

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATOR - UNDRO
INTERNATIONAL CIVIL DEFENCE ORGANIZATION
LEAGUE OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES

E M E R G E N C Y 8 4
2nd INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
ON DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RELIEF

GENEVA, 1 TO 4 OCTOBER 1984

COMPLETE RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS

GENEVA 1985

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Opening address	1 (1-3)
Mr. Hans Mumenthaler	
Welcome address	2 (1-2)
Mr. Pierre Wellhauser	
International Disaster Relief Coordination	3 (1-4)
Mr. M'Hamed Essaafi	
Trends and Developments in Emergency Relief	4 (1-3)
Mr. Hans Hoegh	
Programme and Scope of the Congress	5 (1-4)
Dr. Milan M. Bodi	
Buildings and Emergencies - Planning and Operations	6 (1-10)
Prefect Henri Rouanet	
Fire prevention and preparedness in high rise buildings and places of public assembly	7 (1-6)
Mr. Brian Collins	
Intervention of the Fire Brigade in high rise buildings	8 (1-5)
Mr. Duncan Mc Callum	
The indispensable human presence in the organization of high risk premises	9 (1-5)
Lt. Col. Jean-Paul Cherix	
Rescue and Evacuation Techniques and Management	10 (1-14)
Major General Mohamed Helmi Seddik	
Intervention in case of sea pollution by petrochemical products	11 (1-5)
Mr. J.W. Richardson	
The UISC-7 Airborne Disaster Intervention Detachment, Advanced element of a medical evacuation chain integrated into the general relief organization	12 (1-7)
Surgeon Lt. Col. Pierre Chevalier	
Disaster Medicine	13 (1-4)
Prof. Corrado Manni	
Disaster Medicine - Training of medical and ancillary personnel	14 (1-8)
Prof. Pierre Huguenard, Dr. C. Desfemmes, Dr. J.M. Abbeys	
WHO Emergency Health Kit - Standard drugs and clinic equipment for 10.000 persons for 3 months	15 (1-3)
Dr. S.W.A. Gunn	
Relief, Housing, Shelters	16 (1-7)
Mr. Hans Mumenthaler	
Housing earthquake victims - The Italian Experience	17 (1-2)
Prof. Francesco Polizzi	
Recommendations of Technical Committees	18 (1-3)
Statement on the conclusions of the Congress	19 (1-2)
Mr. Haroun Tazieff	
Closing address	20 (1-2)
Mr. Noureddine Ben M'Hidi	
List of the short statements presented in the Technical Committees	21 (1-2)

Editor :

Information Service of the ICDO, 10-12 chemin de Surville,
CH-1213 Petit-Lancy/Geneva, Switzerland

OPENING ADDRESS

by Mr. Hans Mumenthaler, Director of the Swiss Federal
Civil Protection Office, Berne

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Mr. Rudolf Friedrich, Federal Councillor and Chief of the Federal Justice and Police Department, I have the honour and the privilege of addressing you on the occasion of the opening of the Second International Congress on Disaster Preparedness and Relief.

The Swiss authorities are well aware of the importance of the activities you undertake in various ways on behalf of people in distress, and they welcome you most warmly. They thank the organizers for having chosen the city of Geneva as the venue of the Congress, and wish it every success.

In view of the growing interdependence of nations in a more and more vulnerable world, and of the scale of the tasks thus facing the agencies responsible for disaster relief, concerted action is obviously essential. In this connection, the regular exchange of information and experience is particularly important, and our gratitude therefore goes to the organizers of this second Congress.

We welcome the close and fruitful contacts which we have had the benefit of enjoying with them for many years. If more and more political leaders are today aware of the importance of effective civil protection, this is due in particular to the praiseworthy action of the International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO) and its unceasing effort to promote the training of specialists and encourage the establishment of suitable civil protection structures.

It is our hope that the results of the organizers' initiative and perseverance will live up to the expectations of all the participants here in Geneva.

As you know, Geneva is not only the European headquarters of the United Nations, after having been the birthplace of the League of Nations; it is above all and primarily the headquarters of many humanitarian organizations. One of these is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), founded in 1863 by Henry Dunant, whose mission is in particular to come to the assistance of victims of war, to disseminate knowledge about international humanitarian law, and to monitor compliance with the four 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols of 1977. Another leading organization is the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, established in 1919, which is a federation of some 130 national societies and as such co-ordinates disaster relief operations throughout the world; its great value is in encouraging the foundation and developing of new Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

It is above all through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that Switzerland maintains close relations with the various humanitarian institutions which are directly part of the United Nations, in particular the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food

Programme (WFP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO), which is one of the prime partners of the Swiss Disaster Relief Corps.

