

**Fifty ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly
Seventy seventh plenary meeting**

**Agenda item 39 “Strengthening of coordination of
humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the
United Nations, including special economic assistance”**

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Statement by

**Ambassador Andrei Dapkiunas
Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Belarus
to the United Nations**

Mr. President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

There are life watershed events. The tragedy in the Indian Ocean is set to become such watershed for the whole of humankind. The utmost scale of devastation and human suffering makes us question the limits of the possible for Man. It may also teach us a few important lessons.

Compassion and human solidarity which transcends state borders does save the world. We admire a truly generous assistance response by the major developed and developing countries, international organizations, public and private donors. Relief campaigns like this are the only kind of noble money race. The one which brings up true international leaders – not by claim or force but by recognition.

We highly commend fast, coordinated and effective emergency relief efforts of the United Nations system. They alone are a sufficient proof of the increasing relevance and importance of our Organisation.

The people of Belarus send their words of sympathy and compassion to all the people who have lost their dear ones in the killing waves. Like dozens nations across the world, Belarusians grieve and give. Belarus is not a donor country yet we also do what we can to help. A week ago today dozens of tons of food, living essentials and technological equipment, including 125 sets of advanced water purification system (with a total value of US \$ 100 thousand) were delivered by the decision of the President of Belarus to one of the most disaster-stricken countries – Sri Lanka.

The world was not prepared for the disaster – it could have been. People were powerless in face of the calamity – they should not have been. Establishment of **comprehensive disaster early warning systems** – not just about tsunami and not just regionally – has become a truly vital factor of world security. The real progress in meeting the challenge of preventing such horrible loss of human life can only be made when we finally understand a simple truth – for killer waves, earthquakes and hurricanes it is never the world of state and regions, it is the world as one. This

destructive force can only be sensibly countered with just as unified effort of the world community.

In view of the recent drastic increase in the frequency and intensity of severe natural calamities and ever higher degree of vulnerability of developing countries to them the international community should take prompt and decisive measures. United Nations has to take the lead in this.

Last but not least. It would only be fair, noble and right if the enormous volume of provided and declared emergency assistance to the affected countries were not subtracted from previous – before the disaster struck – development assistance commitments of major world donors. If distinguished donor countries go in these calculations the easier way, expectations of billions of people in the developing world and hopes that human solidarity can not only deal with the damage but can actually help one day to prevent it – these expectations can be betrayed. We would like to believe that they will not be.