responses that have a developmental impact, it is essential that agencies wanting to help with recovery and development beyond recovery, acknowledge the capacities of the affected population. However, it is true to say that during a disaster, vulnerabilities are more noticeable than capacities, yet the latter must be sought out and used.

It is recognized that not all crises become disasters and not all people suffer equally from their effects. However, some people suffer more than others when a disaster does strike. The reason for this lies in the study of vulnerability. In other words, people become disaster victims because they are vulnerable, and since people have different degrees of vulnerability, they are affected differently.

Anderson and Woodrow's three levels of vulnerability and capacity, which we will be using in our analysis of women's conditions before and after disasters, begin with physical/material poverty, where poor people tend to be those that suffer the most from crises because they have "little savings, few income or production options, and limited resources." It is also the area on which most outside disaster assistance is concentrated, because when a disaster strikes, it is the "physical destruction or

suffering that compels the attention of outsiders". However, although disaster victims suffer physical deprivation, such as lack of food, of shelter, medicines and water, there are always some physical resources left. These resources can be in the form of goods that have been recovered or simply skills that the victims carry with them. These are capacities, and they are the building blocks for the beginning of development work. 12

In order to understand physical vulnerabilities, one must answer the following questions: What were the ways in which the group (the victims) were physically vulnerable ?, Is it because of their economic activities (for example, farmers who lose their land due to flood or drought)?, Their geographic location (homes built on flood plains, in cyclone areas, or on mountains prone to mudslides) ?, Or, because of their poverty and lack of resources for long-term sustenance ?.

Therefore,

the physical/material area includes land, climate and the environment, people's health, their skills and labour, infrastructure, food, housing, capital, and physical technologies. 13

The second type of vulnerability is the social/organizational realm, which refers to how a society is organized, and how it manages its internal conflicts.

Social/organizational vulnerabilities are obvious when prejudice or conflict exist in a society, showing divisions according to race, religion, ethnicity, language, class, or caste. All of these factors can weaken the social fabric to a point where people become even more vulnerable to crisis. For example, a war will definitely show overt conflict. Today ten million people suffer social, as well as physical disruption as refugees. 14

On the other hand, social/organizational capacities are shown in such coping systems as "family, groups, community, and/or area-wide organizations; systems for distributing goods and services; inter- and intra-family decision-making patterns"... By supporting these capacities..."a community can build community cohesion through joint action." 15

The third and final category is the motivational/attitudinal area. In this category, we study the ways in which people view themselves and their ability to deal with a crisis situation. In other words,

what were people's beliefs and motivations before the disaster happened and how did the disaster affect them ?; Do people feel they have the ability to shape their lives ? . Strength or weakness in this realm can make a significant difference in a society's ability to rebuild or improve its material base or its social institutions. 16

It is the sense of capacity that a person possesses that will reinforce an attempt by these victims of catastrophes to overcome their losses and to rebuild their social and economic systems.

Consequently, it will be the capacities which women

possess that will reinforce the attempt by women as victims of disasters to overcome their vulnerabilities and their losses, and to rebuild their family and organizational systems with the use of their capacities.

We already know, as Anderson and Woodrow have told us, that women and men have different social and economic roles in all societies. "A gender-based division of labour exists in all situations, whether the society is modern or traditional". The differences can be found in religion and especially in culture, as well as rapid change where gender roles are concerned. Therefore, in all cases, examining the three categories of capacities and vulnerabilities for women and for men "makes sense if one is to find the best programmatic intervention for supporting development." 17

It is, therefore, our intention to define, in general terms, women's physical/material, social/organizational and motivational/attitudinal roles, seeing how these can be considered both as vulnerabilities and as capacities not only in overall terms, but also in a disaster situation.

Part 2 - VULNERABILITIES AND CAPACITIES OF WOMEN

Ethnographers have tried to evaluate the role of women throughout the world, yet they have fallen short of being able to accurately depict women's activities in the home, in production, in community and religious life. One reason for this can stem from the greater social

invisibility of women. For example, the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs has concluded from their studies that Third World women are invisible. Even where women are socially and economically visible, their less than desirable situation is dependent upon the lack of equality *viv-à-vis* their male counterparts. This lack of equality, for example, can explain why women are the most likely to be victims of poverty if they are forced to become self-sufficient following a divorce or layoff from their jobs. At the same time, women's capacities as actors in the development of their communities must not be overlooked. As providers of food, water, clothing and shelter for their children, women are the most essential actors in the welfare of any society.

What all of this means in a disaster situation, whether it be natural or human-caused, is that women could become vulnerable to its effects because of their submissive situations and because of their inferior positions in society, and because disaster managers are not clear on the roles women play in each of their respective communities. Even if they try to assist them, they often do not take traditional beliefs into account and therefore implement programs that are unresponsive to their specific needs, nor do they make use of existing capacities.

I. Physical/Material Vulnerabilities and Capacities

Women make up one half of the world's population. They perform two-thirds of the work hours, but account for only one third of the labour force world wide. At the same time, women receive only ten percent of the world's income. 18

In many developing countries, the larger share of the farming workload is taken on by women. They contribute two-thirds of all hours spent in traditional agriculture and three-fifths of the time spent on marketing. In Africa, for example, eighty percent of the female population is engaged in agriculture. In Asia, the percentage ranges between 40 and nearly 100 percent of the female population. In Latin America, women tend to participate more in the non-agricultural force: in 1970, 20.3 % worked in industry and 59.5 % worked in services, while 17.4 % were employed in agriculture. 19

The traditional role of women in Third World countries, especially in rural areas, is to work in subsistence agriculture, providing food for their family, planting crops for food, processing of food and its preparation.

Traditionally, on average, the agricultural task that is performed by men is to plough and prepare for cash-crop cultivation.

In a disaster situation where the agricultural infrastructure is hurt or destroyed by a flood (such as in

Bangladesh) or cyclone (such as in the Caribbean) for example, it will undoubtedly be up to the women to reestablish the sector.

In addition, women in the urban areas of the developing countries can spend up to five percent of their day cleaning; 12 percent of the day on family care; four percent on collecting fuel; and 42 percent on production for subsistence. Therefore, a full 67 percent of women's time is spent on the household, including family care, supplies and cleaning. All of which is unpaid work. The other 33 percent is spent on self-maintenance, including sleep, and other psychological necessities and leisure. 21

What separates rural from urban women, is the extra work which is required in rural areas for survival. In addition to the responsibilities we have already mentioned, women in rural areas must shoulder the task of keeping small animals, such as poultry, goats, pigs and rabbits. They do the milking, the processing, and local marketing of the milk and other animal products. But this is not all. Women must also collect firewood, often having to walk great distances from their homes because of a shortage caused by the burning of trees to clear the land for cultivation and due to its collection in great numbers for cooking and heating.

Women, and their children, are also faced with long and strenuous walks to fetch clean water, or whatever water

is available, from the nearest well or water hole, which are already being shared by many surrounding villages. It is a fact that less than ten percent of rural

Third World people have easy access to a safe water supply, since most water tables may be contaminated by human and animal waste.

For the rest of the world, these activities may be thought of as a burden for women. Physically, there is no doubt that it is a heavy burden for a woman to carry. Yet according to culture and long-standing tradition, women have always had to do very hard and unremunerated labour, clearly both a vulnerability and a capacity. However, in a disaster situation these activities must be thought of as capacities to be reinforced by the international community and the governmental infrastructure, giving women special attention in order to be able to meet all of their needs, because their responsibilities will surely be multiplied in terms of having to meet their family's needs once their lives have been disrupted by a disaster.

In addition, the food which these rural and urban women can buy is limited by the income they earn by working for a land owner, from artisanry sold to tourists, to the marketing of the food they grow on their own small plots of land, or from the money they receive from their husbands who have migrated to the cities. Often, they do not earn

enough money to buy the types of food that are nutritious, such as meat, poultry, eggs, cheese and milk.

Instead all they can afford are foods that are devoid of protein and which are high in carbohydrates, creating a state of malnutrition for women and their children. In many parts of the developing world, women and children (especially female children) are more likely than men to be malnourished because according to tradition they must wait until the men have eaten before they can eat.

Inadequate sanitation is also a serious problem. Diseases of the gastro-intestinal tract, caused by bacteria and parasites in food and water, result in severe malabsorption, so that even if the family is provided with proper foods, their bodies cannot make use of them.

It is estimated that eighty percent of all illnesses in the developing countries are linked to water, and children are the most vulnerable to water-borne diseases. In rural areas, chronic malnutrition and poor sanitary conditions combine to make women highly susceptible to diseases such as malaria, hepatitis, urinary tract infections, and pulmonary tuberculosis. A closely related problem is that of a large number of babies born under-weight and highly prone to early death and disease.

In areas where there is one doctor for every 15,000 people, women will surely be the ones to suffer the most in a disaster situation by worsening their present conditions with a decreased amount of food and medical attention.

During a famine in Ethiopia, for example, more women and children than men were found in shelters and they were more malnourished. A greater number died while the rest need to be rehabilitated. Many women have to sell their meagre assets, household animals, cooking utensils and jewelry to buy food and security while travelling to refugee camps. Traditionally, women suffer from a low social status which deprives them of most opportunities for education and training and confines them to their roles as child-bearers and household workers, having to depend on their own resources for survival. 21

Women have the major responsibility for health and nutrition of their families. Indeed, in many rural areas of the developing world, the measure of women's agricultural productivity largely determines how much food is available for consumption. Women also decide how much money can be spent on food and the kind of food the family will eat; preparing the food to conserve its nutrients, and apportion it among family members.

If we were to study the status of women in industrialized nations both at the rural and urban levels, we would find that in general women search for paid employment for economic reasons. Their other roles, however, are very similar to those characterized in developing countries. For example, every adult woman who is married and/or with children has the 'double burden' of

having to work a 35 to 40 hour work week in addition to spending 20 to 25 hours on household tasks and childcare. Men in industrialized societies may participate somewhat more in childcare and in household duties, compared to men in developing countries. Yet, even here, the double burden is a reality. Men still see themselves as the traditional breadwinners while women are the child-rearers and housekeepers. With the occurrence of marriage breakdowns as a result of professional competition or irreconcilable differences in an affluent society, has become very common, leaving women to support themselves and their children. A woman must, therefore, continue to work full-time on the job and at home; or if she was not originally in the labour force she must find work, often with great difficulty since she might no longer have the modern qualifications. Women who do not have the means to return to school or to follow specialized training may experience a chronic state of income insecurity and are more likely than men to be poor. For example, the National Council on Welfare, a Canadian institution, reports that in Canada, more than half (56.7 %) of all low-income Canadians are female. In 1985, six in ten or 60.4 % of single-parent families headed by women were poor. 22

Those who seem to suffer the most, are those women who fit into the following groups: rural women, aboriginal women, immigrant women, invisible minority women and adolescent women. These groups must not only suffer from

the reality gap, but also from programs that are unsuited to their special needs.

Yet, for every woman, almost equal time must be spent on domestic duties and on paid work. Women in eastern-bloc countries (with some exceptions), suffer more than women in western industrialized countries because of the relatively poor provision of consumer goods and services. It is the women, for the majority, who must stand for hours in long queues, and who must make efforts to plan and acquire their families' daily meals, clothing and other needs.

An average week for women in the eastern block is 41 hours of paid work, and 30 to 35 hours on housework (rural women spending up to 55 hours). Men, on the other hand, spend between 15 and 20 hours a week on house related work, mostly consisting of small household repairs. 23

What all this means for women is that their physical/material conditions, relevant to the status of women in every corner of the world where a disaster could strike, be it natural or human-caused, are vulnerable to the effects of disasters because of their submissive attitudes, their inferior positions in society, but also because international, national and local disaster managers have little concept of the roles women play in each of their respective communities. In addition, women's vulnerability as a member of the society where they are

paid less and are rarely elected to positions of leadership, still remains, thereby restricting their ability to contribute to the social, economic and political life of their society.

However, even though women's conditions in their societies, be they developed or developing, expose them to vulnerabilities in a disaster situation, their roles as general providers for the family's physical and material needs, are crucial capacities which create a support mechanism that, if recognized and used, would greatly facilitate disaster management operations.

II. Social/Organizational Vulnerabilities and Capacities

The social/oragnizational vulnerabilities and capacities category includes structures and systems, such as making decisions, establishing leadership, or organizing activities of a social and economic nature. In this category, vulnerabilities can be forms of prejudice or conflict within a society, including divisions according to race, religion, language, etc., creating a weakness in the social fabric to the extent that people are more vulnerable to a crisis. On the other hand, capacities are translated into social coping mechanisms such as family, group, community, and/or area-wide organizations; systems for distributing goods and services; and inter- and intra-family decision-making patterns. These factors should

be built on during efforts to overcome a disaster. Therefore, by becoming engaged in assessing its own capacities, a community can build community cohesion through joint action. 24

Some cultures allow women to market the food they grow, or the artifacts they make. Yet trade is traditional, not commercialized or industrialized. Some cultures, whose religion is Moslem, do not allow their women (particularly in urban areas and less so in rural areas) to leave their homes or neighbourhoods. They are secluded, or "purdah" as it is termed, from activities that go beyond the home. Which means that if a disaster should happen to destroy their surroundings or the family infrastructures they depend on to maintain their family's survival, these women, according to the purdah tradition, are not allowed to seek paid employment to help keep their families alive, thereby creating a very serious vulnerability for urban women and their families. This factor may be less serious in rural areas where the tradition may not be followed as closely and, therefore, might not affect these women in a disaster situation.

Another social/organizational vulnerability women in developing nations must live with has been documented by the International Labour Organization. They have found that women's cooperatives or rural workers' organizations do not have adequate access to land, credit, extension services, or improved tools. (25) In a disaster situation, this

inequality would be aggravated and women would have to face reconstruction of their family's livelihood alone because they have lost their husbands or because their husbands have migrated to the cities in search of work.

In the last two decades, there has been some training of men and women for the local-level extension supported by the United Nations, showing, for example, how women can also operate and repair machines, with demonstrations that can be repeated when the trainees return to their villages, or move from village to village. In this way, women can teach other women how to manage the machines. This networking can play a key role in raising issues essential to improving women's conditions, especially in the health field. Some International Organizations have created educational and training programs for young women on women's health care needs, on nutrition, on childcare (especially on oral rehydration therapy for children with diarrhea as it is a major cause of death for young malnourished infants and children). These students, chosen for their reasonably high education, will then travel from village to village, teaching women how to take care of their special needs. These women, in turn, can teach other women. This same principle can be used for teaching women income-generating activities, water purification, tree planting, agricultural techniques, water storage, and alternative forms of energy.

The development of agricultural and craft-based cooperatives over the last two decades, especially in the rural areas, has at least brought women new opportunities to earn cash.

Women in industrialized countries, as well as in some Asian countries (such as Nepal, Japan, and Korea), have sought liberation as individuals as well as a greater satisfaction by the improvement of their family's economic situation and of their status within the family, better family economic well-being such as a bigger house, better quality property, financial security and freedom from worry.

Therefore, women's social/organizational capacities rest upon their productive and reproductive functions in all societies.

They are active economic producers of goods and services, are transmitters of culture and they manage the central social unit - the household. However, in a disaster situation, women are disproportionately represented among those groups whom disasters strike; secondly, capacities and vulnerabilities differ between men and women. They have different coping mechanisms and different vulnerabilities. These differences arise from the differences in their work and social roles. 26

Because it is often these coping mechanisms that respond to the effects of disasters, it is up to the International Organizations and local governmental structures to work with them in establishing a disaster response plan that is effective in that it is accountable to all people affected by disasters, where all will benefit

equally from assistance provided, and where women would receive special attention in the process with a proper assessment of their true needs.

III. Motivational/Attitudinal Vulnerabilities and Capacities

We must now ask ourselves, how disasters affect women and how could women possibly be motivated to respond to disasters considering the conditions they live in ?.

As defined by Frederick C. Cuny in his book Disasters and Development (1983), disasters

... hurt people. They injure and kill. They cause emotional stress and trauma. They destroy homes and businesses, cause economic hardship, and spell financial ruin for many. And the people who hurt the most are the poor. A natural disasters (or human-caused disaster), can happen anywhere, but for a combination of reasons - political as well as geographic - most large-scale disasters occur in the region between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. This region encompasses most of the poorer developing nations.... 27

The elements that are at risk are the people, the buildings, the civil engineering works, the economic activities, public services, utilities and infrastructures, etc., in a certain disaster-prone area. 28

With improvements made in world communication, as well as an increase in the human effort to control our natural environment, we are aware of the increasing global toll as a consequence of the extreme events occurring because of human and natural factors. The loss in property from natural and human-caused hazards is rising in most

regions of the planet, especially the wealthiest areas, and the loss of life is continuing to increase in the poorer nations of the world. All this is happening even though the actual number of disasters is actually declining.