This list, by no means an exhaustive one, displays the international community's will to tackle the consequences of disasters of all kinds. It also underscores the need for the best possible co-ordination of the many forms of assistance and mutual aid in order to avoid duplication and, above all, to make the fullest use of available resources. Beyond encouraging and developing preventive measures by which disasters can as far as possible be forestalled, what is particularly important is to increase the speed with which action is taken in the event of disaster. UNDRO has an essential role to play in this respect. In particular, everything must be done to ensure that all the aid provided reaches the disaster victims by the shortest possible path, in other words, as rapidly as possible. Switzerland supports all efforts undertaken in this field, in particular by participating in the drafting of new conventions or the review of existing ones, and also by ensuring that they are implemented.

Switzerland devoted 125 million francs to humanitarian assistance in 1983 (and 113 million in 1982). In addition to relief operations in cases of natural disaster and armed conflict, the share of assistance for displaced persons and refugees is increasing. Africa alone now has more than 5 million refugees. The countries receiving them must themselves cope with a wide-ranging deterioration of their economic situation, all too often compounded by the effects of a catastrophic drought.

In 1983, the field of action of the Swiss Disaster Relief Corps was broadened; it can now call on over 950 volunteers, and possesses a large stock of material and equipment. Last year, about 145 volunteers were involved in relief operations in Equatorial Guinea (medical and sanitary aid), Ghana (refugee assistance), Guinea (earthquake), Italy (earthquake), Colombia (earthquake), North Yemen (earthquake), Burkina Faso (yellow fever epidemic), Peru (floods), South Yemen (floods), Chad (civil war, famine) and Turkey (earthquake).

At the same time, considerable financial resources were made available to Swiss charity organizations for emergency humanitarian action in 19 countries. Other relief operations were undertaken with the assistance of nine Swiss diplomatic missions.

As far as humanitarian law is concerned, Switzerland has always been keenly interested in the work of the Diplomatic Conference on the Reaffirmation and Development of International Humanitarian Law Applicable in Armed Conflicts. At the invitation of the Federal Council, the Conference met in Geneva on several occasions between 1974 and 1977 in order to supplement the 1949 Geneva Conventions with two Additional Protocols. It also played an active part in the drafting in 1980 of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Specific Conventional Weapons which are considered to produce excessively traumatic effects or whose action is indiscriminating.

However, while humanitarian assistance may temporarily mitigate major hardship, it cannot alone improve the victims' long-term situation. Switzerland therefore also supports efforts to eliminate the causes of the scourges plaguing mankind. Hence its policy with respect to development aid, the purpose of which is to provide financial and technical support

for countries which cannot meet the fundamental needs of their population through their own resources. Situated at the heart of Europe, and faithful to its policy of permanent and armed neutrality and its multicultural traditions, Switzerland also does everything within its means to encourage the search for peaceful solutions. To be specific, it strives to bring about the cessation of hostilities between two or more States by offering its good offices, to encourage the opening of negotiations or the use of any suitable means for the peaceful settlement of disputes, and to remedy their causes and their consequences. This also explains Switzerland's commitment to mutual understanding and disarmament in the framework of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Alongside its action in favour of peace outside its frontiers, Switzerland has the responsibility of ensuring the integrity of its territory and the welfare and safety of its people. It has therefore established a general defence system based primarily on the prevention of war (deterrence), the main pillars of which are military defence, civil protection and economic supply of the country. In addition to its contribution to deterrence, for example in the face of possible nuclear blackmail, Swiss civil protection is also designed to offer every inhabitant a chance of survival if the country were one day, despite itself, to be involved in a war, which is the worst of disasters.

Specifically, the main purpose of civil protection is to protect, safeguard and come to the assistance of persons and to protect property by measures aimed at preventing or mitigating the consequences of armed conflicts. It does not have a combat role. By stressing preventive measures in its preparations, Switzerland starts from the premise that it is more humane, as well as more economical, to avert the effects of weapons upon the population rather than to take action after the event in the form of medical and relief measures.

As a secondary role, Swiss civil protection may also be called upon to take action in the event of natural, industrial or other disasters to back up specialized personnel such as the firebrigade, police and hospital emergency services. In this context, civil protection action is also conceivable on behalf of disaster areas in border regions : for example, Switzerland has held talks with various neighbouring countries for this purpose.

