

## Accomplishments of the UN and Its Specialized Agencies

### A. International agreements and standards

1. Concerning the peaceful uses of outer space: Four legal documents have evolved covering exploration and use of outer space, the rescue and return of astronauts, liability for damage caused by space objects, and registration of objects launched into outer space.
2. International efforts to control drug abuse: The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) consolidated "traditional narcotics" agreements; abuse of newly developed drugs led the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs to draft a new agreement, adopted in 1971, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances.
3. Facilitating international communications: The Universal Postal Union and the International Telegraph Union make international mail, telephone, telegraph, radio, and television systems possible. Through the ITU an international system of frequency allocations and broadcast standards and regulations has been agreed to, bringing order to a complex technical field.
4. International civil aviation: The ICAO has persuaded member states to upgrade airport security to combat terrorism; it is also promoting international standards on control of aircraft noise and aircraft engine pollution.
5. Food standards: The FAO's Codex Alimentarius Commission is the only international body setting criteria for fish products -- and the United States imports 70-80% of the fish we consume.

### B. Direct emergency services to people

1. Under conditions of war and civil disturbance: UN agencies have attempted to provide food, shelter, and medicine to civilian populations caught up in war and civil strife, events that

have extended over several months. In the case of Lebanon the numbers of people helped were measured in the thousands; in Bangladesh, during the period leading to that country's independence, in the millions.

2. Under conditions of natural disaster: Some of the worst disasters of modern times have hit some of the poorest countries. The UN has rushed help to people hit by earthquakes in Peru, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Indonesia, and Turkey; to victims of floods in the Philippines and Pakistan; and to millions of (then) East Pakistanis overwhelmed by one of history's worst calamities, the tidal wave of 1970.
3. In the aftermath of disaster: One disaster can trigger another. The East Pakistani tidal wave contaminated surface water supplies, setting off a severe cholera epidemic. UNICEF began a project to install new wells (100,000) and recondition old ones (60,000), improving permanently the health standards of millions of persons.
4. Help for refugees: UNRWA helps 1-1/2 million persons dislocated by the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has worked with millions more, resettling refugees from Indo-China, Cyprus, and southern Africa.

C. Long-term benefits to all mankind

1. Stimulating international trade and development: In the age of interdependence the American economy (and those of other industrial countries) is linked to the economies of the developing world. By helping developing nations uncover \$20 billion worth of mineral deposits, UNDP has aided not only those countries where the sites are located, but has increased known mineral reserves worldwide.
2. Preserving the world's cultural heritage: The roots of our civilization extend across the centuries. Monuments of the past offer us insights into mankind's cultural origins and



development and, where preserved, form part of the heritage we bequeath the future. All people benefit from UNESCO's work in salvaging the Nubian monuments as have the people of Egypt.

3. Conquering disease: In the Middle Ages successive smallpox epidemics ripped apart the fabric of European civilization. In our own day hundreds of thousands have died around the globe, despite the availability of an effective vaccine. The United States alone spent \$120 million each year on surveillance, vaccinations, and quarantine measures. However, a 10-year campaign by the WHO, costing about \$95 million, has wiped out the disease everywhere in the world except the Horn of Africa. When complete, this campaign will represent the first time in human history that Man has succeeded in eliminating a dread disease, one that once challenged his very existence.