Therefore, the loss of so much property and life result from other causes, some of which are a larger world population, vulnerability due to poverty, human settlements in disaster-prone areas, industrialization causing pollution and uncontrollable devastation. For example, about 95 percent of disaster-related deaths occur among the two-thirds of the world's population that occupy developing countries. 29

The result, according to Burton and White (1978), is that the global toll caused by natural and human-caused disasters tends to rise as fast as the increase of population and material wealth, and maybe even faster. Therefore, in developing countries, disasters may be less frequent, but they are more catastrophic, and more costly in lives and wealth, whereas they are increasingly costly in absolute wealth in industrial countries. 30

To summarize, in most developing countries where the majority of disasters occur, Wijkman and Timberlake (1984) have defined three major causes which dominate disaster processes: "1) human vulnerability resulting from poverty and inequality; 2) environmental degradation owing to poor land use; and 3) rapid population growth, especially among the poor. " 31

Since the majority of the poor and those considered as unequal are women; since the principal victims of environmental degradation are the underprivileged, the

majority of whom are women; and since it is the women who are the childbearers with no real control as to how many children they will conceive in their childbearing years, they are the ones most likely to suffer in the event of a disaster, because of the limits tradition imposes on their activities.

For example, women and their children represent the majority in the 13.3 million refugees which exist in our world today. As victims of this human-caused disaster, refugee women are subject to specific hazards related to their gender and refugee situation. Overcrowding in the camps is a definite concern, as well as epidemics, diseases, rape, exploitation and abuse. Refugees often arrive in family groupings, without the male of the household, and often require everything, from food to clothes. Their nutritional levels are also low, while priority feeding is given to males.

Refugee camps and shelters have their positive and negative attributes. Firstly, they cause a concentration of refugees that allow for easy registration and surveillance, easy accessibility to food and medical relief, and ready provision of other services. However, they also create problems. The most important of these problems is a "camp psychology" of excessive dependence.

This influx of people into a country of asylum also means chaos for that country, since it is faced with having to share its resources in order to accommodate the needs of

the refugees. The assistance given by governments and organizations have taken much of the pressure off of these countries, however, they will undoubtedly have to integrate the refugees into their social and economic infrastructures as time goes on, straining the resources allocated to their own people.

In finding an alternative to these camps, one solution, according to a UN report, is the settling of refugees among local people who were not affected by the disaster. Only those refugees that cannot be placed with local people should be put in camps. In certain selected areas and situations, large numbers of refugees can be accommodated through local settlement. It is important, however, to group together only people from the same community, clan or group, or those who speak the same language. According to the report,

social intercourse between local people and refugees contributes in no small measure to the future rehabilitation and resettlement and makes it easier for the relief organization to phase out its activities. In settling refugees with villagers, the relief teams must ensure as far as possible that villagers and refugees receive similar treatment insofar as relief support is concerned. 32

On the other hand, disasters such as chemical leaks, pollution, etc., can affect women severely. After Bhopal, for example, news papers and articles reported that many women suffered menstrual and gynaecological problems; pregnant women gave birth to deformed babies; and some of the infants were born blind.

Meteorological disasters, such as cyclones, typhoons and hurricanes often hit directly on the vulnerabilities of a country and its population. Reconstruction of homes, schools, businesses, the replanting of trees and crops, reestablishing water, electricity and other services, are, to some extent, always necessary following a major disaster. Women make up a great part of these efforts. Yet the burden falls heavily on rural and urban women who could lose most or all of their property as well as members of their family. Their roles as child-rearers, producers and sellers will be essential to the reconstruction of the devastated society.

This is especially true in the aftermath of an earthquake, where both property and lives are lost, due to the vulnerable situation brought on by conditions or by a lack of disaster planning. Neither developed nor developing countries are immune to this kind of disaster within a disaster. However, women around the world are affected differently by the same type of disaster. For some women, whose conditions are characterized by low incomes and minimum property ownership, the rebuilding of their lives seems to be less difficult than for women who live with better conditions, but whose losses tend to be more costly. Yet, the loss of life is just as devastating for one as it is for the other. Therefore, when disasters strike, women and men feel their effects differently. Both are concerned about family welfare and survival. However, if women are

primarily responsible for most of the family's needs, a disaster will increase their workload immensely. 33

On a different level but still related to motivational/attitudinal vulnerabilities and capacities, women's roles in life have, since the beginning of human existence, been towards reproduction, production and childrearing. With this also developed an attitude of submission and subordination to what was perceived as the superior male, who was the hunter and the provider. 34

This attitude of submission of the woman towards the man has been passed down through generations and is still true today in many societies. In the least developed countries, and lesser in the developed nations, the tradition has been for women and young girls to put themselves last, living in constant passivity when it comes to their personal comfort. For example, a woman will prepare a meal for her family, but her husband will eat first, followed by his son(s), and only then her daughter(s) and herself; by this time nothing much is left. It is obvious that in a disaster situation, when the production and preparation of food may be more difficult, a mother has even less of a chance to provide herself and the family with enough food or shelter. This is a big vulnerability that women must live through. However, this attitude of having to provide for her children and the rest of her family, is the greatest capacity that a woman in a

disaster situation, and any other, has to offer. Women also have an innate sense of needing to hold together the family, home, kin, even the community. Women also have an inclination to keep themselves together, by maintaining a comprehensive grip on the basics of life, on the things which are really important for human beings. This attitude motivates women to seek help if needed, to get emergency food aid, to get emergency water supplies, to find temporary shelter for herself and her family, to find emergency-type employment in order to be able to afford other necessities not provided by an emergency response. It is this capacity that should be recognized and used by the officers representing the international organizations, non-governmental organizations, voluntary agencies and national and local governments.

Therefore, we would like to argue, as do experts in the field of post-disaster human behavior, that women are the ones who have the most to offer in readjusting family and community life to the post-disaster situation. They have a variety of resources upon which they can draw. One, being their tremendous motivation to try and provide their family with their needs, and two, women often form groups that are essential coping mechanisms in any situation, especially disaster situations. These groups are formed within working environments, neighbourhoods, family structures, gathering points such as water wells, etc.. These coping mechanisms were not formed by an institution

promoting unity, but rather are a result of every day life. It is these mechanisms that are essential to the reconstruction of a community and its infrastructures following a disaster.

Once a disaster strikes, a series of emergency operations will be undertaken; namely, a response phase consisting of search and rescue; followed by the recovery phase, which will then initiate the next phase of disaster preparedness. It is the motivation of each individual to undertake these three phases of disaster management that will reduce the amount of property and of lives lost.

We cannot even begin to fully assess women's attitudes towards the losses they have encountered in a disaster situation. Rarely do studies undertake such a research. It is not our intention here to do so, we simply feel that this perspective is one that must be given some consideration in the attempt to integrate women more successfully in the Disaster Management process.

Disaster managers tend to think of women as victims of a disaster, who will suffer so much from the shock of the catastrophe, that they become helpless and unable to function.

In addition, local coping mechanisms tend to work better in a crisis situation than in normal periods. We do agree that in a post-disaster situation confusion reigns

and social organization may be disrupted. However, as F.C. Cuny points out, there is a coming together that is quick, translating into spontaneous actions. Refugees are a good example in this case, since they are the ones who must look out for their own interests. 35

Therefore, by undertaking a study of women's conditions at the physical, social, and motivational levels, both their vulnerabilities and capacities must be identified and recognized.

These vulnerabilities and capacities must, in turn, be recognized by International Organizations and national infrastructures involved in the in the Disaster Management process. However, it is important that the conclusions of this research also reflect the fact that women in disaster situations have specific needs, at times physical, material or phsychological. But, what are these specific needs, and what are their capacities ?

IV- Women's Needs:

By introducing new tools and machinery to a disaster-stricken society in the hope of improving conditions, often the workload of women is only aggravated, since this machinery and training will be given to men. This is a fact that must be dealt with, because if this policy is not altered to the reality of the situation, meaning that it is the women who are most in need of these tools and training, women's decison-making power will remain low, and their traditional obligation to feed the

household will be strengthened. In a post-disaster situation, women's labour in this new environment will undoubtedly be increased even further, because they still have to carry out household maintenance and child care in addition to their role in food production. Some of women's special needs are: access to tools and training; day care facilities for their children; access to clean water supplies; access to sufficient fuel; special health care; emergency employment; shelters with adequate sanitary facilities and food; financial assistance to deal with increases in food prices due to shortages; special services to reunite children with family members, etc..

In the case of refugees, for example, Dankelman and Davidson (1985) have stated that,

...In some areas, ninety percent of the refugee population are women. As home-makers and child-rearers, women are directly affected by the place in which they live. In some areas, one out of four children die from malnutrition. Just as the lack of sanitation in the home affects women most strongly, so to does the destruction of water resources and fuelwood around settlements. The environment both inside and outside the home, has everywhere a greater significance for women - a fact which is reinforced by cultural patterns. 36

V- Women's Capacities:

Those factors that limit women's capacities to maintain their family's needs in a post-disaster situation are cultural barriers such as seclusion, inequality, lack of training on the use of proper tools, lack of training on sanitary methods and nutritional standards (especially in

less developed countries), an increase in pregnancies, etc.. Yet, what has always remained is an attitude motivated by the need to ensure their family's and their survival, with an ability to adapt their lives to the situation with whatever tools they can acquire. Also characteristic of women is their capacity to pool their strengths and resources into groups of women who can then go on to fulfilling many activities.

These activities can be separated into the three phases of Disaster Management: preparedness, response, and recovery, as defined by Audrey Mullings of the League of Red Cross Societies, Gloria Noel of the Pan American Health Organization, and the staff members of the Pan-Caribbean Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Project (PCDPPP), in their recent article, published in a 1988 edition of UNDRO News, on the "Role of Women in Disaster Management".

Where women make up two-thirds of all heads of households, there are significant implications for the influence of women and their contribution to the socialization process of individuals, family units and the community. In the preparedness phase, women's vulnerability rests with the fact that governments rarely take it upon themselves to create emergency planning and preparedness at the local and community levels, that would parallel plans made at the federal level. The capacities that women have to offer in this phase are many. Women can teach simple everyday safety measures in the home, and even

hazard identification in the community. The authors suggest the following areas in which women can contribute:

- * practice and safety measures in the home;
- * education of the community in skills for use in the phase, i.e. First Aid;
- * identification of community resources;
- * preparation and implementation of family disaster plans;
- * participation in community disaster planning;
- * participation in the testing of community disaster plans;
- * participation through women's groups in public awareness and information programmes;
- * evacuation of vulnerable individuals and community groups, e.g. the elderly, persons with physical and mental disability;
- * learning construction skills to assist with the provision and maintenance of safe housing...

In the disaster response phase, women are vulnerable because the government and international institutions often decide to either keep women away from the disaster zone, or they evacuate them with the children and the elderly. But when we consider the roles which women have played in World War II, and recently where they have engaged in tasks traditionally executed by men, it is not hard to believe that women could become involved in the following disaster response activities:...

- * search and rescue;
- * shelter management;
- * maintaining environmental health, e.g. safe water, vector control, solid and sewage disposal, food safety, etc.;
- * identification of needs and available resources;
- * emergency feeding, clothing, etc.;
- * provision of First Aid and appropriate referrals to other levels of health care;
- * care of vulnerable groups e.g. elderly and handicapped;
- * providing emotional support for community members;
- * addressing needs of relief workers such as rest, food, etc...

During the recovery phase, the assistance that women could provide is overlooked. Some of the activities in which women could become involved are :

* support for the restoration of Primary Health Care Services within the community with specific reference to the management of common health problems; * re-afforestation and replanting of crops; * resettlement of refugees; * making provisions for water storage facilities; and, * assisting with reconstruction of damaged buildings. 37

PART 3 - Programme Evaluation Checklist

In order to better determine how International Organizations and other national institutions can improve their Disaster Management operations, and how they can integrate women and their capacities into the system, we offer a programme evaluation checklist - originally meant to give direction to the integration of women in development, but designed here for women in Disaster Management.

The efforts to integrate women into the process of disaster management must start at the local level, followed by the federal and international institutions. It is necessary to plan special programmes initiated by governments assisting local coping mechanisms to plan project activities so that they increase the capacities of women as well as men and decrease the vulnerabilities of women.

National and international institutions involved in disaster management should merge the criteria their development programmes follow with those of the emergency operations consisting of recovery, reconstruction and

preparedness phases. In addition, these new programmes must include certain criteria that will assure women equitable assistance.

If we follow the "Checklist for participation of women in development projects" presented by H. Ware in her book Women, Demography and Development (1981) quoted from the Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development, we believe that the following criteria would be appropriate in forming a checklist for the participation of women in Disaster Management.

First of all, in the project objectives, it would be appropriate to ask if women are specifically mentioned as either agents or beneficiaries in preparedness and planning projects ?. What are the benefits for women in the acquisition of skills, increased productivity, reduced workload, provision of amenities, opportunities to earn cash income in the post-disaster phases; and would a component for women be a useful addition to the project ?.

The second category, that of the availability of information, we should ask what socio-economic information is already available which is relevant to the target group in general and women in particular ?. Is information available on the economic arrangements undertaken by women at the household level, and is it adequate for the purposes of the project: e.g. structure and size of households, division of labour by sex/age, decision making, rights to land, control over saleable product, sources of cash

income, including off-farm activities. If more information is essential, are their contacts in the field, whether they be from local groups or established Non-governmental Organizations ?. Are these officials briefed to consider the situation and contribution of women ?.

In terms of project design and preparation, there should be some consultation with the people whose lives will be affected by the emergency operations and the preparedness operations; women should be involved at any level in the professional planning and implementation of operations related to all three Disaster Management phases; women should and must be given access to the new opportunities and services, such as local training, agricultural extention, new allocation of land rights, access to credit, membership to cooperatives, and employment during the recovery and rehabilitation phases. Are there enough resources at the local level to provide these services to women ?.

As for the anticipated impact, how will disaster management activities affect women's allocation of time ?. Will their workload increase as a result of changes ?. Will women be equal beneficiaries of all disaster relief assistance ?. How could women be reached specifically during disaster relief operations ?. Will their dependence on husbands increase or decrease as a result of the assistance ?. Is food aid really beneficial to the victims, or does it create a sense of dependence ?. Would there be

any direct or indirect adverse consequences on women from changes resulting from preparedness and prevention projects, and from emergency operations following a disaster ?.

Finally, in the evaluation part of the checklist: are provisions being made to monitor and evaluate the impact of disaster management on women ?; Is the data that is now available on the vulnerabilities and capacities of women in every society, as well as on their possible participation in disaster management activities, sufficient ?. What indicators would be relevant for national and international institutions in the ultimate goal of accomodating their disaster management and disaster management cooperation to the accountability of disaster relief, response, rehabilitation, prevention and preparedness to all victims, especially women ?. 38

These are important questions that should be answered in the implementation of programmes to assist women affected by disasters. But the process of setting up these programmes must go one step further, that is, to include the establishment of guidelines that would be applied by the entire Disaster Management mechanism.

PART 4 -Guidelines:

Some draft guidelines that should be considered in the establishment of final guidelines for the integration of women in the disaster management process have been offered by the participants of a Conference on the Role of

Women in Disaster Management held in Trinidad and Tobago in November 1989. The objective of this Conference was, firstly, to fulfill the recommendations of a May 1989 Conference in Costa Rica on Disaster Preparedness, and secondly, to strengthen National Programmes of Disaster Management in the Caribbean region. It was recognized that natural and human-caused disasters posed a great threat to the region and more specifically to women and children, who suffered as much as men. But the risk was even higher to women since they were entirely responsible for the economic and social wellbeing of the family including the provision of adequate health care and shelter. The Conference came up with some draft guidelines that could be used to direct the implementation of the integration of women in Disaster Management.

First of all, during the pre-disaster phase, the guidelines state that the community should have existing women's groups initiate awareness group activities within the home and workplace and devise ways to mobilize their members for a more dynamic role in community disaster management activities. Country profiles should be used to identify and assess elements at risk to natural hazards and the social/economic/political structures that women can usefully engage to help secure their families' safety, assets, property, etc. At the managerial and technical levels, a sensitivity to women's roles should be developed, as they relate to disaster preparedness. In addition, women

should be represented at technical and managerial levels on decision making bodies which impact on disaster management. Finally, on political and policy making, an institutional framework should be created to formalize permanent working relationships between women's organizations, including community groups, and National Disaster Management Machinery. Also, gender specific research should be initiated, which will determine policies to reduce the vulnerability of women to disasters...