I think that a regular exchange of information and experience concerning civil protection is also worth encouraging; it could deal, for example, with issues such as organization, education, equipment and civil protection installations. Here, as in other fields concerned with collective security, the final conclusion must be that the policy of "every man for himself" will not serve the cause of mankind.

I am therefore convinced that the work we shall jointly undertake over the next few days will represent a useful contribution to tackling the problems connected with disaster relief, whatever the causes and origins of the disaster.

WELCOME ADDRESS

by Mr. Pierre Wellhauser, Chief of the Department of Interior
and Agriculture of the Republic and Canton of Geneva

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am particularly happy to welcome you very warmly on behalf of the Geneva authorities. Your presence here confirms Geneva's international role in the service of the world and of nations.

At the crossroads of ideas, at the centre of world political and economic problems, Geneva is also by tradition the host of international conferences and congresses concerned with the defence of mankind, whether against possible natural disasters or against the dangers created by man's own genius which, it must be confessed, can be destructive.

This is the second time that an international congress on disaster preparedness and relief has been held, in the framework of Emergency 84, side by side with an international exhibition of a wide range of equipment and supplies. I wish to stress the spirit of co-operation shown by all those responsible for organizing your Congress. In this connection, I wish to welcome the participation of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator, the International Civil Defence Organization and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. By combining their expertise and experience, these three organizations have made it possible to hold this Congress of worldwide importance concerning disaster preparedness and relief, a burning issue if ever there was one, since an essential feature of a disaster is that it occurs with brutal suddenness, and in most cases absolutely unexpectedly.

In the past, with the exception of wars which were, and continue to be, the worst of calamities for mankind, disasters were connected with a natural upheaval; earthquakes, epidemics, tidal waves and floods were the main dangers.

Today, there is also the prodigious technological development of our world which, while considerably improving mankind's living conditions, has none the less multiplied the sources of disasters.

The media regularly inform us of calamities which have occurred throughout the world as a result of transport accidents; fires at oil-storage depots, disastrous pollution or dam failures. This list should also include the dangers inherent in terrorism, whose means of destruction in our high-technology societies can cause irreparable harm.

In Geneva, disaster relief was organized nearly 10 years ago, and is based on two pillars. The first consists of permanent relief services, comprising the police, fire brigade and hospitals. These organizations, which can act immediately as they are on a permanent footing, have modern equipment and professional staff. The second is civil defence. This institution is part of our country's over-all defence system, and is intended to protect the population in case of war and to provide the necessary assistance. In collaboration with other national services, its objective is to ensure the survival of as much of our population as possible.

It has a large amount of equipment, a staff now numbering some 22,000 persons for a population of 360,000 inhabitants, shelters capable of holding 90 per cent of our population, and protected hospitals doubling our capacity to treat victims, and thus provides the support necessary to enable a serious event to be dealt with effectively.

To enable our civil defence organization to fulfil this role, in Geneva it has been endowed with resources over and above those stipulated by the Confederation. For example, it has a helicopter, command vehicles, vans capable of transporting more than 100 casualties simultaneously, and a mobile plant for the treatment and bagging of storable drinking water in the event of a breakdown of normal distribution systems.

Preparedness to act in case of disaster, however sophisticated, cannot be enough to ensure the safety of the population. Preventive safety measures must be the main concern of the authorities at all levels, as obviously they alone, whatever their cost, can ensure the saving of lives.

I wish to congratulate the organizers of this Second International Congress on Disaster Preparedness and Relief, which will allow you to compare your expertise and experience. All nations have learned the importance of uniting their efforts to protect life and offer their peoples the essential conditions for survival in case of disaster or danger threatening human lives. If, unfortunately, conflicts cause innocent victims, it is our duty to demonstrate our readiness to do everything to ensure that human lives everywhere are protected, preserved and safeguarded.

I hope that Geneva will provide a propitious setting for your work, and that your activities will strengthen international solidarity in the face of the dangers potentially threatening our peoples.

I hope that in the spirit which unites you, nations will remember the humanist causes they intend to serve. For today, like tomorrow, the fragility and the reality of human happiness depend on the sufferings which the men, women and children of the entire planet can be spared.

Therefore, it is in a hopeful spirit that I welcome the work you are about to undertake and the effects of whatever actions you are able to co-ordinate. Once again, I thank you and welcome you, ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva.

INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF COORDINATION

by Mr. M'Hamed Essaafi, UN Under-Secretary General,
Disaster Relief Coordinator

It is a particular pleasure for me to be able to welcome once more the many distinguished delegates who have come from all over the world to exchange information and experience on disaster relief and preparedness.

The last Congress, held just two years ago, was so great a success that many who had taken part asked if another similar event could be arranged. Even more positively, it was suggested that future conferences should concentrate upon specific topics.

I am pleased to note that this Second Congress, moreover, has attracted even wider attention throughout the world. When I spoke to the Congress in 1982 I outlined our mandate and activities over the first decade since the establishment of UNDR0 in 1972. For the benefit of those of you who were not here on that occasion, I should just like to recall that the Office has three main tasks covering the first three stages of the disaster management cycle. These are (a) relief co-ordination : to ensure that, in case of disaster, the emergency relief activities of all donor sources are mobilized and co-ordinated so as to supply the needs of the disaster-stricken area in a timely and effective manner; (b) preparedness : to raise the level of pre-disaster planning and preparedness, including disaster assessment and relief management capability in disaster-prone developing countries; and (c) prevention : to promote the study, prevention, control and prediction of disasters, including the collection and dissemination of information concerning relevant technological developments.

In exercising its mobilization and co-ordination function, my Office works in close co-operation with the organizations of the United Nations system, and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in humanitarian relief, in particular with the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (LRCS) and the International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO). Their information is vital, particularly in the early stages of disaster, as Civil Defence Organizations and National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the disaster-stricken country are usually the first to be put into operation.

In the afflicted country itself, as indeed in most developing countries, there are representatives of the major UN agencies, diplomatic missions of potential donor countries, and representatives of one or more international voluntary agencies. The UN staff can be called together to help in the assessment of damage and needs, and can be reinforced by staff from UNDR0.

However, on this occasion I wish particularly to concentrate on the broad social and economic impacts of disasters and the scientific and technological means to mitigate if not actually to prevent them.

Numerous disaster statistics provide convincing evidence of rapidly mounting human and material losses due to extreme natural phenomena, thus calling for an intensification of all possible efforts to reduce and where possible eliminate such losses.

Current figures point to the dominance of tropical cyclones and severe local storms, earthquakes and floods among most hazardous natural events. A preliminary review by UNDRO of human global and economic losses between 1970 and 1981 provides the following total figures :

windstorms	354,000 deaths and 12.7 billion dollars of material damage
earthquakes	442,000 deaths and 18.6 billion dollars of material damage
floods	64,000 deaths and 9 billion dollars of material damage.

It is well known that some man-made disasters, such as traffic accidents and fires, may at times exceed the annual losses reached by natural disasters, but the two categories of disaster differ in frequency and their overall characteristics. I shall confine myself, for my part, to natural disasters and their mitigation or prevention.

An increasingly attractive method of planning to reduce the risks of disasters is to construct scenarios for various types of events and their probable consequences. For instance, the death toll for Los Angeles county has been estimated at 10,000 to 23,000, should a large close-by earthquake occur during the day time. Hospitalized injuries would be four times larger. The losses to single family dwellings alone would amount to 1.5 to 2.5 billion dollars, and total building losses (including loss of contents) might range between 17 and 69 billion dollars.

The destruction of buildings by hurricanes in the USA is expected to grow from two billion dollars in 1980 to about five billion dollars annually in the year 2000. One shudders to think what these losses will amount to at a static level of protection. Extremely large hurricanes as single events can produce even more damage relatively speaking, for example hurricane Betsy in 1965 caused economic losses totalling 1.4 billion dollars. The agricultural losses in Haiti from Hurricane Allen in 1980 amounted to 250 million dollars, which corresponded to 21 per cent of GNP for that year. In the small island of St. Lucia losses actually exceeded the GNP by 43 per cent. Historical records of human losses due to hurricanes in the West Indies indicate figures such as 9,000 victims in Martinique in 1780, 3,000 in Puerto Rico in 1899, 4,000 in Cuba and Haiti in 1963 and many more. The total historical fatalities in West Indies have been estimated at 31,000 from hurricanes, 30,000 from volcanic eruptions and 16,000 from earthquakes.

