

Canadian Statement to the Second Committee  
44th General Assembly on Items 25, 88(a) and 153

25 October 1989  
delivered by Jerry Kramer (Counsellor)

Mr Chairman,

I take the floor briefly to speak about the international decade for natural disaster reduction, the problem of flooding in Bangladesh and emergency assistance to the Sudan.

My delegation joins earlier speakers in extending condolences to the many victims of natural disasters which have recently affected numerous countries. These events have brought home very clearly the importance of the objectives which the General Assembly set out in Resolution 42/169 for an International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. During this General Assembly our task will be to define the scope of the Decade, the machinery required to support it and the role of the United Nations system. I wish today to signal the support of my delegation for the proclamation of the Decade and our intention to work constructively with other interested delegations in finalizing the mandate of the Decade.

We owe our thanks to the ad hoc Group of Experts which put forward important proposals concerning the functioning of the Decade as well as to the U.N. Steering Committee, the interagency working group and to the Secretariat working in association with UNDRR for their efforts in developing our thinking on priorities for the 1990s. The work done so far has heightened awareness of the fact that the negative impact of certain natural phenomena can indeed be mitigated by the application of predictive technology, improved construction design and other measures. The fact that the human and social cost of disasters so often falls on economically vulnerable communities and on the geographically disadvantaged, underscores the need for urgent supportive action.

We appreciated the report of the Secretary General made available just before the summer session of ECOSOC because it put forward organizational arrangements that situate the support structure for the Decade more directly within the UN system, partly by including UN experts in the IDNDR Committee, maintaining the UN steering committee under