Secondly, during the response phase, given that women's groups at the community level are largely involved in the initial phase of disaster response, International Relief Agencies as well as outside professional groups should recognize and cooperate with existing organizations. The objective is to promote collaboration between International Relief Agencies and local organizations. The way this can be done is by conferring with local groups before commencing assistance, and by involving local groups in relief actions. As a means to ensure gender sensitivity and effective cooperation with local emergency committees, the managerial level should include professional and volunteer women at all the levels of the organizations involved in relief operations, whether traditionally assigned to women or not. The objective is to increase the participation of women at the decision making and planning levels to address the specific concerns of women during disaster response. This could be achieved by actively

recruiting women to reach 50 % representation in all technical and managerial committees; through ongoing training programs, empowering women to participate effectively in these committees; and by providing opportunities for men and women to work together on teams resolving problems of a technical nature. Finally, political and policy-making guidelines should ensure greater gender perspective in natural disaster intervention by promoting data collection and studies in the aftermath of a disaster including demographic variables and by developing participatory mechanisms between women's bureaux and Non-Governmental Organizations and National Emergency Commissions. To accomplish this collection of data with demographic variables and studies which reflect a gender perspective, women political leaders and women at national planning levels must ensure a gender perspective in national disaster planning, and they must work to strengthen women's bureaux in the areas of personnel, finance, research and disaster management...

Finally, at the recovery phase, community based organizations should be incorporated into the recovery phase of the disaster management programme as key agents. In particular, women's participation, perspectives and concerns should be an integral part of this process. The objective is to strengthen the capacities of women and community-based organizations to exert greater control over the recovery, restoration and development process, by

providing them with trainers and training. At the managerial level, collaboration and coordination should be promoted between relief agencies responsible for disaster management and those responsible for development with particular emphasis on women. The objective is to ensure collaboration and coordination between relief and development agencies. Lastly, at the political and policy-making level, an effective system of needs assessment and distribution must be a priority in the recovery phase at all levels, by identifying existing community-based organizations, paying particular attention to women's organizations and women leaders in communities. 39

CONCLUSION

We conclude, therefore, that the first step in reducing physical/material vulnerabilities is to identify the high-risk areas and understand the basic organization of production, where women are predominant. This is done by relating a hazard, such as an earthquake, a nuclear or gas leak, a flood, a volcanic eruption, etc., to the terrain and to the probability that such an event will occur. The result should be the implementation of appropriate planning of human settlements, so that when a disaster does occur, not as much damage, whether it be material or in terms of lives lost, will occur.

No country, rich or poor can escape the devastating effects of natural or human-caused disasters. The difference in the extent of damage and loss of life between similar types of disasters in different countries depends on the vulnerabilities of the locations of the disasters; be they expensive housing or commercial establishments, gas lines, or other infrastructures common to developed countries, or rural housing settlements, agricultural lands, or other infrastructures common to developing countries. 40 Therefore, reducing physical vulnerabilities is possible.

The second level of analysis we emphasized, the social/organizational structure, serves as a coping mechanism that must be identified, strengthened and even increased, in order to broaden the contacts of local groups and promote cooperation between them. Dependency relationships, must be identified and eliminated. F. Cuny, a specialist in this field, believes that:

by increasing self-sufficiency and reliance on internal resources, national and international agencies improve the ability of local people to cope with disasters, and in turn helping to mitigate the effects of disasters and speed recovery. 41

At the third and final level, we should reduce all attitudinal vulnerabilities and build on the coping and caring attitudes and motivations that characterize women's responses to a disaster situation, because they are the essential actors in the maintenance of the family and the

community in normal times as well as in post-disaster situations.

A summary of the Vulnerability/Capacity analysis of women's physical/material, social/organizational, and attitudinal/motivational conditions can be seen in figure 4, clarifying the analytical framework for women's integration in development and relief programmes.

The question now is to see whether the international disaster management community has become aware of the realities we have described in this chapter, evaluating their commitment to accountability to the victims of disasters. Therefore, we will be looking at how the United Nations institutions, which we spoke of in chapter one, deal with the question of women in disaster management, and to what extent each should integrate the role of women in their disaster management operations.

Any agency which has a responsibility and a commitment to alleviating human suffering, is confronted by serious political choices. As an agency works with local people to design ways to reduce vulnerabilities and strengthen capacities, historical factors, social movements, ideology, conflicts, environment, and the economy of a disaster-prone or -stricken nation must be kept in mind.

This is why we have chosen the Vulnerability/Capacity Analysis for a gender-specific study, bringing to light the realities of women's status, roles and conditions

throughout the world, and superimposed these factors on the effect a disaster has on the ways in which they could respond in each phase of a disaster.

It is impossible for every woman in every society to assist in the Disaster Management process to the fullest extent, as defined by Mullings, Noel and the PCDPPP Staff Members. In some societies, women are barred by tradition from taking up any activities that would mean leaving the home. In these cases, the international community must recognize that some women will have to be assisted more directly, as opposed to a more general assistance given to women whose movements are not dictated by tradition and whose contributions to Disaster Management can be encouraged to their fullest extent. Not only would the need for the integration of women be fulfilled, but this change of policy would mean a more effective disaster response, and a more accountable one.

We would hope that, in the future, international organizations, federal and local governments, together with local coping mechanisms, NGOs and voluntary agencies having Disaster Management responsibilities will conceptualize their studies of the special needs of women in disaster situations in a systematic way that would follow the vulnerability/capacity analysis. Because only in this way, will the special needs of women be recognized and met, further to be translated into an improvement in the

survival of the family and community and in the preparation and response to a disaster.

The world's vulnerability to disasters have caused some concern as to what capacities the planet and its inhabitants have to offer in the mitigation of such occurrences. If we were to look at the capacities, technological innovations would be added to the capacity of humans to recover from the worst disasters.

Just as in other levels, the equality between men and women must be extended even to the field of Disaster Management. It is very important that all those involved in the Disaster Management process reevaluate their responses, and become aware of the need for women to be integrated into the process at the preparedness, response and recovery phases, because their individual contributions together with the social mechanisms they have created, are essential to the proper recovery of the community and the survival of the family.

CHAPTER 4
HOW TO INTEGRATE WOMEN IN THE DISASTER MANAGEMENT
PROCESS

Having studied the potential roles that women can play in the Disaster Management process, we should now examine why these roles have not been recognized up to the present in disaster management and, what introducing the idea of integrating women in the multilateral disaster management process would entail.

We could argue that there are several reasons, some implicit and others explicit, why the issue of women in disaster management has been overlooked in the whole process. At the implicit level, the disaster management process, which (as we have seen in the first chapter) depends on the actions of several organizations and agencies of the United Nations, as well as on voluntary organizations (such as the League of Red Cross Societies and its affiliates), has been limited by several obstacles. One of the most serious rests with the fact that the degree of effectiveness of co-operation between organizations, agencies and voluntary organizations is not sufficient to create a process that is both efficient and accountable to the victims of natural and human-caused disasters.

At the explicit level, as we have already pointed out in the first chapter, as long as the emergency situation is relatively simple in nature, involving the response to a single major emergency, or at most one or two other supporting agencies, the problem of inter-agency co-ordination should not cause any great concern or require any special procedures to ensure effective co-ordination. For example, it is clear that the major responsibility for refugees rests with the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees; or in the case of an epidemic or health emergency in some other form, the World Health Organization would be the agency primarily concerned; and large-scale emergency food requirements resulting from the uprooting of masses of population, with the consequent disruption of local food production must involve the capacities of both the Food and Agricultural Organization and the World Food Programme.

Therefore, where one particular agency is clearly responsible it should take the lead and others (usually a number of smaller intergovernmental or voluntary agencies), should provide supplementary support services to those provided by the leading agencies.

It is more in cases, we believe, where there are political factors and multiplicity of agencies that the real need for effective co-ordinating mechanisms arise.

It is here that the United Nations faces its greatest challenge, where it must work effectively as a team.

First of all, co-ordination among equals is frequently difficult to achieve, even in the best of circumstances or in the rush and pressure of efforts to organize to meet sudden emergencies. Therefore, in order to have organizations meet the needs of women, it is essential that all those who are called to participate ensure that their mandates reflect a clear definition of women's roles, because the larger the number of participants in the mitigation of a disaster, the more difficult co-ordination will be, and with a greater number of participants, activities will be repetitious and the process will lack a general policy in dealing with the needs of victims at both the material and physical levels.

Therefore, the solution to integrating women in the disaster management process is threefold: first, if the whole structure of disaster management is improved by dealing with the co-ordination problems, then the process will be more effective; secondly, women's community and grass roots groups must, with the help of regional institutions, be allowed to participate to the fullest extent in the disaster management process; thirdly, as a result of these activities, UNDRO's mobilizing, directing and co-ordinating activities will be improved with the participation of women.

Reports, such as those written by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on activities and problems of UNDR0 have offered many recommendations towards some possible solutions. Although it is not the purpose of this chapter to cover them all, we do however believe that the problems women face in not receiving proper assistance because their needs have not been properly assessed is somehow linked to the problems of co-ordination within the Disaster Management system, and some of the solutions that have been offered to solve the latter's problems may in fact help the condition of women in disasters as well.

The first section of this chapter will deal with the problem of co-ordination between organizations and within the U.N. co-ordinating mechanism. By briefly looking at the mechanisms that have been put into place by the United Nations General Assembly to establish UNDR0's co-ordinating role: i.e. several Memoranda of Understanding, the Economic and Social Council, and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, we will see where the co-ordination problems lie, and how these problems can help to explain why the issue of women in the disaster management process has been overlooked.

A second section will consist of looking at the mechanisms that already exist, and which could be used to

accomplish the integration of women in Disaster Management. One of the primary mechanisms is in the form of a United Nations legislation created in 1973 assuring the protection of women and children in emergencies and armed conflict. The second mechanism is the entire network created as a result of the International Women's Year and the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985).

The purpose will be to suggest ways in which organizations could improve the way they respond to disasters by accepting greater co-ordination from the lead agency, thereby setting the groundwork for enforcing a new policy on accountability to those affected by disasters where the needs of women will be greatly met and their activities in disaster management reinforced. In addition, we argue that a new sense of community participation at the disaster management level will be necessary to fulfill this goal of accountability. The community will consist of various women's groups and organizations that already exist or that have been created as a result of the disaster. It is these groups that are the initial disaster response mechanisms and, should receive all forms of assistance in terms of disaster planning and preparedness training, and should be reinforced at the response and rehabilitation phases. International and national mechanisms should recognize these women's groups and organizations, and they should also rethink the way they view victim-participation in

disaster relief and allow women to participate to the fullest extent of their capacities in the Disaster Management process. Only then will the process be effective and respond to the needs of women as its most valuable actors.

We hope to conclude that just as a unified approach to development is now recognized as giving the best results, a similar approach to disaster relief, planning and preparedness is likely to be more effective than disjointed efforts. The experience of the United Nations has suggested that co-ordination arrangements are more effective when those organizations who are involved have participated in establishing them, rather than when they have not, because of jurisdictional reasons and because no one organization can or should duplicate the technical competence of the others.

We also anticipate the need for a better administrative framework within the United Nations to integrate women in Disaster Management, by having the General Assembly strengthen the legislation dealing with the protection of women and children in emergency and armed conflict, which should be made applicable to all U.N. organizations, agencies and voluntary organizations who must accept the leadership of a co-ordinating agency, whether it be UNHCR to meet the needs of refugees, UNDRR for the co-ordination of a massive response by some or all organizations, or the ECOSOC and ACC in the

co-ordination of a programme dealing with the system-wide integration of women in disaster management. We shall see, therefore, how the integration of women in the Disaster Management mechanism could work.

PART 1 - Co-ordinating Mechanisms

The policies and actions of the organizations and agencies participating in the Disaster Management process will influence the way people affected by disasters are treated. Therefore, their action or inaction vis-a-vis those affected by disasters will surely affect women in the way that their position as beneficiaries of assistance will either be minimal or null.

Starting in 1972, the United Nations and most of the major international agencies in the U.N. family (with the exception of the UN Relief and Works Agency which has been providing emergency assistance since its creation in 1950), have created departments or offices that deal solely with disaster relief, preparedness and prevention. For example, emergency units over the past decade have been instituted in UNICEF, FAO, WFP, UNHCR, WHO and PAHO. Of these, the most important has been the creation of UNDRO in 1971 because, as its mandate stated, it was to mobilize, direct and co-ordinate the assistance with that given by other inter-governmental and non-governmental

organizations. However, since its creation, UNDRO's mandate has been rather uncertain, which meant that it found itself increasingly at odds with many of the more established organizations. Several questions remain unclear: for example,

what was meant by 'to direct'?. Did UNDRO's responsibilities include 'human-caused' disasters normally handled by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees?. Would UNDRO's appeals clash with those of agencies such as UNICEF?. Was UNDRO intended to have an 'operational role', that is, to get involved in the actual running of the relief work, or merely a non-operational, co-ordinating role? 1,

and finally, should UNDRO be the primary organization that will ensure the system-wide programming of the integration of women in natural and human-caused disaster management?.

Memoranda of Understanding and Generalized Agreements

Conscious of its weakness, UNDRO created a special Trust Fund in 1976 that would allow it to receive contributions from various governmental and non-governmental donors. Also in 1976, a series of Memoranda of Understanding were signed with various organizations and agencies in order to establish, in writing, some guidelines that these other organizations would follow, with UNDRO as the co-ordinating agency. In the summer of 1976, UNDRO's Co-ordinator, Mr. F.N. Berkol signed a memorandum of understanding with Mr. Edouard Saouma, Director General of the Food and Agricultural

Organization, and with Mr. Thomas C.M. Robinson, interim Executive Director of the World Food Programme. The announcement in the UNDRO publication UNDRO News stated that

the two memoranda recognized the close and effective co-operation which already existed between the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO) and the FAO, and between UNDRO and the WFP, and affirmed the responsibilities to be exercised jointly and separately when the Government of a country stricken by disaster requests the assistance of the United Nations. They emphasized, in particular, joint action to be taken to make the United Nations response the most effective. 2

In mobilizing and co-ordinating relief, UNDRO has and does pay special attention to the needs of special groups in disaster situations. For example, the food relief aid that is provided, frequently contains only adult rations which are not appropriate for children, especially those in infancy, because they may often cause illnesses such as gastro-enteritis. It is, therefore, in UNDRO's opinion, that in carrying out assessment operations to determine the relief needs of disaster victims as actors, that every effort should be made to provide separate estimates for adult victims (especially the aged), pregnant and nursing women and children.

UNICEF:

Further to a memorandum of understanding signed in 1977, UNDRO collaborates in this type of work with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

"Upon the availability of such information, UNDR0 can include in its regular reports on the situation estimated figures on the victims, divided into the above-mentioned categories, and can remind donors of the need for separate treatment for each group...

...On the field, UNICEF staff also play an active role in the work of the Disaster Teams formed under the aegis of the United Nations Development Resident Representatives, frequently with the assistance of UNDR0 staff sent to the field.

UNICEF helps to establish the special needs of children, whether for immediate relief or during the rehabilitation and reconstruction phases, and UNDR0 takes such steps as may be required to ensure that relief needs are drawn to the attention of the international donor community.

UNDR0 and UNICEF frequently collaborate using the supplies in the UNICEF warehouse in Copenhagen...

... In general preparedness activities, UNICEF and UNDR0 collaborate in formulating plans designated to protect vulnerable groups in the fields of nutrition, health and welfare, and through studies and surveys concerning the stockpiling of emergency supplies, especially those likely to be required for use by children and other vulnerable groups, such as the aged and the handicapped...

... In preparing stockpiles, due attention should be paid to the inclusion of items suitable for children or for pregnant and nursing women." 3

Finally, UNICEF is also involved in the education for children, and in developing methodologies for a series of vulnerability analyses of various regions for the purpose of determining disaster risks in particular locations.

UNHCR:

In 1978, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the UN Disaster Relief Co-ordinator signed a memorandum of understanding which stated that

the accord gives UNDR0 the responsibility for co-ordination of relief assistance to those compelled to leave their homes as a result of, or as a precautionary measure against, the effects of natural and other disasters, including aviation, maritime, industrial or nuclear radiation accidents. The Memorandum provides for a continuous exchange of information on needs and contributions made when a disaster-stricken State requests assistance from either Organization... ..UNDR0 and UNHCR have also agreed to co-operate in efforts to remove obstacles to the rapid delivery of emergency relief and the formulation of measures to expedite the provision of relief consignments and personnel, the exchange of up-to-date background information on disaster-prone countries, the preparation of a comprehensive glossary of relief items, including standard specifications for those commonly supplied, and the exchange of information on appropriate sources of relief supplies, the establishment of improvement of stockpiles and the best use of available resources in disasters and other emergencies. 4

WHO:

In 1979, UNDR0 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the World Health Organization. The agreement recognizes WHO's role for the assessment for emergency health and medical requirements, in the procurement of medicines and medical supplies.