Damage scenarios for developing countries provide some alarming figures when extrapolated from losses experienced in the past, and taking into account population growth, urbanization and increasing concentrations of human activities. For instance, an earthquake similar to that which occurred in 1746 off the Peruvian coast would, with the present distribution and concentration of population probably cause some 385,000 deaths, mainly in Callao and Lima, and largely because of a tsunami wave which would reach a height of 20 to 30 m. Four million people would be homeless.

Such simulation exercises or scenarios, often using modern computer technology, provide governments with essential data for effective pre-disaster planning for large urban areas. The problem lies in the effective application of such simulations to public policy and practical measures to reduce risks.

Natural processes are governed by physical laws and tend to establish a certain balance of forces after every disruption of the environment. However, man tends to interfere with these natural processes; and his interventions, motivated not only by elementary needs for food and housing but also by acts of violence and war can be most damaging. The extent of human intervention is constantly growing, and some of its consequences are disastrous, particularly regarding changes in the environment. Desertification, flooding, air and water pollution, to mention but four, have reached an alarming state within the very short interval of the last two decades. Problems of natural and man-made hazards and the reduction of their consequent losses, that is to say risk are usually highlighted after disasters, and manage to attract public and political attention and we should make maximum use of this awareness period. It is evident from all analyses that disaster risks are increasing because greater and greater numbers of people are being exposed to hazards, not only because of an increase in global atmospheric circulation or of earthquake or volcanic activity, but because of an expansion of towns and new settlements for industrial installations in disaster-prone regions.

The rapid growth and spread of population in hazardous areas is contributing to the mounting costs of disasters in terms of loss of life and damage to property and investment. Many developing countries double their populations every 20 to 25 years (assuming national population growth rates of 2 per cent to 3 per cent); the urban populations of these countries even double every 12 to 15 years (assuming urban growth rates of 4 to 7 per cent).

The rate of expansion of slums and squatter settlements around major urban agglomerations is even larger, growing at about twice the average urban rate. In settlements such as these there is a doubling of population every 5 to 7 years. Densities are usually very high : up to 100,000 persons per km² and more.

In assessing the interaction between disasters and development, however, direct loss of function or investment is not the only disaster-related criterion to give cause for concern. There are chains of secondary effects which in the long-run can lead to irreparable national economic damage : loss of production and income, loss of serviced land, deterioration of certain natural resources, pollution, etc.

Some hazards can be eliminated or modified, others are beyond control of man. However, something can always be done to reduce expected losses through adequate efforts of prevention and preparedness. Prevention includes technical as well as social and legislative measures, including, of course the use of new technologies. If I may illustrate : growing industrialization and the migration of populations towards urban centres mean that an earthquake to-day might destroy 50 per cent of all property and dislocate a similar proportion of industrial production for several years, whereas 80 years ago, in what was then a primarily agricultural community the same earthquake would have damaged but 5 per cent of the total property and affected no more than 5 per cent of the gross national product. Conversely, hurricanes which have a disastrous effect on many crops, and hence on an economy based primarily on agriculture, are less likely to cause a major or protracted disruption of industry unless they

are accompanied by severe flooding. The general conclusion is that the move to masonry construction and to industrialization has resulted in a diminished degree of exposure to hurricanes, but conversely in greatly increased exposure to earthquake risk.

The ability to predict destructive events has improved considerably in recent years, particularly with respect to hurricanes. Within the last decade, routine monitoring by satellite, as well as by radar stations has increased the probability of successful early warning for this hazard to virtually 100 per cent. Accurate forecasts give at least 24 hour advance notice of the arrival time and scale of the expected damage. Thus, in the future, loss of life from hurricanes is likely to be greatly reduced.

Scientific methods have been applied to the prediction of volcanic eruptions in the last few decades, and there have been major improvements in the ability to detect precursors, although considerable uncertainty remains as to how far and how fast an abnormal situation will escalate. Earthquakes remain the only essentially unpredictable event, although the installation over the last few years of sophisticated monitoring systems on the continents and on the sea bed has provided some promising results for the significant improvement of earthquake prediction towards the end of this century.

Once again let me stress the fact that during the last few decades science has advanced sufficiently rapidly to provide us with new tools for disaster prevention and most certainly mitigation. However, much of the new body of knowledge is not being applied to the disaster management cycle, sometimes for lack of financial or human resources, but largely because of lacunas at the managerial and political levels in grasping the importance and role of science and technology.

It is evident that coherent disaster management policies are required both at the country and the international levels.

