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Fifty-second session  
Agenda item 20 (a)

## Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance of the United Nations, including Special Economic Assistance: Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations

### Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 1995/56 of 28 July 1995, the Economic and Social Council decided to undertake a review of the capacity of the United Nations to respond to humanitarian crises and disasters. The Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive and analytical report on all aspects of the capacity of the United Nations system for humanitarian assistance. In its resolution 51/194 of 17 December 1996, the General Assembly endorsed the review called for by the Council and requested the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to contribute to the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General.

2. Pursuant to those resolutions, the United Nations humanitarian system has undertaken, over the past 18 months, an unprecedented effort to review the capacity of the United Nations system to address humanitarian crises. During the review, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee examined some of the central issues, in particular those relating to coordination, resource mobilization, internally displaced persons, evaluation, strengthening local capacity and relief and development linkages, and staff development. The conclusions emanating from this review will allow for a more strategic approach to humanitarian assistance which will, in turn, enhance effective response to humanitarian crises, allow for better focus on capacity-building, and increase linkages

with rehabilitation and recovery activities. Drawing upon the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee as well as past experience in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, the Secretary-General submitted an interim report to the Economic and Social Council in July 1997 on the review of the capacity of the United Nations system for humanitarian assistance (E/1997/98). In its decision 1997/218 of 17 July 1997, the Council took note of the report and requested the Secretary-General to present a more comprehensive report on humanitarian assistance to the Council at one of its subsequent sessions.

3. In his report on the reform of the United Nations (A/51/950), the Secretary-General included a number of proposals and actions that pertain to the humanitarian sector. Those reform measures aim primarily at strengthening the Office of the Emergency Relief Coordinator through enhanced focus on three core functions: policy development and coordination; advocacy of humanitarian issues; and coordination of humanitarian emergency response. They also address the functioning of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and field coordination arrangements, as well as the consolidated appeal process. It is expected that those proposals and actions, which relate to and would further

enhance the implementation of General Assembly resolution 46/182, will be considered by the General Assembly at its current session.

4. Therefore, in the context of his reporting on the follow-up to General Assembly resolution 46/182, the Secretary-General will report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session in 1998 on the implementation of the reform of the humanitarian sector of the United Nations as well as further progress by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in the strengthening of the capacity of the United Nations in humanitarian assistance.

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