ILO:

A generalized agreement was also signed with the International Labour Organization. Its work in disasters is especially important in the prevention, preparedness and reconstruction phases, and it has also contributed skilled relief assistance after some types of industrial catastrophes. According to a 1977 issue of UNDR0 News,

"ILO will assist in organizing labour-intensive public works programmes such as those for flood protection, as part of disaster prevention schemes, and in planning rapid deployment of labour for site clearance after a disaster." 5

UNDP:

Yet, the most important element, and still the least trained in the activities of disaster management co-ordination, is the UNDP Resident Representative. These individuals have acted ex officio as representatives of the Co-ordinator, as called by General Assembly resolution 2816 (1971). By agreement with the Administrator of UNDP, Resident Representatives at all times represent the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, and are often the first to receive demands for assistance made by the disaster-prone government of the country they are representatives for.

Paragraph 8 of resolution 2816 (XXVI) provides that

in response to a request for disaster relief from a disaster-stricken State and, as necessary, in particular in disaster-prone countries, the United Nations resident co-ordinator shall, with the full concurrence, consent and participation of the Government, convene meetings of the concerned organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system to plan, monitor and take immediate action to provide assistance and the International Committee of the Red Cross, the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and appropriate voluntary organizations may be invited to participate in such meetings with the host country. 6

The Resident Representative is prepared to act as agent in procuring relief supplies for U.N. organizations

and in arranging the transportation of these supplies to the disaster area as well as any arrangements to assure the relief transportation efforts are successful in arriving at their appointed destination.

In addition, country representatives (and sometimes regional representatives) of all agencies with which UNDRD has signed a Memorandum of Understanding

are called upon to co-operate with the UNDP Resident Representative in several ways, and in particular in the formulation of a U.N. country team which will act in disasters. The national Red Cross or Red Crescent Society, the diplomatic missions of donor countries, and international non-governmental organizations can play a very useful role in the team, and not only in the relief phase. 7

The existence of a Team, comprising a number of officials representing each organization and institution involved in a disaster relief operation, should become more involved in assuring the accountability of relief to every victim. This Team is meant to assist Resident Representatives to

compile basic data about the state of preparedness in the country and the facilities and supplies likely to be available for use in the emergency ... The team may also view its own 'action plan' so that all members know in an emergency what to do and where to do it, and how to help one another ... The team may also ensure that in the immediate emergency phase while concerted action is essential, the U.N. agencies represented in the country present an agreed assessment of damage and needs, reporting this to the U.N. Disaster Relief Office and the agencies themselves, and provide to the government authorities and others concerned a single point of contact with those who are best able to mobilize multilateral assistance and to influence bilateral donors to send the help that is actually needed. 8

As is plainly clear, the success of the activities undertaken by these bodies is essential to a full accountability of disaster relief, reconstruction, preparedness and planning to those affected by disasters. However, the Team's activities go even further in ensuring that, as far as can be predicted, concerted action continues to be taken after the emergency phase ends and rehabilitation and reconstruction begin. The truth of this fact was reported on by Mr. Bradford Morse, UNDP Administrator, on the 'Role of the Resident Representative in respect of Pre-Disaster Planning and Disaster Relief' (UNDP/PROG/73, 1983). The report stated that it is during the phases of reconstruction and rehabilitation that UNDRD disengages from the post-disaster operations, and that the Resident Representative reassumes his normal role.

"UNDRO maintains an interest in the later stages, and indeed may have to do more than this if funds channelled through UNDRO by donors are still being used in rehabilitation work. UNDRO may also become more closely concerned in a different way if prevention measures are being applied in the task of reconstruction." 9

Governments, according to the report, should be encouraged to

view the existence of the U.N. country team as an earnest of the international community's intention (or hope) to provide speedy, effective and co-ordinated assistance after a disaster. Government departments that are responsible for disaster preparedness and relief should be kept fully informed of the work of the team and should be invited to send representatives to its meetings...

... A Resident Representative should establish, as far as may be possible, the capabilities of each member of the team, the nature of assistance likely to be offered and possibly the part of the country where it is most likely given. Arrangements must be made for a local co-ordination centre for use by U.N. and other donors' representatives so that the vital exchanges of information between donors themselves and between donors (as a group) and the government, may take place with the minimum of formality. 10

This would surely also facilitate a general understanding of how victims as actors will be assisted, with women needing different types of assistance than men, children and the handicapped (both male and female).

Disaster Response

The disaster response process works as follows: As soon as a disaster occurs, or threatens to occur, the Resident Representative sends a report immediately to UNDRO by telex, or cable. This report, or the following

one to UNDRD contains a general appraisal of the disaster and or probable relief needs from abroad, if any. Follow-up reports are sent as frequently and as rapidly as accurate assessments of needs are made and actual local resources are ascertained. At this point, specific consideration must be given to study the conditions of the victims as actors (especially women), and to determine their specific needs (as these may be different than the needs of other groups of victims). This does not necessarily mean that the needs of women require more aid, but they do have needs that require specific types of aid.

The following page shows the fifteen points that should be covered in the disaster assessment reports given to UNDRD. In it, provisions are made for finding out what type of assistance is needed and what is the general area that has been damaged. The factor that has not been included in the general population statistics, is the breakdown into how many of the killed or injured were women, how many of the homeless were women, how many children they had, and how many households were headed by women. The latter type of information can be researched during the preparedness and planning phases, the rest must be kept track of during the disaster. For example, local morgues could count the number of women killed; shelters housing those who lost their homes could keep track of how many women there are and with how many

1. Nature of disaster
2. Date of period of its occurrence
3. Name of area affected
4. Estimate of number of people killed
5. Estimate of number of people injured (see also paragraph 38 below)
6. Estimate of number of people homeless
7. Estimated total number of people resident in area affected
8. Estimates of material damage, e.g. number of houses, public utilities, cattle, crops, etc., destroyed or damaged
9. Has the government requested UNDRD/United Nations assistance?
10. Relief measures taken by government, UN agencies, Red Cross, voluntary agencies, foreign embassies, etc. Are these bodies diverting supplies already available locally or in the region? What recommendations are they making to their headquarters offices regarding additional aid? What aid has been requested by the government from foreign embassies?
11. Type and quantity of relief supplies needed from abroad and their relative priorities in terms of delivery. These may include, for example, medical supplies, hospital equipment, food, shelter material, bedding, blankets, clothing, soap, generators, ambulances and other vehicles, dinghies, outboard motors, helicopters, other transport aircraft, etc. (The most detailed specifications possible should be given: e.g. "5-man winter-weight tents with heaters" and not simply "tents".)
12. Whether any of the required relief supplies are available for local purchase, and if so (a) in what quantities, (b) at what cost, and (c) whether a contribution is being requested from UNDRD. (See paragraph 46 below.)
13. If foreign relief personnel are required, their number and qualifications.
14. Have the appropriate authorities been alerted to admit relief aid at local airports and/or other points of entry?
15. To what exact name and address should relief supplies be addressed? This consignee may be, for instance, the national Disaster Relief Co-ordinator if one exists, or a ministry, government department or other authority charged with the responsibility for co-ordination, or the Resident Representative himself.

Source: UNDRD general information.

dependent children; hospitals and clinics could count the number of women injured. With access to this type of information, UN organizations and agencies could target assistance to those women requiring specific aid.

It is obvious that co-operation and co-ordination between the members of a team will make it much easier for the donor community as a whole to effect local co-ordination of information, assessment and relief activity.

The ultimate goal of disaster relief is a speedy assistance of the right kind and quantity in the right place, without delay, waste or duplication. But, the system should go even further to try and provide the right kind of assistance, tailored to the victims who need special attention, such as women; and that all organizations and agencies become aware of this need and make it part of their response system.

The disabled (of whom some may be women), for example, have been given special status. Research undertaken in connection with the 1981 International Year for Disabled Persons, showed that all too often, people who had become temporarily or permanently disabled did not receive the treatment and rehabilitation services that they needed. It was found that sometimes this was due to lack of resources, or because the government was unaware of the size of the problem. This is why the U.N.

agencies have been called upon to make, wherever possible, efforts to ensure that the numbers of disabled, or potentially disabled, are assessed and recorded and that whatever assistance may be necessary for them is obtained, from national or international sources. The UNICEF, ILO and WHO representatives may be the most appropriate members of the U.N. team to be asked to help in this task. 11

The cases of the disabled and of women cannot really be compared, but their situations are parallel in the sense that they are a group of potential actors in disasters who require special assistance guaranteed by legislation and, in addition, for whom mechanisms should concentrate on the protection of lives and needs before, during and after a disaster. In this same vein, UNICEF, ILO, and the WHO have a definite role to play in fulfilling these tasks. UNICEF should be involved because those affected by disasters could include children and pregnant or nursing mothers, and would therefore be asked to protect and assure proper assistance to these groups. The same is true for ILO, who specializes in creating pre-planned emergency employment; and WHO would deal with the health needs of all people, especially women, since they are the ones who are the basic providers in many families.

The question at hand is this: Who is to co-ordinate these specific efforts that will deal with the special needs of women ?. Also ,who is to be the co-ordinating agency in a disaster ?. This issue has yet to be resolved. Not even the Memoranda of Understanding and resolutions strengthening the role of UNDR0 have been able to solve the deadlock. A further problem arises when a government, having asked one country or an international agency for help also makes a direct request to a number of donors for the same items of relief supplies.

"It has occurred (according to a General Assembly report), that co-ordinated appeals have been made among one group of donors, while private approaches are made to a second group. When this happens, the nature of the approaches and the size of the responses are usually not made known to the co-ordinators." 12

This just shows how the disaster relief system can be misused, even though the General Assembly had recognized in 1978 that there was indeed a problem. Resolution 33/22 (November 29, 1979) reaffirmed the central role of UNDR0 in the mobilization, direction and co-ordination of relief assistance,

calling upon donors to inform the co-ordinator of their actions and plans and upon recipient Governments to report contributions offered and received; it did not, however, remind recipient Governments to co-operate with the Co-ordinator in order that parallel, sometimes even conflicting, appeals should not be made. 13

Governments of a developing country have a tendency to proceed in such a manner, because they use

occasions such as disasters to replenish their food and medical supply stocks. This is a clear misuse of the system, and has been reported in several UN, ECOSOC, and General Assembly reports on Special Economic, Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance. Yet, as the ECOSOC's 1981/16 report states,

"it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator exists to serve both donors and recipients. More specifically, it exists to serve the interests of the survivors of the disasters. All can benefit if the resources of the Office are properly used. All will tend to lose if they are not." 14

Co-ordination Problems

Within the problems of co-ordination, we can identify areas of potential confusion due to some overlapping, as well as gaps in the services provided. The problem is that no agency can be seen as being clearly responsible. Also, not all agencies have clear or precisely defined terms of reference. For example, the World Health Organization is one of the few agencies which has emergency responsibilities written into its constitution. UNICEF is one of the few, according to the ECOSOC report we mentioned above, whose mandate extends to all peoples and territories without regard to the question of membership in the U.N. or any of its specialized agencies.

So far, no real limits have been placed on which type of country will receive assistance. However, there are exceptions.

"In the case of non-food agricultural assistance provided by the Food and Agricultural Organization, this is limited to State members of the organization, and there is still a good deal of uncertainty as to where the responsibility for meeting the needs of displaced persons (other than refugees) within a country resides. The UNHCR has taken over and provided the assistance required, either on the request of the Secretary-General, the U.N. General Assembly or on its own initiatives, but uncertainty remains as to where this responsibility officially lies." 15

Other barriers affect UNDRO's co-ordinating efforts. One of the major ones is the well-know fact, as stated in the 1981 Joint Inspection Unit report evaluating UNDRO's activities, that

the major U.N. system organizations involved in disasters are much larger and better funded, have been functioning longer, have carved out clearer areas of expertise and operational roles, and have their own programmes, clienteles and interests. UNDRO has operated with caution, confining itself largely to a role in 'sudden' natural disasters, with major and long-term disasters either assigned to another 'lead' agency or to a special 'co-ordinator'. 16

Therefore, external factors, such as government misuse of the system, lack of co-operation and co-ordination, and the lack of funding, have caused great uncertainty over the degree of feasibility of disaster relief co-ordination. UNDRO's mandate has been broad and imprecise which makes it subject to various interpretations. UNDRO, it is said, lacks a specific body to give it direction. Other organizations and agencies

see UNDRD with differing views as related to its precise functions and their appropriate mix. Finally, its functions and activities have overlapped with those of governments, voluntary organizations and U.N. system organizations, resulting directly or indirectly to problems in co-ordination and co-operation with these groups.

But the most important criticism of UNDRD rests in this next paragraph quoted from the Joint Inspection Unit report, A/36/73 (1981) dedicated to the evaluation of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator:

Because of these external difficulties, UNDRD has not proven very effective as a focal point, co-ordinator and catalyst in the disaster field. It has neither exerted the hoped-for leadership and stimulus, nor has it become an important focal point for disaster data, research and careful assessment of disaster problems, trends and performances which would allow a more precise evaluation of progress achieved world wide and the results and impact of UNDRD's own activities. In the areas to which UNDRD has given priority, progress towards its stated objectives appears to be disappointingly slow. An international disaster prevention strategy does not exist; UNDRD's information-sharing services are only partly used; detailed disaster information and relief arrangements are not well developed; it is not known whether or to what extent UNDRD has helped to reduce waste and inefficiency in relief administration; governments of disaster-prone countries are not yet well-organized to deal with disaster emergencies in a self-reliant fashion; relief committees of U.N. system field representatives have not evolved; disaster prevention techniques have not been applied; and increased disaster research has not been linked to urgent disaster problems. 17

As mentioned in the introduction, reports, such as those written by the Joint Inspection Unit, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly on activities and problems of UNDR0 have also offered many recommendations towards some possible solutions.

First of all, one of the solutions to making sure that women's needs are being assessed and responded to effectively lies, at the international level, in the improved co-operation between governments, agencies and U.N. organizations in the disaster management process. Now that we have seen that the organization that was supposed to co-ordinate these relief efforts (UNDR0) has not gained favour amongst these other groups, an alternative route to a collaborative effort in meeting women's needs must be found. At the national level, the utilization of community women's groups and organizations (as we will see later on in the recommendations) by the national and international disaster management mechanism can contribute to an efficient and accountable disaster response, rehabilitation and preparedness operation.

Since UNDR0 has not succeeded in fulfilling its mandate to its fullest extent and since organizations, agencies and governments have tended to work sometimes independently from each other, collaborating only in a few cases, a way must be found to unite these groups in a way that will address the issue of women in disaster management in the same way as the issue of women in

development was dealt in the the late 1970s and early 1980s.

PART 2: The integration of women in disaster management

Knowing, then, what has to be done, how is the integration of women in Disaster Management going to take shape ?

It is obvious that disaster relief co-ordination within and between governments, international organizations, and voluntary agencies cannot be resolved overnight. This is why

with proper planning and foresight and a realization that co-ordination saves lives, many of the difficulties can be worked out in advance and the victims of disasters (in developed and in developing countries) will no longer be the victims of unplanned international reliefs efforts. 18

Also, by recognizing that

widows, single mothers, children, disabled persons and the elderly are more vulnerable than anyone else in particular in any disaster situation, 19

as quoted from Gunnar Hagman, an officer of the Swedish Red Cross, will improvements to the Disaster Management process be made.

If the goals of disaster relief are "the reduction of human suffering, the improvement of material well-being, and the increase of personal security," 20

why is it that instead of paying attention to, and studying systematically, the multitude of basic human problems that may accompany, interact with, or be initiated by natural hazard or human-caused events - such as loss of livelihood, life-support, shelter, reserves, security and life - more emphasis is commonly placed on technological solutions and on 'broad spectrum' responses sponsored by big governmental and international agencies, or other kinds of outsiders? At the same time there is a misleading picture of the costs, benefits, and appropriateness of 'big responses'. 21

Therefore, in a system, this seems to emphasize the image of organizations rather than their accountability to victims. A question we should ask ourselves is whether there are any safeguards for those who are the most vulnerable?