The present conference and exhibition, I am convinced, is one of the ways in which to reach this goal, namely by the encouragement to apply the latest scientific and technological achievements to selected fields of prevention, preparedness and relief, such as fire prevention and preparedness, rescue and evacuation, disaster medicine and emergency shelter. I hope that we all, as was the case during Emergency 82, benefit from this opportunity, in the interests of those who are threatened by calamities and that "Emergency 84" will contribute to increase public awareness of the vital importance of disaster preparedness and prevention.

TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN EMERGENCY RELIEF

by Mr. Hans Hoegh, Secretary General of the League of
Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is bar graph hanging on one wall of my outer office, showing the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' emergency relief actions since the beginning of the 1960s.

The graph is there partly for visitors. I want them to be able to see at a glance the increasing demand for League help in all kinds of disaster situations. I also want them to see how the demand has changed : for instance, drought relief actions have more than doubled since the 1960s, and floods - the type of emergency we face most often - occur twice as frequently in the 1980s as they did in the 1960s.

But I also keep the graph for myself. When I look at it, it reminds me that the League's disaster relief involvement is growing. In 1983 the League launched 48 appeals, twenty-two more than in 1982. It coordinated 68 operations for natural disaster victims or refugees, most of them in developing countries. It gave assistance to more than 5 million people worldwide.

It is the human factor which sticks in my mind : 5 million people helped in one year alone.

If I had to sum up the Red Cross/Red Crescent approach to emergency relief it would be with one rule : the victims must come first.

We must make sure that the victim receives not only what he or she needs, but also what is in the victim's best interest.

I am not merely repeating the obvious. I am talking about a marked trend away from donor-oriented relief operations and towards victim-oriented actions.

Of course, it would be better if we could prevent disasters altogether. A recent study by the Swedish Red Cross sums it up well : prevention is better than cure. Unfortunately, there is no immediate likelihood of preventing disasters, and our emergency relief actions will continue. So to that topic I return.

When we say that the victim must come first, we put special emphasis on the need for appropriate medical supplies, food, and services; we also place a premium on speed.

Let me talk about each of these areas in turn. Many of you may remember that on October 30, 1983, a very severe earthquake hit Erzurum province in Turkey. A League disaster relief standby team and tons of aid were rushed into the area.

After the initial period of confusion, we learned that at a conservative estimate, 1,000 kgs of drugs donated to this action turned out to be unusable.

They were unusable for various reasons. In some cases, they were out of date. In others, the labels were in languages nobody could read. In still others, drugs carried only the manufacturers' trade names, of which there are literally thousands, and disaster workers in the field far from an extensive medical reference library had no practical way of telling what they had received.

The only useful thing to do with donations like that is to burn them.

The most unfortunate thing is that these donations came in even though we have been taking a very hard line about medical supplies in general and especially drugs.

We have insisted that donors not send in any such supplies unless they coordinate with the League. Had that been done in Turkey, we would have refused to accept the useless drugs.

We also insist that any medical supplies donated appear on the World Health Organization Recognized Standard Lists A, B and C. Again, many did not, meaning that they were probably not adapted for use in a disaster relief action in any case.

We demand that drugs arrive in the country of use at least six months before their expiry date.

And last, we insist that donors label drugs with the generic name - of which there are only a few hundred, well known to doctors all over the world - and that all medical supplies carry labels that the people using the supplies will be able to read.

You now perhaps begin to understand what I mean when I tell you that putting the victim first represents an important trend and not just a platitude. People do not like to have donations refused. I have received everything from uncomprehending stares to nasty letters because League Officers have politely but firmly said to medical supply donors, "We don't want this. Take it back".

Unfortunately, the problem shows every sign of persisting. But we have no intention of giving in, either, and eventually we will make sure everyone understands.

Let me now talk for a few moments about food. The League is of course not involved in disagreements about long-term food aid, since our action is usually confined to the emergency phase of a disaster. In spite of that, inappropriate food can still pose problems.

If you follow League appeals, you will notice that as often as possible we ask for cash for local purchase of emergency food. Where food isn't locally available, we always try to buy supplies from as close to the scene as it can be found, to ensure they fit into the victim's ordinary eating pattern.

Anyone with any experience in disaster relief knows why : you do the victim no service by giving him food he finds too strange to eat. Nor do you help by providing food that he will like, but can no longer have once the disaster relief workers have left.

In practical terms, that means that we will not allow generous donations of candy bars. And I assure you we have been offered them.