In December 1968, legislation calling for the right of those people affected by armed conflicts and emergencies to receive protection as a human right under United Nations law began with resolution 2444 (XXIII) on the Respect of Human Rights in Armed Conflicts. Paragraph 2 (b) states that that there is

"a need for additional humanitarian international conventions or other appropriate legal instruments to ensure the better protection of civilians, prisoners and combatants in all armed conflicts and the prohibition and limitation of the use of certain methods and means of warfare";

and paragraph 1 (c) states that

"distinction must be made at all times between persons taking part in the hostilities and members of the civilian population to the effect that the latter be spared as much as possible." 22

General Assembly resolution 1515(XLVIII) on the "Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict for Peace, National Liberation and Independence", dated 28 May, 1970, asks the Secretary General to present to the Commission on the Status of Women, at its 24th session, a report containing all gathered information from the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), UNICEF and International Committee of the Red Cross, as well as other U.N. organizations, on the condition of women and children in times of emergency and armed conflict in the fight for peace, self-determination, national liberation and independence. The resolution also asks the General Assembly to study the possibility of drawing a declaration on the protection of women and children in emergency and armed conflict.

As a response to this request a report was written in 1973 and presented to the Economic and Social Council by the Secretary-General on "The Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict " (E/CN.6/586). In the report, it was pointed out that there was a need to improve international humanitarian law on the protection of women and children in emergency and armed conflict and, to apply the existing conventions

in this matter. The protection of women and children, must be founded on practical measures and realities that are simple and easily applicable. This is why, as one of the UN Members who participated in the writing of the report, all new norms attached to international humanitarian law concerning the protection of women and children must include the following factors: (a) the protection of all categories of medical establishments: hospitals, clinics, sanitary centres, polyclinics (clinics devoted to various diseases), medical supply warehouses, pharmacies, first aid outposts, etc.; all civic health establishments, including retirement homes, rest homes, medical personnel training centres, homes for the handicapped, fall out shelters and infermeries; (b) the respect for human rights: protection of citizens against the dangers resulting from hostilities by forbidding the attack against populated areas, especially where there are women and children, even if the presence of combattants is only rumored; (c) forbid the bombardment of populated areas without warning civilians who are not taking part in the fighting, to give them enough time to evacuate; with special studies concerning hostages and ways of including them in the human rights code.

Another UN Member remarked that in improving the guarantees offered by international law to civil defence organization, we could facilitate the work of the

organizations who want to help and to protect women and children in armed conflict.

The report also concluded that: (a) a certain number of organizations of volunteers have gained much experience in responding to disasters and to armed conflicts, so it would, therefore, be very useful to institute within the U.N. system a central service that would have the role of gathering this knowledge and experience gained by the volunteer organizations; (b) it would be possible to identify the organizations possessing the required qualifications to respond to specific situations (reuniting children with their parents or offering proper assistance to single mothers, etc.), and establishing a list; (c) that techniques could be developed to identify specific problems that have, either during a disaster or armed conflict, caused the death of women or children or have caused them to suffer; (d) improve financing and communications to reduce the suffering.

The report is even more specific, in that it acknowledges that the World Health Organization has observed that beyond the usual health risks to women and children, their vulnerability, in disasters, can be multiplied by their particular conditions. Women who have been forced to live in less desirable situations due to poverty in both developed and developing countries are subject to risks resulting from natural and human-caused

disasters. Also, it is often women and children who are the first to be evacuated from a disaster prone region, thus ignoring women's capacities to assist in the Disaster Management process. Those refugees who are subject to conditions in a foreign land, placed in conditions where their lives are in danger as victims of the fear of anxiety, are witness to increases in the risks of accidents, injuries and diseases. The risk increases with the separation of families and children from their parents. Young women and women in general, regardless of their condition or age, can be victims of all kinds of aggression. In some cultures, the risk of pregnancy or the birth of an unwanted child can cause the woman to be banished from her community.

The World Health Organization proposes the following measures concerning the most vulnerable social groups (pregnant women and those still breast feeding, women during and after pregnancy, young girls before and after adolescence, seniors, persons in hospitals, and infants (from 1 to 4 years of age) in cases of disaster:

(a) disaster management organizers, whether it be at the local, national or international levels, must be accountable to the needs of these groups, especially in the distribution of food rations, but also for clothing and shelter; care and diligence must also be given to organizing refugee centers, child health centers, maternity wards, and other disaster centers set up

outside disaster-prone areas; (b) greater provision must be made to increase hospitals' capacities to provide maternity and pediatric services. In the meantime, improvement plans for sanitary centers that provide care for families and children must be revised and consolidated; (c) Health care and counselling centers must be planned in advance in order to provide family planning services, by helping women to avoid unwanted pregnancies, and to diagnose and treat diseases that affect the most vulnerable; (d) All single and able women must be encouraged to participate in disaster operations. After a period of training, these volunteers can participate in the organization and maintenance of all temporary medical centers and shelters; (e) In order to avoid the deterioration of the health of mothers and children, new ways must be found to improve the degree of efficiency of actions provided by health and social services, the training of volunteers and auxiliaries must be accelerated in order for them to respond as soon as possible to medical needs as well as to needs within disaster shelters and refugee camps, in order to orient patients to health centers; (f) After a disaster situation, a long term reconstruction plan should foresee the reintegration of the vulnerable groups and all those affected, with a return to a normal life in terms of the provision of community services; (g) The strengthening of the family unit as a way of creating some stability in

order to avoid social problems such as alcoholism, psychological problems or poisoning. 23

The report we have just been studying, E/CN.6/586 (1973) on the Protection of Women and Children, offers further observations and suggestions on the elaboration of a distinct international instrument that would deal with the protection of women and children in emergency and armed conflict. In this section of the report, the representative from the United Kingdom was of the opinion that the Commission on the Status of Women is not the appropriate organism that should study the problem of the protection of women and children in emergency or in armed conflicts. Morocco and Sweden have proposed that the General Assembly adopt a declaration on the protection of women and children in emergency and armed conflict. Sweden further suggests that there be a reassertion, within the declaration of the General Assembly, of the responsibility of each side of the conflict to respect the integrity of the civilian population.

Italy congratulates the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) on having an interest in the risks that women and children face in emergency and armed conflicts. It encourages the CSW to seek the advice of experts in the field of human rights applicable to times of war and, therefore, to elaborate one or many special protective

measures for women and children, formulated in realistic terms. 24

Many individual countries have set up their own disaster mitigation departments within their governmental and local structures, they also have established plans to secure and protect their population from natural and human-caused disasters, including war. For women, children, the elderly and handicapped persons, evacuation plans do exist, with the provision of food and the minimum comforts, plus the provision of material and moral support for women and children affected by conflicts in order to reduce the prejudices which they are subjected to, and the provision of material and non-material needs to refugees. (We will explore some examples in the conclusion of the Thesis).

Various organizations in the United Nations have undertaken their own plans to deal with the needs of those affected by natural and human-caused disasters. For example, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has indicated that when it has received an appeal by a country to deal with its refugee problem, the High Commissioner has accorded some special attention to those who, in respect to their age and their physical condition need special assistance. This category of refugees includes a high percentage of women and children.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinians in the Near East has undertaken specific programs destined toward refugee women and children especially for maternal and child hygiene, and other programs directed especially towards women (such as providing supplementary rations for expectant and nursing mothers).

However, this report does recognize that the availability of data on the condition of women in emergencies and armed conflicts is very limited. Most of the information refers to the conditions of the population in general, and even though one could try and distinguish those situations that concern women and children specifically, it would still be very difficult to get a complete view of the situation of this specific category of victims. Also, information concerning women and children have only included allegations on the mistreatment of this group based from several witnesses. For example, in Bangladesh, young girls who were raped preferred to commit suicide rather than be rejected from society, because unmarried mothers face this situation. Since there are an insufficient voluntary organizations capable of helping young mothers morally or materially, as well as gynecologists or personal support centres, the situation has worsened. 25

In its concluding remarks, the report asks whether the Commission on the Status of Women will decide if it would be advantageous to write a preliminary declaration on the protection of women and children in emergency and armed conflict, which would be declared and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly.

In effect, on December 14, 1974, the General Assembly proclaimed resolution 3318 (XXIX), the "Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict". Paragraph 6, states that

women and children belonging to the civilian population and finding themselves in circumstances of emergency and armed conflict, ... shall not be deprived of shelter, food, medical aid or other inalienable rights, in accordance with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, or other instruments of international law. 26

In addition to the Declaration, the General Assembly also calls for the strict observance of the Declaration by all Member States.

Therefore, the essential point that should be understood from these reports, resolutions and the Declaration, is that every individual, male or female, young or old, handicapped or able has a right to protection, and therefore to assistance, in situations of emergency and armed conflict. This protection and assistance must be assured at the national level, through

governments, both local and national, and at the international level, either by multilateral or bilateral arrangements.

In the period following the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict, the idea of human rights towards women within the United Nations became even more important.

It is within this framework that the United Nations also embarked on promoting the Elimination of Discrimination against women and to integrate women more effectively into the development process. As Philip Alston states in his article entitled "Human Rights and the International Development Strategy", published in the Bulletin of Peace Proposals (1979), ...

All States, as members of the international community have a duty to remove the diverse obstacles which obstruct the attainment of development objectives and a duty to provide positive assistance to promote the universal realization of human rights, including the right to development./.../ It would be appropriate to require all parts of the United Nations system to appraise their activities critically with a view to ensuring that the most effective possible measures to promote human rights within the development process are being taken. For this purpose... the author believes ...it is essential to reject the widely accepted assumption that everything done by the United Nations agencies, almost by definition, contributes in one way or another to the promotion of human rights. Such an assessment must be superficial, misleading, or even false, and in any event inadequate. The question to be asked is not whether the agencies' activities are ultimately contributing to the promotion of human rights but whether they are doing so in the most direct, effective, and appropriate manner. 27

Resolutions following the Declaration, such as General Assembly resolution 5 (XXV), adopted by the Commission on Humanitarian Rights in March 1979, proposed that greater emphasis should be placed on the obligation of governments to facilitate the satisfaction of the basic needs of the individual.

During, and following, the International Women's Year (1975) and the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), the programmes which were created emphasized the integration of women in development. These programmes called for the international community to

provide women with the necessary skills to make their contribution more effective in terms of production and to ensure their greater participation in decision-making, planning and implementation of all programmes and projects. Full integration also implies that women receive their fair share of the benefits of development, thereby helping to ensure a more equitable distribution of income among all sectors of the population. 28

The World Plan of Action, the International Women's Year's major triumph,

was not intended as a substitute for existing international instruments and programmes. Its purpose was, and is, mainly to stimulate national and international action to solve the problems of the underdeveloped and of the socio-economic structures which places women in an inferior position, in order to achieve the goals of the International Women's Year. 29

Provisions were also made providing for the needs of women, including migrant women coming from rural areas or from abroad, and for women workers and their families who live in urban slums and squatter settlements.

Training, job-counselling, child-care facilities, financial aid, and necessary language training and other forms of assistance should be provided. Also, the World Plan of Action, states that "special attention should be given to the needs of elderly women, who frequently receive less protection and assistance than men." 30

The World Plan of Action also asks that all organizations of the United Nations system take separate as well as joint action to implement its recommendations. These activities (which are outlined in the next page) should be co-ordinated in a proper manner through the existing machinery, especially the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC).

We may argue, therefore, that this mechanism created to fulfill the demands of the Women's Decade could succeed in improving the co-ordination of a new programme of integrating women in the disaster management process, but also improve, as it was called for by the Plan, international action in support of existing programmes, expanding their action in the following main areas:

(a) research, data collection and analysis; (b) technical co-operation, training and advisory services including co-ordination with national and regional activities of organization within the U.N. system; (c) elaborate an ongoing review of international standards; (d) dissemination and exchange of information and liaison with non-governmental organizations and other groups; (e) review and appraisal including monitoring of progress made in achieving the aims and objectives of the new programme; and (f) executive and management functions including overall co-ordination with all the organizations of the U.N. system and with the national and regional machinery used during and after the Decade. 31

Therefore, effective international machinery should be established, or existing bodies such as the Commission on the Status of Women, should be utilized so that women all over the world can have the opportunity to support each other by having a mutual understanding of their national and local problems. The result should be the elimination of all forms of discrimination and oppression. Perhaps the preparation and distribution of documentation on the situation of women in specific countries of the world, and the particular risks they face in every day life and in disasters, should be initiated in the form of a yearbook or almanac that would be kept up to date.

Just as international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental agencies have tried to strengthen their efforts to distribute information on women and related matters in publications describing women's situation, their changing roles and their integration into the development effort through planning

World Plan of Action

The World Plan of Action was adopted without a vote on 1 July. It states in the Introduction that the benefits of technological progress are not equitably shared, and that the developing countries, representing 70 per cent of the world population, receive only 30 per cent of world income. Therefore, in order to achieve "uniform and balanced development of the international community", the international economic order needs to be replaced by the one envisaged in the Assembly's Declaration of May 1974 on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order.

The Plan states that it is the right of individuals and couples "freely and responsibly to determine the number and spacing of their children and to have the information and the means to do so". The exercise of that right is "basic to the attainment of any real equality between the sexes and, without its achievement, women are disadvantaged in their attempt to benefit from other reforms".

Further, the Plan asserts, the "integral development of the personality of the woman as a human being is directly connected with her participation in the development process as a mother, worker and citizen" and policies should be developed to promote the co-ordination of those different roles.

Measures Recommended

On the national level, the Plan recommends both general and specific measures on administrative and organizational matters, legislation, political participation, employment, population and other areas relevant to the status and role of women in society.

The Plan recommends achievement of the following as a "minimum" by the end of the first five-year period of the 1975-1985 decade:

—A marked increase in literacy of women;

—Extension of vocational training in basic skills, including modern farming methods;

—Parity of enrolment at the primary level of education;

—Increased employment opportunities for women;

—Establishment and increase of infrastructural services required in rural areas and others;

—Enactment of legislation on equal political participation with men, equal employment opportunities and remuneration, and on equality in legal capacity and the exercise thereof;

—Encouragement of increased participation of women in the formulation of action policies at all levels;

—Increased provision for comprehensive measures for health education and services, sanitation, nutrition, family education, family planning and other welfare services;

—Provision for parity in the exercise of civil, social and political rights such as those pertaining to marriage, citizenship and commerce;

—Recognition of the economic value of women's work in the home, in domestic food production and marketing and in voluntary activities not traditionally remunerated;

—Redirection of formal, non-formal and life-long education towards the re-evaluation of men and women, in order to ensure their full realization as an individual in the family and in society;

—Promotion of women's organizations as an interim measure within workers' organizations and educational, economic and professional institutions;

—Development of modern rural technology, cottage industry, pre-school day-care centres, and time and energy-saving devices to help reduce the heavy workload of women, thus facilitating their full participation in community, national and international affairs; and

—Establishment of an interdisciplinary and multisectoral machinery within each Government for accelerating the achievement of equal opportunities for women and their full integration in national life.

Noting that the family is "an important agent for social, political and cultural change", the Plan states that the functions and roles traditionally allotted to each sex within the family should be continually re-examined and reassessed in the light of changing conditions if women are to enjoy equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities in society.

and implementation of policies, so should they concentrate on improving information on the needs of women in disaster situations, either through the media, newsletters, or visual charts. This information would help to sensitize the international community into recognizing that the needs of women in disaster situations are different than those of men, since not only must they take care of themselves, but also their children and other family members such as the elderly and the physically disabled.

In terms of appreciating the local coping mechanisms, village leadership patterns should be well understood and utilized. The formation of women's groups is a fundamental strategy in attempts to increase women's power. Networking among these groups and organizations should be strengthened locally, nationally and internationally. It is essential that the local, national and international structures accept the ideal of 'people's participation' as a tool for any successful disaster management operation. Women's organizations can play a vital role in not only improving the situation of women but also in the efficiency and accountability of the Disaster Management process.

If the integration of women in Disaster Management is to take root, women's organizations must put pressure on international and national machineries from within as

well as from without. Also, these machineries must accept their demands and change their policies towards disaster victim accountability. By including a programme that would take into account these factors in the already existing system-wide women in development programme and mechanism, co-ordinated and implemented by the U.N.'s co-ordinating agencies : the ECOSOC and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), no significant additional funding would be required and no separate organizational structure would have to be created. However, the United Nations co-ordinating bodies, as we will see below, should assure the creation of a new programme that would guarantee a system-wide integration of women in the disaster management process.

The U.N.'s co-ordinating bodies:

It is possible that the co-ordinating bodies of the United Nations: The ECOSOC and the ACC, could be the mechanisms by which the integration of women in Disaster Management could materialize. Before defining what their involvement would be in this situation, we must first describe what they do.

The dominant co-ordinating mechanisms within the United Nations are the U.N. General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC). In a

report to the ECOSOC on the "Co-ordination in the U.N. and the U.N. System" (A/42/232 of 22 May, 1987),

the General Assembly is the highest authority in matters of co-ordination within the system. In that context, General Assembly resolution 32/197 provided that the General Assembly should function as the principal forum for policy making and for the harmonization of international efforts in respect of economic, social and related problems and should establish overall strategies, policies and priorities for the system as a whole in respect of international co-operation, including operational activities, in economic, social and related fields. 32

It is up to the General Assembly and the ECOSOC as central organs to review and co-ordinate activities that are undertaken by governing bodies of the specialized agencies and other intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors who have specific co-ordination roles in their respective fields of competence. The General Assembly, itself must provide a policy framework within which co-operation and co-ordination of the activities of organizations of the system can be carried out.

In addition, this report (A/42/232) outlines the activities of the ACC:

while organizations consult with each other for co-ordination purposes or joint actions, it is through the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination and its subsidiary bodies that most co-operative arrangements involving the majority of organizations of the system and all system-wide co-ordination arrangements on a vast variety of subjects are worked out and supervised. Composed of the executive heads of all organizations and programmes under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, the ACC constitutes a direct link between the organizations of the U.N. system, thus playing a central role in the smooth and efficient functioning of the system and in promoting coherent action by it...

... The ACC was established by the Economic and Social Council in 1946, with the task of ensuring the fullest and most effective implementation of the arrangements entered into between the United Nations and the specialized agencies./.../ In its resolution 32/197, the General Assembly stated that the aim of inter-agency co-ordination at the inter-secretariat level should be to assist in the preparatory work for intergovernmental decisions, in the implementation of such decisions and in their translation into mutually complementary or joint-programme activities. The tasks of such co-ordination include preparing recommendations for consideration by the intergovernmental bodies concerned, concerting the implementation by the appropriate United Nations bodies of policy directives and priorities emanating from the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and developing the co-operative and, wherever possible, joint planning, as well as the co-ordinated execution of programme activities decided upon at the intergovernmental level. 33

The ACC has established the Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions. This Committee is meant to carry out ongoing co-ordination functions in respect of programme and operational activities. One of its branches deals with programme matters, and has been concerned with women and development for some time. It oversees ad hoc inter-agency meetings on women discussing such matters as cross-organizational review of medium-term plans on women

and development submitted to the ECOSOC in 1985 and the proposed system-wide plan for women and development, which is adopted on behalf of the Administrative Committee. Just as its policy is that women and development should be on the agenda of all relevant subsidiary bodies of the Administrative Committee, such as the Task Force on Rural Development and on Science and Technology for Development, so should they include issues pertaining to the material, physical, social/organizational and motivational needs of women in both natural and human-caused disaster situations at all three phases of the disaster management process.

In January 1987, the ad hoc inter-agency meeting of the ACC's Consultative Committee on Substantive Questions considered the question of implementing the International Women's Decade's Forward-looking Strategies in relation to the programmes of the United Nations. This same type of mechanism could follow the International Decade on Natural Disaster Reduction (1990-2000), by monitoring the implementation of a system-wide plan on women in disaster management, during the implementation of the system-wide plan of action that oversees the work of the ad hoc meetings on women.

However, not even this area has escaped problems. Reviews of the system have concluded that there are problems in the co-ordination of such programmes dealing with the needs of women. At present, most country

programmes are not adequately designed to ensure that issues related to women are examined at the planning stage. According to a joint ECOSOC-General Assembly report on "Strengthening the work of the U.N. in integrating women effectively in economic development programmes and activities", dated 2 June, 1987, this inadequacy

may be due to the fact that most of the country-programming exercises were initiated several years ago, at a time when governments and international organizations had not yet fully integrated the examination of issues related to women in their planning procedures. 34

The United Nations has recognized this shortfall, and has instituted procedures to correct it. But even the ECOSOC has suffered some setbacks. Presently, the Council is in a central position that provides guidance and monitors and co-ordinates the activities of various components of the system and it translates the diversified activities of the system into a coherent whole. Therefore, any attempt to strengthen co-ordination must include steps to enhance the effectiveness of the Council. It is in this area that the Council feels it is failing. The problem it faces is a rapid expansion of programmes and activities within the United Nations, and the consequential erosion of the Council's authority and areas of responsibility.

For the ACC, on the other hand, its main problem is that it has increasingly felt the burden of having to

examine too many questions of varying degrees of importance of a very diverse nature. Some of the Committee members felt that it should focus its attention at each session only on a limited number of issues and consider in greater depth those of major importance and concern to most members of the Committee. The joint ECOSDC/General Assembly report (A/42/232)

also felt that the ACC provided valuable opportunity for the executive heads of the system to talk to each other and to share their concerns. /These/... could more effectively carry out their work while taking into account the broader concerns of the system as a whole. Corresponding arrangements could be made for other issues to be dealt with as far as possible by its subsidiary machinery. 35

One of these issues could be on the link between women and disaster management.

Yet, the problem of programme co-ordination, evaluation and maintenance does not lie solely in these co-ordinating agencies.

"The recent financial crisis confronted by the United Nations has focused on co-ordination as an instrument for arriving at a common agreement on broad objectives, for improving co-operation in operational activities, in particular at the country level, and for avoiding overlap and duplication, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of the activities of the system." 36

RECOMMENDATIONS:

At this point, we can offer three priorities and several recommendations as to how the issue of women in disaster management could be given more attention by the

international disaster management machinery and by such institutions as the ECOSOC, the ACC, the General Assembly, the Commission on the Status of Women and the International Centre for Humanitarian Affairs (a research centre established in Vienna specializing in women's issues). For example, these mechanisms could surely complete the data they already have from studies made on the conditions of women within the development process with studies on women's conditions in disaster situations: namely, how women react to disasters (psychologically and physically), and how their capacities can be fully utilized. Also, programme co-ordination amongst the U.N. organizations (UNDP, UNHCR, WFP, UNRWA) and specialized agencies (ILO, FAO, WHO) should be improved which, together with the unifying role of UNDRD, could come to an agreement as to which organization or agency would be the lead agency (depending on the type of disaster and the needs required to mitigate the disaster), while UNDRD would remain the main source of information concerning the needs of the country and the victims of the disaster, and also would keep track of which organization or agency is supplying which materials and during which phase of the disaster management process.

We believe that the improvements in the Disaster Management process and the integration of women in the

process have three priorities, all of which are equally important, which we will study individually.

Priorities in integrating women in Disaster Management

I. One of the priorities in being able to integrate women in the disaster management process is to improve the disaster management process itself (yet, other possibilities are involved). Although we have already spoken about the problems in the co-ordination of activities initiated by all the organizations and agencies involved in the process, we still do not know how these problems affect the victims of disasters.

One of the major problems that hinders the efficiency of the process are some counterproductive responses on the part of many different agencies. The agencies and organizations we studied so far, UNDR0, UNDP, FAO, WFP, WHO, PAHO, UNHCR, ILO, and UNRWA have a strong tendency to dispatch themselves and/or material assistance to the disaster affected area. In a major disaster, this has caused loss of time and effort caused by the convergence of many individuals, organizations and material goods. These inputs are provided without knowing how these additional resources will help. Researchers into the effects of aid on disaster-prone communities, such as aid for drought-affected regions in the Sahel or flood-affected regions in Southern India and Bangladesh, have shown that an unco-ordinated mass response puts a great strain on physical space, communications facilities

and the patience of victims and the few officials whose involvement in the disaster is legitimate.

The resources provided and distributed by the international community should be assured to areas of greatest need, and distributed equally amongst the victims. Also, there must be some assurance that programme norms and methods employed by each agency do not conflict with those of any other. There should be some basic common policies that are agreed upon by all actors, international, governmental and non-governmental. If not, available resources will not reach the most needy, meaning that all victims are treated as a mass of beneficiaries with one set of needs, instead of being treated as individual beneficiaries having different needs.

If things are not done correctly at the victim-response level, those affected by disasters will be confused and will misunderstand intentions, leaving room for resentment and bitterness among those who have been treated unfairly.

But all actors in the international disaster management machinery are essential to the process, because there is no one relief organization which can provide a complete range of services to all those affected by disasters. For example, medicines must be provided with appropriate qualified personnel; or building materials with tools to work with or the credit

to buy them. For women, the co-ordination of these inputs will mean the difference between benefitting from assistance directly, or receiving benefits unsuited to their needs.

Therefore, the role of the co-ordinating agencies (ECOSOC, ACC, and the General Assembly) will be to issue guidelines on the integration of women in disaster management, and it will be up to the co-ordinating agency that is in charge of a disaster to enforce the programme within the activities of each participating organization and agency which will facilitate compatibility among the different approaches. Within this idea of convergence, one co-ordinating organization could undertake four functions: (1) it must be able to convince unqualified organizations and misguided individuals that their presence is unwarranted, and will only lead to inappropriate assistance; (2) it can offer guidance towards appropriate response; (3) it can direct aid that is inappropriate, but which was given to recipients that are not harmful; (4) and it can help in solving conflicts and disputes between organizations.

This means that one such organization, whether it be UNDRO in the case where a disaster requires a system-wide assistance (such as floods, earthquakes, war), or a lead agency during a disaster that requires the assistance and expertise of one or two organizations or agencies (such as health epidemics, insect

infestations, refugees, droughts), should try and resolve the ongoing obstacle of organizations working to improve their own public image. Presently, the competitive spirit which exists among organizations and specialized agencies to receive the most donations and to achieve the best results in terms of saving the most lives, has become anathema to inter-agency co-ordination. Too much emphasis is placed on programmes and relief fashioned to publicity value, and not enough on actions that will fit in a co-ordinated, effective and efficient response by all these organs.

Therefore, first of all, in order for the disaster management process to work for the benefit of all victims, but especially women, it will be necessary for each agency or organization to relinquish some autonomy, because being part of a co-ordinated effort often means that one must be prepared to subject one's own will to that of another, where the costs and benefits are unlikely to be distributed evenly among the organizations that are participating in a disaster response. Therefore, those organizations who already have offices in the disaster-prone areas must, in their quick responses, plan to initiate their activities in conjunction with other organizations and agencies, community groups and regional institutions, and keep UNDRD informed as to their relief efforts.

Furthermore, which body will be the one with the power or duty to exercise the co-ordinating function will have to be decided upon before a disaster strikes. Also, A. J. Taylor, author of the article "Co-ordination for Disasters", suggests

an appropriate division of labour must be made among the various relief agencies likely to be involved and a mechanism is required to ensure that their input is guaranteed or, at least, supervised. The effects of an organization failing to meet its undertaking can be disruptive for other agencies but it can also be catastrophic for the individual communities. 37

II. A second priority in the integration of women in the Disaster Management process, and one that seems more feasible and natural, is a bottom-up approach to disaster response. By this we mean that women's local groups and organizations, as essential actors in the Disaster Management process, must be given priority when thinking of disaster relief accountability, since it is these groups which could ensure that the disaster management operations are accountable to women, their specific needs and their capacities. For example, as a result of the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City, the Sindicato de Mujeres Costureras (or the Union of Women Seamstresses) was created in September 19, 1985 because they felt that women were not being treated fairly in the disaster response process. The group would therefore represent and protect women's rights in the process. Another group, La Confederation National del Movimiento Urbano Popular (or

the National Confederation of the Popular Urban Movement) in Mexico, was concerned with the destruction and the rebuilding of housing, and represented the low-income urban dwellers. Within La Confederation, or CONAMUP, is the Central de Mujeres, or Women's Group, who were particularly concerned about housing being reconstructed adequately to proper specifications, and who made sure that the destruction of some housing was appropriate and necessary. It is as a result of the earthquake that these two groups were formed, and still survive to this day. Another example is the Sistren Theatre Collective in Jamaica, whose members, as a result of Hurricane Gilbert in September 1985, used their group as a tool to analyse the problems of women who had been affected by the disaster and acted for change. They would put on plays on and act out local problems, and offered some remedies to the situation. Another organization, the Organization of Women for Progress, was created as an organization found in low-income areas, both urban and rural, providing medical and legal services to women. 38

Also, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other agencies working with refugees have introduced a number of training and income-generating projects in order to give women new skills or build on existing ones so that they are able to make an active contribution to the improvement of their situation. For example, the Family Life Programme in Somalia has been

recognized as a noteworthy illustration of women's participation in training projects. Since its creation in 1980, the FLP has trained 46,000 women between the ages of 16 and 40, in nutrition, hygiene, home improvement, functional literacy, tailoring, handicrafts and dressmaking. Of course, the participation of women in some activities is sometimes limited by the time factor: such as walking long distances for water and wood for fuel, caring for children and household chores. This is why projects must be created with these constraints in mind. But, with these improved skills, through training during the period of exile,

refugee women can better fulfill their traditional role as a vital resource in their immediate environment and in the rehabilitation and development of their home countries once they return. 39

It is these groups and organizations who often take responsibility for the initial disaster response. By using them to improve the disaster management process in terms of its accountability to women, it renders this local mechanism stronger and able to provide the right services to those it is responsible for. This is the bottom-up approach that should lead, not only to the recognition by the national and international mechanisms of their existence but also to using them in the Disaster Management process.

By the beginning of the 1980s, General Assembly resolutions and decisions resulted in some agreement on identifying three categories of humanitarian emergency situations with which the United Nations could be involved. Peter Macalister-Smith in his book International Humanitarian Assistance: Disaster Relief Actions in International Law and Organization (1985), identifies these three categories:

(1) there are disaster situations which fall clearly within the competence of one U.N. organization or specialized agency and for which that body holds primary responsibility; (2) there are disaster situations in which UNDRO is required to play a co-ordinating role for the U.N. system; (3) the General Assembly has recognized that in exceptional circumstances involving complex disasters or emergencies of great magnitude special arrangements can be required to mobilize, co-ordinate and deliver international assistance. In addition, the General Assembly has envisaged and reaffirmed that UNDRO may play a role not only for the U.N. system but also in the wider international response in certain disasters. For this reason, the co-ordinator was requested to establish and maintain the closest co-operation with all organizations concerned and to make all feasible advance arrangements with them for the purpose of ensuring effective assistance. 40

According to the recommendations provided by the Joint Inspection Unit's evaluation of UNDRO, which we are already familiar with, the basic function of UNDRO should be confined to 'sudden' natural disasters. In this way, UNDRO could focus its efforts and resources on that specific area and establish a reputation for efficient and reliable performance. The so-called "creeping"

disasters, such as famines, droughts and epidemics, should not be included in its functions.

Therefore, within the area of sudden natural disasters, UNDR0 should have, according to the report, the following functions:

(a) serve as principal recipient and communicator within the United Nations system of information on disaster situations, what appear to be the primary needs, and what assistance is being provided, as reported to UNDR0 by UNDP Resident Representatives/Resident Co-ordinators and U.N. system, governmental and voluntary organizations, and make available information based upon what it had received so that decisions could be made by relief contributors; (b) to receive voluntary contributions for 'earmarked' disaster relief assistance when contributors wish to channel such assistance through UNDR0; (c) to serve as the executing agent for UNDP-funded projects on preparedness, which should emphasize the training of nationals in pre-disaster planning and relief management; (d) to promote greater recognition of the impact of disasters on economic development in the developing countries, and the importance of effective prevention and preparedness measures to further such development by mitigating disaster damage. 41

Also, UNDR0 and UNDP should work more closely together, especially through increased liaison and briefing work by the UNDR0 Liaison Office. Efforts should be made to ensure that every UNDP office in a disaster-prone country has an officer trained in disaster relief and pre-disaster planning (through a UNDR0 training program), and that procedures exist to ensure that disaster prevention measures are considered in the governments' development planning.

It has been suggested that UNDR0 should be integrated into the UNDP, since the latter's field

officers act as representatives for UNDRO. However, the Joint Inspection Unit report does not accept this suggestion, since it would mean that UNDRO would lose its identity and, therefore, much of its funding.