In addition, we contend with religious and social custom. In a Moslem nation, for example, people will not knowingly eat pork; to provide it defeats the purpose of an emergency relief action.

I now turn to the services we provide for disaster victims. But with an apology : the topic is so vast and so complicated that it would take days to analyse it in detail.

The essential point, though, can be made in very few words the relief action must be adapted to the victim's culture and way of life.

In Pakistan, where we have long been cooperating with the Red Crescent Society in a relief action for refugees from Afghanistan, we make sure that medically trained women - nurses or doctors - are on hand to treat refugee women who become ill or need attention.

The refugees are largely nomads, with a way of life going back to before the time of Christ. In their world, a man may not approach a woman who does not belong to his extended family group. Under most circumstances a woman, no matter how sick, will not seek help from a male doctor.

The League works very hard to adapt to the cultures of the countries in which its National Societies call on it for assistance ...

Last, I want to emphasize the importance of speed. Victims need emergency aid most during the critical first few hours after most types of natural disaster.

To an extent, that holds true even for the silent disaster, drought. It takes time for a drought to build up to a critical stage, but once that happens, speed is just as important as it is following a flood or an earthquake.

When Cyclone Kamisy struck the island of Madagascar last October, the League Disaster Standby Team from the Netherlands Red Cross reached the scene with a first load of supplies inside of forty-eight hours after the initial alert.

They received high praise from the Government and in the press, who were grateful for the help they brought. You may think we can never beat a record like that, but we are trying. And we will succeed. Why ? - The victim must come first.

Emergency relief has value only if we hold to that rule. If we bear it in mind, we can hope to live up to our ideals.

PROGRAMME AND SCOPE OF THE CONGRESS

by Dr. Milan M. Bodi, Secretary General
of the International Civil Defence Organization

In Spring 1981, the organizers of the EMERGENCY 82 Exhibition of equipment, supplies and services for disaster preparedness and relief approached UNDRO (Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator), the League of Red-Cross and Red-Crescent Societies and the International Civil Defence Organization with a view to enhancing the presentation of equipment, etc., on the various stands by the holding of an international Congress bringing together representatives of authorities and institutions whose relief activities specifically need up-to-date equipment and facilities to ensure optimum effectiveness. This was the origin of the International Congress on Disaster Preparedness and Relief which provides an opportunity for all concerned with saving human life, especially the three above-mentioned international organizations, each in its own field of action, to pool their views and experience. The originality and impact of this exhibition, unusual for its tripartite form, stem from the deliberate adoption of this approach, which obviates any risk of duplication of activities or competition. On the contrary, the aims of these three organizations are complementary to such a degree that if any one of them failed to respond to a call from a stricken country to the international community for help in a major disaster, the relief mechanism would be affected to the detriment of the people who were the victims.

Before saying a few words about these three organizations, I think I may speak for all in paying tribute to the tripartite organizing committee, which has been good enough to entrust me with co-ordinating its work and without whose support this Congress could never have taken place, let alone been the major event you can all see it is or had the kind backing of the Swiss federal, cantonal and communal authorities, to whom our warm thanks are due.

First I would mention UNDRO, the United Nations co-ordinating body, dealing with Governments through the intermediary of the representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP for short) in their respective countries and seeking at that level the most appropriate ways and means to co-ordinate the efforts of governmental and non-governmental bodies bringing help to afflicted countries. As for the League, which as its name indicates embraces in its membership the national Red-Cross and Red-Crescent societies, it is one of the vital instruments of charitable and humanitarian action in any kind of relief work, and has the advantage of very long experience since it is now more than a century old. Mr. Essaafi and Mr. Hoegh have in their addresses given you fuller details about the activities of their organizations.

./.

Now, in presenting to you the International Civil Defence Organization, I should like to quote from the preamble to its Constitution, which gives it the status of an intergovernmental body and to which many Governments, including those of the Third World, have acceded with praiseworthy confidence and determination. This preamble specifies the fundamental tasks devolving on ICDO : to promote, intensify and co-ordinate on a world-wide scale the development and improvement of organizations, means and techniques for preventing and reducing the consequences of natural and technical disasters in peacetime or the use of weapons in time of conflict.

In the sphere of international meetings and relations, ICDO has since 1958 organized world conferences on the general problems of Civil Defence and international technical conferences on specific problems such as the protection of buildings, radiological protection, mass medical treatment of injuries, which have a direct bearing on the protection of people and their possessions.