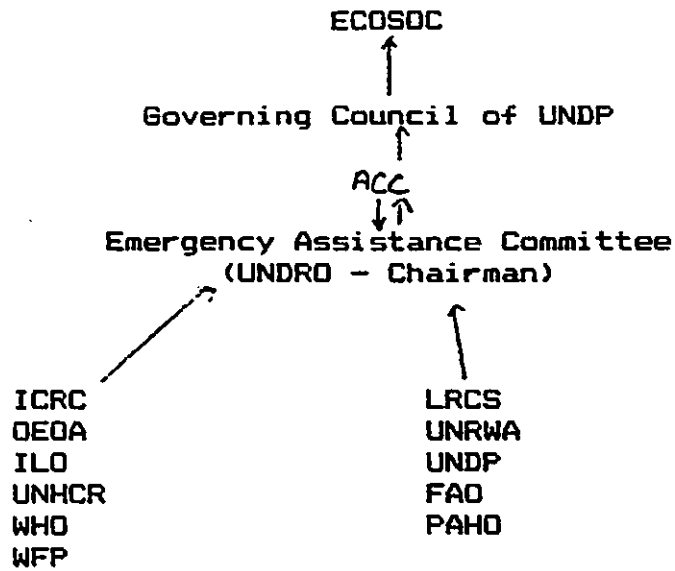
The authors of this report proposed other ways in which disaster emergency assistance could be made applicable to all types of disasters, as well as how to encourage a co-ordinated and unified contribution by the organizations of the United Nations system. Firstly, in this approach, UNDRO would continue to operate with a mandate limited to sudden disasters. Secondly, in order to provide a mechanism to respond to the broader humanitarian issues necessitated by disasters of all kinds including prevention and preparedness needs, an inter-agency Emergency Assistance Committee would be created by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination drawn from organizations of the United Nations system and U.N. bodies particularly concerned with disasters. The Co-ordinator of UNDRO would be the chairman of the Committee, and UNDRO would serve as a technical secretariat for the Committee where the staff would be given specific information-sharing tasks. The Committee would report to the ACC, through the ACC to the Governing Council of the UNDP, and through them to ECOSOC. These bodies should keep the Committee informed and be encouraged to use the Committee when necessary to help

organize participation by other organizations of the United Nations system.

The Committee would meet for each specific relief effort requested by governments, whether it be for a period of days, weeks, months or even years. With the help of its secretariat and any lead agency designated by the Committee, a plan of action for assistance by the United Nations would be approved, which would also specify the role and contribution of each organization concerned. This plan of action would then be submitted to the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination for approval under procedures which would guarantee quick action, but also be subject to revision as work progresses.

The Committee could also be responsible for any collaboration and co-operation that is required for technical co-operation projects in disaster preparedness and prevention, but subject to the same rules and procedures applied to other technical co-operation activities.

Finally, UNDRG could seek the advice of the Committee on such issues as policies and techniques for assisting in sudden natural disasters. In addition, the Committee could also help strengthen the modalities for co-ordination and co-operation within the U.N. system for such disasters. 42



It is within this framework, consisting of the ECOSOC, the ACC, and the Emergency Assistance Committee, that the issue of women in disaster management (the issue which would have been studied by the Commission on the Status of Women and the Institute for Humanitarian Affairs and International Research, INSTRAW and UNIFEM), would be translated into a need for action by the General Assembly through a renewed strength given to the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in emergency and armed conflict. There exists already a new resolution, 43/131 dated 8 December, 1988, on "Humanitarian Assistance to victims of natural disaster and emergency situations of the same nature". In this resolution, the ACC and the ECOSOC have shown their commitment to facilitate the co-ordination of programmes relating to the protection of women as well as to safeguard their right to receive proper assistance during the relief, reconstruction, prevention and preparedness phases of disaster management.

From a structural point of view, the Emergency Assistance Committee would form that essential co-ordinating link between UNDRO and the other organizations involved in the Disaster Management process, where UNDRO's role could be defined as either be the lead agency during disasters requiring a system-wide participation, or be the source of a complete data network that would keep track of all donations, their

sources and their method of distribution. This information would be accessible to all organizations, agencies, non-governmental organizations and voluntary agencies. The existence of this Committee within UNDR0, would mean that UNDR0 could remain the primary organization responsible for the co-ordination of humanitarian assistance, able to formulate guidelines and policies on the integration of women in disaster management that, through the Committee, would be applicable to all international, governmental and non-governmental bodies.

III. The third priority is, as we have already suggested, the improved co-operation between all U.N. system organizations, including non-governmental organizations (such as OXFAM) and voluntary organizations (such as the Red Cross Societies). In addition, however, the development of a successful solution at the national level would be required, since important responsibilities for relief co-ordination are exercised at the national level. As Macalister-Smith (1985) points out,

the ultimate results of co-operation and co-ordination achieved among international relief agencies depend considerably on the scope and effectiveness of national and co-ordinating mechanisms. National relief co-ordination between the national and international levels of activity in relief matters, and the specific aspects of co-ordination in the course of relief operation...
 ... National disaster co-ordinating offices established in many countries contribute to international relief co-ordination. In some countries the voluntary agencies active in foreign disaster relief have set up their own co-ordinating mechanisms often with the involvement of the National Red Cross Society...
 ... The failure of co-ordination in the disaster-affected country accounts for much of the confusion which may accompany relief operations in major disaster situations, although to some extent such confusion is by definition inherent in a disaster situation...
 ... The General Assembly has also repeatedly indicated the importance of potential recipient governments establishing disaster contingency plans, at the national and municipal (or village) level for a single national disaster relief co-ordinator. A particular function of such a co-ordinator is to facilitate the receipt of international assistance. 43

CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have considered how the actions of the disaster management mechanism should be co-ordinated, as well as how women's right to humanitarian assistance could be enforced. These two factors, combined have yet to be considered by international and national institutions participating in the Disaster Management process.

But, authors such as Frederick Cuny, author of the book Disasters and Development (1983) and a very well known expert on disaster relief, is of the opinion that

it is imperative that an intervenor attempting to conduct a relief or reconstruction program first identify the various coping mechanisms that exist, namely women and their social organizations, and understand their role in society. Municipal or village leaders could easily know what these coping mechanisms are, and could therefore keep in constant contact with these mechanisms, teaching them how to respond in disaster situations, thereby extending this knowledge to all members of each community. If this is not done, the international, or national, relief program could ultimately damage the coping mechanisms or substantially reduce their effectiveness.

Unfortunately, most intervenors, Cuny tells us, do not understand the role played by coping mechanisms in a culture. Many cannot even identify them, nor do they attempt to do so.

These same intervenors are often blinded to the long-term implications of a program by more obvious short-term emergency needs created by the disaster. In an attempt to meet the needs of victims, the time is not taken to identify or find out what is currently happening in the community. There is no collection of anthropological data or background information that would help in identifying coping mechanisms. In this sense, regional organizations, such as the Pan-Caribbean Disaster Preparedness and Prevention Project (PCDPPP),

created in 1979 following a series of disasters (a volcano eruption in St. Lucia, flooding in western Jamaica and a hurricane in the Dominican Republic) was created because the Caribbean governments, while recognizing their national responsibility to improve disaster preparedness measures, saw the need for mutual co-operation within the region as well as the necessity to tap expertise and specialized assistance from abroad.

The PCDFPP project will end in 1990, leaving a gap in the coordination of disaster management at the regional and national levels. Yet, the model of this project should be copied by all regions, since the existence of such a project in the Disaster Management process would help in expediting disaster relief aid, issuing warnings widely and rapidly, evacuating people quickly from the most vulnerable areas if necessary, establishing evacuation centres and feeding programmes, establishing co-ordination centres and emergency communication systems, and setting up damage assessment and reporting procedures. The objectives would be:

to promote and facilitate the adoption of preparedness and prevention measures at the national and regional levels, and in particular to a) help governments plan preparedness and prevention programmes based on existing threats and the impact of disasters on the development of the countries concerned. These include in particular the formulation of emergency plans, the setting up of relief co-ordination machinery and the application of prevention measures; b) to help governments implement preparedness and prevention programmes on the basis of priorities agreed upon and the availability of resources from within and outside the countries concerned; c) to provide a regional 'pool of expertise' for relief, co-ordinated by UNDRD whenever a disaster occurs anywhere in the regions; d) to periodically re-evaluate risks in the Caribbean on the basis of a new inventory of resources and progress made in disaster prevention and preparedness. 44

Therefore, the problem confronting the intervenors at the human level is how to identify the coping mechanisms that exist in society, of which women make up a great percentage, and how to relate outside help to these built-in response systems. Furthermore, says Cuny, "outside assistance must be provided in such a way as to encourage a collective response using these mechanisms." 45

International organizations should act in a way that their interventions will not cause a disincentive to self-help, nor should they undermine the confidence in the coping mechanisms, or destroy the development efforts of indigenous organizations.

The link we have made between the process of integrating women in the development process as well as the disaster management process is an appropriate one,

because the role of women in disasters is inextricably linked to the community. Community groups in general and women, in particular, have an important role to play in overall development. The focus placed on the role of women in disasters must in fact be seen as a strategic entry point for the greater developmental issue: the strengthening of community groups. Women must be seen both as a target group and as a resource group. Women's groups should be considered within the community at the individual, and family levels as well as at the managerial and political levels. It is in this way that the entire range of these resources will be fully maximized. Therefore, the gender focus in disaster management will be developed within the framework of the role of the community in general. However, the role of women in disasters has not been sufficiently explored and developed. This is contrary to the growing evidence that women are a force for development.

Throughout the 1980s, the responses of international organizations to disasters has experienced some development and some improvements. For example, the United Nations Children's Fund concentrates on the special needs of children and young mothers in disasters. UNICEF often programs, purchases, ships and assists with the internal distribution of a wide range of supplies

(including food) and equipment needed for relief operations. Its broad mandate and its special fund-raising capacities give it a flexibility that is unique among U.N. agencies. It is often the only U.N. agency with a complete in-country supply operation intact at the time of a disaster. UNICEF's public information resources have made it the best known U.N. agency and are often used to inform the public of the grim details of a disaster.

The Food and Agricultural Organization approves emergency aid provided through the facilities of its subsidiary organization, the World Food Programme. When a disaster occurs, FAO's Country Representative and in-country personnel advise the UNDP Resident Representative on emergency operations pertaining to food and nutrition and on the agricultural reconstruction and rehabilitation phase of an emergency, usually in a technical advisory capacity to the local government.

The World Food Programme provides emergency food and assists a government in receiving and distributing aid. The advice that the WFP gives to the UNDP Resident Representative and to the local government on emergency food needs created by a disaster is particularly important.

The World Health Organization advises the UNDP Resident Representative and the local government on the public health implications of a disaster and it approves

the furnishing of and (occasionally) purchases, and ships medical equipment and supplies for U.N.-assisted relief operations. WHO field teams and advisers may assist with emergency vaccination and treatment measures. Regional organizations such as the Pan American Health Organization helps it provide assistance to the Latin American and Caribbean nations.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees plays a major role among U.N. agencies, sometimes the only one, in human-caused disasters such as international and internal conflicts. The UNHCR also focuses on meeting the short- and medium-term needs (prior to resettlement) of refugees who have fled across national borders. Like UNICEF, UNHCR can raise some of its funds by direct solicitation.

The International Labour Organization deals with preparedness in creating emergency employment for victims who have lost their sources of income because their livelihoods were destroyed by the disaster (either directly or indirectly).

Yet, few agencies are taking steps to try and develop formal basic systems for relief management, in terms of creating a special office and special field teams that could evaluate the needs of the victims. But funding constraints have hampered the need to improve analysis of specific relief needs. One solution would be

to incorporate an independent centre for information dissemination into a relief program, as close to the field operations as possible. The costs of this, however, seem to be too high.

Even fewer agencies have undertaken to improve the distribution of aid so that all victims will benefit from international assistance, while integrating women into the disaster management system; by recognizing them as both victims and, most importantly, essential coping mechanisms in cases of disasters. Cultural stereotypes that prevent women from engaging in rescue, reconstruction, prevention and preparedness activities must be examined. Organizations such as UNICEF and WFP have shown some commitment to studying and responding to the special needs of women. UNHCR has made many declarations, but remains one of the organizations that has done little to integrate women into its management process. 46

In a special issue on "Women and the World Food Programme" in WFP News (April/June 1985), the agency promised to try to include more and more women in the planning and the implementation of its projects, and to continue its efforts to the year 2000 and beyond, recognizing that emergency assistance not only helps to meet immediate nutritional needs but can help displace persons to improve their living conditions, where women play an important role. 47

The United Nations system must not forget that it has a responsibility to the people it is meant to assist in disaster situations. Organizations and Specialized Agencies must be accountable to the victims of disasters, and not to the prestige of donors providing the financial and material assistance.

According to Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, one of the roles of the United Nations is to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems, including those of a humanitarian nature, and humanitarian assistance in cases of peacetime disaster certainly falls within its mandate. Therefore, as Dr. B. Jakovlevic, a specialist in the legal aspects of the right to humanitarian assistance, stated:

the U.N. cannot avoid its responsibility for improving co-operation in this field, and should undertake appropriate action, more energetically than up to this date (1987). Such actions should include efforts to have a joint effort on the part of the Red Cross, the U.N. and all others concerned to conclude an international agreement, or agreements, on humanitarian assistance, which would be vital for vast numbers of disaster victims requiring better, more efficient and more rational action, and would certainly contribute to the respect and exercise of some fundamental human rights. 48

Professor J. Patrlogic, author of the article "Protection from Disasters: a human right", argues that in the formulation of a global relief policy, the legal protection of those affected by natural disasters is a very important factor. As we have already mentioned, for

the assistance and protection of victims in disaster situations to be effective, it is necessary to promote and formulate a basic principle which derives from international co-operation and international solidarity. 49

The United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council have adopted important resolutions for ad hoc situations concerning assistance in natural disaster situations, and also resolutions which provide for the competencies and responsibility of the U.N. regarding assistance to, and protection of, those affected by disasters. After the establishment of UNDR0, a great number of resolutions reaffirmed respect for basic human rights in the protection of disaster victims. Resolutions adopted by other international agencies such as UNDP, WHO, FAO, UNICEF, WFP, the International Committees of the Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies are important in the field of assistance and protection of disaster victims.

Yet there is still a need for a unified analytical approach on the inter-relationships between international law and relief actions. It is this kind of instrumentality, says Prof. J. Patrnoic, which the international community needs today. He concludes that:

the dynamic pragmatic work and experience of UNDR0 and the League of Red Cross Societies, two very competent bodies in the relief field, will certainly indicate and help define the main problems and will gather momentum for a reaffirmation and possible codification of relief principles and rules which will reinforce the respect and protection of basic human rights of disaster victims 50,

and we would add, especially, the rights of women.

Women must be protected from the deprivation of traditional means of livelihood which results from environmental degradation resulting from such natural and human caused disasters as drought, floods, hurricanes, erosion, desertification, deforestation, inappropriate land use, and armed conflicts. These conditions have already forced a great number of poor women into difficult situations where critically low levels of water supplies, shortages of fuel, over-utilization of grazing and arable lands and population density have deprived them of their livelihood. The most seriously affected are the women in drought-afflicted arid and semi-arid areas in urban slums and squatter settlements. But, women in both developed and developing countries suffer from the degradation and pollution of their own environments.

Therefore, as soon as a government has called for emergency assistance, it is essential that the needs of women be considered at the onset of relief activities by both the international disaster management mechanism and the governmental mechanism which would consist of an

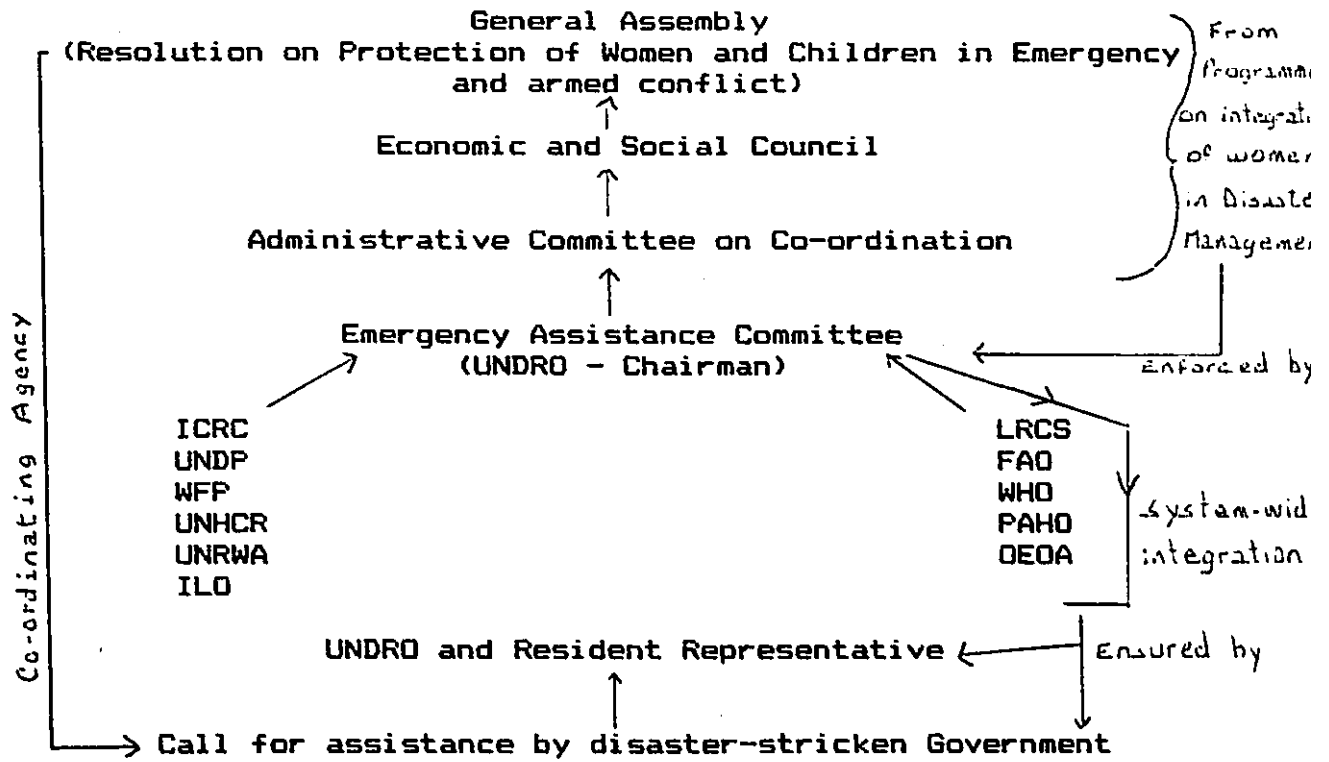
emergency planning office at the national and municipal (or village) levels.

In programmes and projects aimed at alleviating the plight of disaster victims, women have been involved to some degree in the implementation stage. There seems to be little recognition of the potential of the female resource for effective organized action at all levels of the planning and implementation process. The participation of women seems to be limited to the traditional roles of caring and nurturing.

It is at this initial point that the following four steps should be followed: (a) to consider an integral approach to programme planning to ensure that disaster related needs and concerns of women are built into all sectors; (b) there should be advocacy efforts within developed and developing countries to ensure that officials recognize and accept the centrality of women's role to the successful attainment of national disaster objectives and the organizations' or governments' serious commitment to women as active contributors to disaster management; (c) there must be some incentives for motivating recipient governments to address women and disaster concerns and to take effective action on their behalf; (d) the development of an accountability system within the organization to monitor the implementation performance of the women and disaster-policy directives in all organizational units and field offices. 51

Therefore, we suggest that the institutionalization of a program that would meet the needs of women in disaster situations, undertaken by national governments and international organizations studied, should be advocated through the use of existing structures including local women's organizations and international instruments that would serve to formally entrench women's interests and reinforce a concern for the status of women in general, as well as the specific situation they are faced with during a disaster. Instruments such as the Commission on the Status of Women, the Voluntary Fund for the Decade of Women (UNIFEM), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, must all have a role to play in the advancement of research and policy formulation on the conditions of women in disaster situations. Together with the co-ordinative help of the ECOSOC and the ACC these instruments could put pressure on the General Assembly to reinforce its own disaster response mechanisms which would also include an improved attitude towards the response to women's needs and concerns, which would, in the end, be translated into guidelines on disaster response and the right of every victim to benefit from proper assistance. This rethinking of the

Disaster Management process towards accountability to all those affected by disasters, emanating from the ECOSOC and the ACC, would be made applicable to all organizations and agencies through the Emergency Assistance Committee (chaired by UNDRO). (see next page)



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

We have attempted in this reasearch to examine the multilateral Disaster Management process from the point of view of women. We looked at the overall process in terms of its historical evolution, the dynamics that make it work, and its goals. This historical perspective set the tone for our study on how women could participate in such a process, and how their participation could be assured through current institutions that would represent women's interests.

If we were to look at each chapter point by point, the objective of chapter one was, firstly, to review the historical development of Disaster Management, from the creation of the International Relief Union in 1927 to the naming of the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Hazard Reduction, examining the creation and evolution of UNRRA, UNRWA, UNICEF, UNHCR, ILO, UNDP, WHO, PAHO, WFP, FAO, and UNDRO.

The central focus of this historical review was to study the dynamics of the United Nations current disaster management co-ordinating office, UNDRO, in reference to the history of Disaster Management, emerging from the effects of both world wars, and the need for a world-wide relief network for all displaced persons. We were able to

draw a pattern that explained why so many difficulties have arisen within UNDRO's exercise of its mandate, and within its relationship with other agencies and organizations. Among the most noticeable are: 1) UNDRO's lack of influence due partly to its financial weakness; 2) a lack of leadership among organizations and Specialized Agencies that not only leads to the duplication of efforts, but also to a lack of stated policy, either in the form of guidelines from UNDRO, an international conference or a General Assembly resolution, leaving organizations such as the FAO, WFP, UNDP and UNICEF without guidance as to their responsibilities and scope of action, even though each had signed a memorandum of understanding with UNDRO in the late 1970s.

In the second chapter, we attempted to review the dynamics of the United Nations interest in women's issues. We began with the creation of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1946, which set the pace for the promotion of equality between men and women in the world and within the UN structure in the 1950s and 1960s, followed by the promotion of the integration of women in the development of Third World countries, leading to the International Women's Year (1975) and the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985).

In studying these two factors, the history of disaster management and the creation of UNDRO, and the

history of the UN's interest in the status of women, we did not argue that the two dynamics followed the same logic even though they occur at the same time; but we do believe that eventually, the disaster management process, with UNDRD at its head, should give more attention to the conditions of women in disaster management, and work for the integration of women in the process.

We chose to look at the Disaster Management process and its failings from the point of view of women because, as we saw in our second chapter, the greatest percentage of victims of natural and human-caused disasters are women, who presently account for fifty percent of the population. And, although they have been recognized as crucial actors in the development process of their communities, they remain the most vulnerable group in the wake of all types of disasters because women's capacities in dealing with a disaster situation has been overlooked and in some cases undermined by traditional beliefs.

Based on the information gathered on women's general social and economic conditions throughout the world, we were able to distinguish between women's vulnerabilities and capacities at the physical/material, social/organizational, and attitudinal/motivational levels.

In raising the issue that the conditions of women in disaster management and their participation in the

administration of the process had been overlooked, we demonstrated through the roles they could undertake that it would be advantageous for international organizations, specialized agencies and voluntary organizations to take more measures to ensure that their disaster recovery, reconstruction and preparedness operations take women's needs into account and recognize the potential of women and their community groups or organizations, since these are often the first point of impact as well as the first level of response in the event of a disaster.

The Checklist used for the evaluation of development programmes is certainly applicable to disaster relief operations, in terms of establishing a form of evaluation for the actions taken by the disaster management network. It is as a direct result of our research on the conditions of women in disasters, and their lack of access to the Disaster Management network that we have established a need for a set of guidelines relating to the involvement of women in the management of the disaster relief process at the level of their communities and within the UN system. The guidelines we have offered are just draft guidelines that were drawn up at the conclusion of the Conference in the Caribbean in November 1989 on the Role of Women in Disaster Management; but they could certainly be used to form definite guidelines, which would greatly facilitate the co-ordination of disaster management operations, since it

would bring organizations and agencies together to agree on actions that should be taken in relation to victim accountability.

Finally, by confirming the existence of legislation and a Declaration on the protection of women and children in emergency and armed conflict, as well as resolutions on the human right of women to receive adequate assistance relative to their needs, we found that by calling for their reinforcement, as well as for the easing of tensions between organizations and agencies participating in the disaster management process, the UN should: a) consider an integral approach to programme planning to ensure that disaster-related needs and concerns of women are built into all sectors; b) have advocacy efforts within developed and developing countries to ensure that officials recognize and accept the centrality of women's role to the successful attainment of national disaster objectives and the organizations' or governments' serious commitment to women as active agents in their societies and communities and as active contributors to disaster management; c) encourage incentives for motivating recipient governments to address women and disaster concerns and to take effective action on their behalf; and d) develop an accountability system within the organization and government to monitor the performance of the implementation of women- and disaster- policy

directives in all organizational, governmental, and communal units and field offices.

LIMITS

Although the participation of non-governmental organizations, and voluntary organizations such as the League of Red Cross Societies, the International Red Cross Society and the Red Lion Societies, are very important to the mitigation of disasters and to the distribution of supplies - both medical and material - we have chosen only to mention their importance rather than describe in detail what their roles are, because our main focus is on the multilateral institutions of the United Nations as it is the largest disaster management network. This might have taken away from describing the effectiveness of the disaster management process since actions undertaken by non-governmental organizations are so essential to the process, but we had to establish some limits to the historical review and the dynamics of the disaster management process.

Secondly, more detail about the effects of disasters on women's conditions could have helped to give a better idea as to how much they really suffer, but this type of information has yet to be collected, and eye witness accounts were not possible.

Thirdly, the recommendations made in the fourth chapter as to how the integration of women in the disaster

management process could be achieved are not based on actual policies. However, we felt that solutions could be found at all levels of the process which, if put together, would greatly improve the operations. For example, the media could change its way of covering disasters and disaster relief by looking at the way its done, and not how many lives are saved; Secondly, the UN organizations and agencies involved in the process should all work in co-operation with each other, so that efforts are not duplicated, and each will give up some autonomy so that there can exist one co-ordinating agency that will mobilize, direct and co-ordinate the disaster management operations; Also, the guidelines offered by the Conference held in Trinidad late last year, could certainly offer a direction to future discussions on the possibility of integrating and, therefore, encourage the participation of women in the administration of disaster relief, reconstruction and preparedness operations.

Yet, it is crucial that a bottom-up approach be undertaken to disaster management. By this we mean, that women's groups and organizations, as the first units to react to a disaster, must be included from the very beginning in the: mobilization of the kind of relief that is appropriate to all victims, and where all benefit from assistance as a human right; in the directing of assistance to all disaster-prone zones; and in the co-ordination of relief, where each actor in the disaster

management process will recognize women and their groups as essential actors for the effective use and distribution of assistance.

Further limits were in the inaccessibility of some documents that are not provided to depositary libraries; missing documents; and, documents yet unpublished.

THE FUTURE

If we look to the future, the General Assembly resolution 42/169 dated 11 December, 1987 called for the naming of the 1990s as the International Decade for Natural Hazard Reduction. In this resolution, the General Assembly called on the international community, under the auspices of the United Nations, to pay special attention to fostering international co-operation in the field of natural disaster reduction. The objective of the Decade, according to a report of the Secretary-General - A/43/723 dated 18 October, 1988 - on the International Decade for Natural Hazard Reduction is to reduce through concerted international actions the loss of life, property damage and economic disruption caused by natural disasters, especially in developing countries. The goals of the Decade are:

a) to improve the capacity of each country to mitigate the effects of natural disasters expeditiously and effectively, paying special attention to assisting developing countries in the establishment, when needed, of early warning systems; b) to devise appropriate guidelines and strategies for applying existing knowledge, taking into account the cultural and economic diversity among nations; c) to foster scientific and engineering endeavors aimed at closing critical gaps in knowledge in order to reduce loss of life and property; d) to disseminate existing and new information related to measures for the assessment, prediction, prevention and mitigation of natural disasters; e) to develop measures for the assessment, prediction and mitigation of natural disasters through programmes of technical assistance and technology transfer, demonstration projects and education and training, tailored to specific hazards and locations, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes. 1

The report further states that the

Decade is envisaged as an international undertaking that will require the active support and participation of local communities (that would hopefully include women's groups), national authorities, regional organizations, and the international community as a whole, both governmental and non-governmental. The United Nations has a critical catalytic and facilitating role in inspiring and supporting these activities. In addition, the United Nations is called on to become an international centre for the exchange of information, the storing of documents and the co-ordination of international efforts. 2

However, the extent of the United Nations system's participation during the decade is still uncertain pending agreement on the appropriate framework. But its proponent is the United States National Academy of Sciences, of which participants to preparatory meetings include scientists and experts in the field of natural hazards and their effects, as well as national committees or other

official bodies that have been established by participating governments.

Although one would think that UNDR0 would be the driving force of the Decade, some believe that UNDR0 should not be made the Secretariat for the Decade, because such a responsibility would be too great, and that it should concentrate more on improving its capacities. However, if these groups of experts can come up with some solutions to mitigate the effects of natural hazards on the environment and on the populations they effect, UNDR0 should certainly be made aware of these improvements and use them in their preparedness operations throughout the world. 3

In addition, we believe that the example of the Conference on the Role of (Caribbean) Women in Disaster Management should be copied in every region: The Americas, Latin America, Asia, Africa, Scandinavia, the Middle East, Eastern and Western Europe, and Australia and New Zealand, so that all may define the needs of their own populations in disaster situations common to their regions, and what institutions, both local and national, exist so they may be able to participate to their maximum effectiveness in the disaster management process.

There have already been some improvements in preparing these different regions for disasters. In Asia, for example, the focal point for the disaster mitigation

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activities of UNDR0 is the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre. The Centre responds to the specific needs of countries in the region, providing services in training, information management, pre-disaster planning, the application of appropriate technology and public awareness programmes. In the Pacific, UNDR0 began to lay the groundwork for a disaster mitigation programme with discussions with government representatives, the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Co-operation (SPEC) and the regional UNDP Office at Fiji. The programme is meant to strengthen the capacity of the Pacific islands to cope with disasters, especially those caused by cyclones. The programme is to be established in the Fijis and to collaborate closely with the regional tropical cyclones project of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) based at Nadi, as well as with organizations providing bilateral disaster preparedness assistance in the region.

We are already familiar with the Pan Caribbean Preparedness and Prevention Project, whose mandate finishes in 1990 unless more funds and staff can be found. In Latin America, as a result of several volcano eruptions, earthquakes, landslides and floods, an increased awareness has translated into requests by governments for a regional disaster prevention and preparedness programme, with workshops and field training courses in preparing reliable hazard maps as an essential prerequisite to developing emergency plans. Financing has

come primarily from the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and the US Agency for International Development. In the Mediterranean, following a series of devastating earthquakes in the region in the last 10 years, countries have called repeatedly for concerted action to reduce earthquake losses, and to develop a regional co-operative project on seismic risk reduction. A project has been elaborated by UNDP and UNDRQ in co-operation with the UN Centre for Human Settlements (UNCSH), UN Environmental Program, UN Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), to assist the Mediterranean countries in developing and sharing innovative techniques for seismic risk assessment, mitigation and emergency planning. 4

If women and the institutions representing them could become part of this process, they would be able to offer advice and direction on ways to ensure not only the safeguard of household and agricultural property but also on ways to rebuild following a disaster according to women's specifications relative to their needs. Therefore, disaster mitigation, aid distribution and co-ordination could and should be made more accountable to the victims of natural and human-caused disasters, thereby making these processes more effective.

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SUMMARY

It will be the purpose of this thesis to study the roles of twelve United Nations Organizations and Specialized Agencies having Disaster Management responsibilities within their mandate. These organizations and agencies are: the International Relief Union, the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East, the UN International Children's Relief Fund, the UN Development Programme, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, the Pan American Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Food Programme, and the UN Disaster Relief Office.

Of specific interest to our study is the extent to which each organization and agency focuses on the needs and the role of women in Disaster Management and how this focus has or has not been included in their policies, rules and criteria for disaster-related activities. This focus of women stems from the perception that the role of women in disaster situations has yet to receive the attention it deserves. Women are potential resources that must not be overlooked, as it has been, in the policy-making of each of these organizations and agencies

pertaining to victim accountability in the preparedness, response and rehabilitation phases of Disaster Management.

It will be our objective to point out why this oversight exists, and determine what mixture of different factors have caused such a gap. Possible reasons are the lack of co-operation between these organizations and agencies; a shortcoming in the definition of the role of women in Disaster Management; the need for a new outlook on the Disaster Management process, one that would integrate women in the system through legislation drafted at the General Assembly such as the 1970 Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict) by all Member States, and translating this outlook into co-operative action through the UN program co-ordinating bodies (these bodies include the Economic and Social Council and the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination). There also seems to be a certain invisibility of the role of women because of a lack of accurate statistical data on the role of women in disaster-prone countries. Finally, there seems to be a problem on the part of the international and national organizations and institutions that whatever efforts are made, relief will eventually reach those who need it the most, hoping, also, that the recipient government will manage the relief supplies efficiently and equally, using women's local community groups, organizations and unions.

The thesis rests on the following hypothesis: that, without a better understanding of women's special needs and an awareness of the potential roles that women can play in Disaster Management, effectiveness and accountability in Disaster Management will remain unsatisfactory.

The thesis concludes that these next steps should be followed: a) to consider an integral approach to programme planning to ensure that disaster related needs and concerns of women are built into all sectors; b) there should be advocacy reports within developed and developing countries to ensure that officials recognize and accept the centrality of women's role to the successful attainment of national disaster objectives and the organizations' or governments' serious commitment to women as active contributors to Disaster Management; c) there must be some incentives for motivating recipient governments to address women and disaster concerns and to take effective action on their behalf; d) the development of an accountability system within the organization to monitor the implementation performance of the women and disaster-policy directives in all organizational units and field offices.