The first attempt, in 1982, of our three organizations to pool our efforts, experience and world contacts was a success; it enabled us to bring together the authorities and experts responsible for protection and relief in more than 60 countries, with a plurality of opinions but the common denominator of a global approach to "Disaster preparedness and relief".

For this second edition, EMERGENCY 84, at which 88 countries are represented (on the same theme of disaster preparedness and relief), it was decided to focus the issue on a more specific general topic, that of the roof under which we live and work and spend our time, by discussing : "BUILDINGS AND EMERGENCIES - PLANNING AND OPERATIONS", a broad theme embracing four subsidiary topics whose main aspects will be dealt with in Technical Committees : 1. Prevention and preparedness; 2. Rescue and evacuation; 3. Disaster medicine; and 4. Relief proper, including emergency housing.

These are the four essential components of any co-ordinated action by relief bodies, whether they be the Civil Defence or fire-fighting services, the Red-Cross and Red-Crescent relief units, aid and rescue groups, or emergency services, in urban or rural areas and on land or at sea.

The subject of emergency housing has been intentionally extended to cover underground buildings, shelters and other Civil Defence installations because - Switzerland, host for our three organizations and for this Congress, has deservedly won world acclaim by its provision for the survival of the population in an emergency. That too is why visits to Geneva Civil Defence installations are included in the programme for after the closure of the Congress on Thursday, 4 October, starting at 2 p.m.

./.

In this connection I should like to draw the attention of representatives to the pink sheet contained in the file issued to them by the Congress secretariat and, regarding the visit to the Civil Defence training centre, with a demonstration by the Rescue Dogs Unit, to remind them that coach tickets will be on sale at the Congress secretariat up to 6 p.m. this evening to facilitate the transport arrangements.

While I am on the subject of the programme and time-table, it may be helpful also to recall that this evening at 6 p.m., in the "Salève" restaurant, on the same floor as the secretariat and the Exhibition, the authorities of the Republic and Canton of Geneva and of the City of Geneva are holding a reception in honour of Congress participants. An invitation to the reception is contained in the file, but if any of you have lost it you can just come wearing your badge. Incidentally, the badge has to be worn for attendance at all the events; it also gives free entry to the EMERGENCY 84 Exhibition, which opens tomorrow morning. The Exhibition can be visited during the intervals provided for in the programme for tomorrow and the next day, and also on 5 October, as the Exhibition will go on for one day longer than the Congress.

On Tuesday 2 and Wednesday 3 October the Technical Committees will hold their meetings simultaneously here in Room A and in Room B next door, as shown in the programme.

The Committees will begin their work at 9 a.m. sharp with two technical papers, followed by a half-hour recess at about 10.30 a.m. During the interval representatives will be served coffee in the bar at the entrance to the Exhibition, which is on the same floor as the Congress secretariat and the restaurant. After the morning recess, at a time to be decided by the Committee Moderator, the second part of the morning will be devoted to short statements (15 minutes each) and discussions. The statements will be delivered in the same order as the printed abstracts in the booklet issued to participants. The afternoon meetings will begin at 2 p.m. according to the programme, with a half-hour tea break.

Speakers who have announced their intention to show films or slides are invited to hand them to the operator before the beginning of the meeting, indicating clearly the title of the paper they are to accompany.

Lastly, regarding the plenary closing meeting to be held here in Room A on 4 October, Mr. Haroun Tazieff, the French Secretary of State for the Study and Prevention of Major Natural and Technological Hazards, has informed us that barring some last-minute difficulty he will be taking part. He will speak after the Moderators of the four Technical Committees have submitted the conclusions and recommendations of their respective Committees. The closing meeting will then proceed in accordance with the programme. I hope that the consolidated findings of the Committees will result in concrete recommendations and proposals which can be accepted and put into effect by the greatest possible number of responsible bodies.

In conclusion I should like on behalf of my Organization, as its Secretary General, and on behalf of Mr. Nouredine Ben M'Hidi, President of the ICDO Executive Council, who is with me on the platform, to appeal to you all to ensure that Civil Defence, too often misinterpreted or misunderstood, becomes through your efforts more widely accepted throughout the world and receives the necessary legal and administrative backing to be able to channel and distribute in an orderly, methodical and efficient way the assistance offered by the Office of the Relief Coordinator, with the legendarily dedicated participation of the League and its powerful national societies, wherever an unfortunate country stricken by a major catastrophe finds itself obliged to appeal for help to the international Community.