

■ International relief

Recent disasters prompts U.N. to discuss funding

BY EDITH M. LEDERER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UNITED NATIONS - Countries rich and poor on Monday called for a \$500 million U.N. fund to meet humanitarian emergencies after a year of devastating disasters.

General Assembly President Jan Eliasson said the current \$50 million revolving fund was insufficient, and the increase would help the United Nations respond quickly to sudden and underfunded crises.

"The complexity of today's crises and the growing magnitude of disasters require that humanitarian assistance remains one of the highest priorities of the work of the United Nations," he told the crowd at the opening of a daylong debate on improving U.N. humanitarian and disaster relief.

As the U.N. was meeting, he said, the death toll from the Oct. 8 Pakistan earthquake was still rising "and thousands of people are in danger of freezing to death as winter sets in." An especially destructive hurricane season has also left thousands homeless in the Caribbean, Central America and the United States, and nearly 35 million people in sub-Saharan Africa are hungry and need food as a result of "a lethal combination of conflict and drought," he said.

Jamaica's U.N. Ambassador Stafford Neil, speaking for a group that includes 132 mainly developing countries and China, offered support for the increased fund and

said "addressing the funding capacity of the U.N. system is one of the most critical steps to achieving the objective of improving the U.N. emergency response capacity."

Pakistan's U.N. Ambassador Munir Akram said the South Asian earthquake showed that the U.N.'s disaster coordination machinery must be strengthened, he said, but "more importantly, it is imperative that the U.N. should be provided with adequate financial resources to respond quickly and effectively to such disasters."

South African diplomat Andries Oosthuizen said it was troubling that crises in Africa received scant money, citing an appeal to help drought victims in Djibouti which received 5 percent of the required \$7.5 million. The appeal to help drought victims in Malawi also received little funding and now the situation has gotten worse, which means more money will be needed, he said.

Oosthuizen strongly backed Secretary-General Kofi Annan's request to donors to fund it with additional money and not take money away from other development programs.

U.S. Ambassador Sichan Siv said the United States generally supported the idea of a rapidly available source of funding and wants to see how a U.N. fund would operate. It also hopes for a broadened donor base, additional voluntary resources, strengthened early warning systems, and improved U.N. coordination.

IN BRIEF

AOL, Warner Bros. put old TV shows online

LOS ANGELES — Dozens of old television shows including "Welcome Back Kotter" will be available online and free of charge under a deal between America Online Inc. and Warner Bros.

In the latest alternative to traditional TV viewing, a new broadband network called In2TV will be launched in early 2006 by AOL and Warner Bros. Domestic Cable Distribution, the companies said Monday.

"Welcome Back Kotter," "Sisters" and "Growing Pains" are among the 30 series to be offered initially as Internet streamcasts. They will be grouped on channels by genre, including comedy, drama, animation, sci-fi and horror,

action-adventure and "vintage TV."

In2TV plans to offer more than 100 TV series and at least 300 episodes per month in the first year, the companies said.

The shows will be delivered through AOL Video on Demand, AOL Video Search and AOL Television. At the time of launch, the programs will be available exclusively on AOL and will not be in syndication on TV, AOL official said.

Middle East: Event offers insight to culture

Continued from page 1

of the region.

"Unfortunately, these images and the stories we hear about affect how we think about the people of the Middle East," Shirzadegan said.

In remarks that were occasionally pointed toward the Bush administration, Cohen argued that future conflicts can be avoided if Americans begin to understand the people of the Middle East better.

Americans would be better served by learning about the Middle East in a university setting than as soldiers in foreign lands, he said.

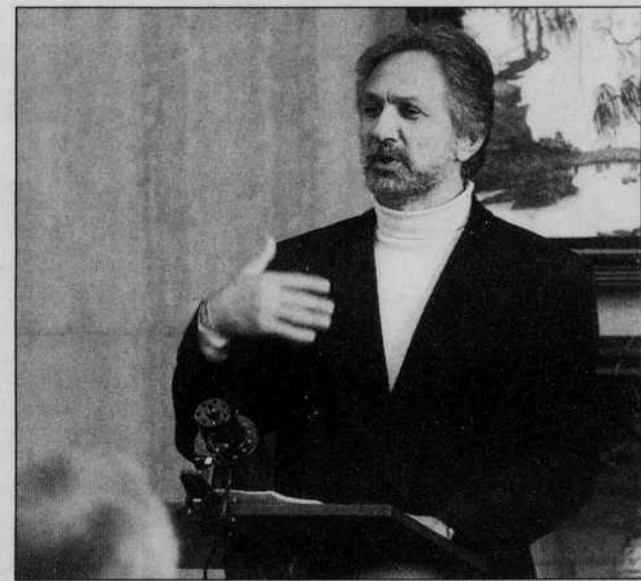
The ceremony was held in the International Resource Lounge, located above the post office in the EMU.

Throughout the week, the IRC will host a tea time from 3-5 p.m. A sitting area comprising pillows and a rug from Saudi Arabia will serve as the social hearth for guests.

"The Middle East is famous for its hospitality, so we decided to do our own small version of hospitality this week, every afternoon," said Sonja Rasmussen, coordinator of the IRC.

Events throughout the week look to humanize life in the Middle East, offering students a broader picture of the region than the media present, Rasmussen said.

Planning for the week's events began in the spring and sought to



Magid Shirzadegan, interim associate vice president for international programs, talks about his experiences with coming to America and being asked about the Middle East.

TIM BOBOSKY | PHOTO EDITOR

draw from the knowledge and experiences of faculty, students and local merchants.

Lucia Black, a senior who helped Rasmussen organize and plan the week's events, took pride in how the plans turned out.

"As I looked at the schedule this week, I was really happy to say that if I hadn't planned these events, I would still come to most of them," she said.

Black agreed with Cohen that

increased understanding of the Middle East could lead to significant improvements in international relations.

"The way I can see this event as a success is if people who are interested in the Middle East come together and meet each other, and people who don't know anything about it are connected with the resources and professors who do," she said.

jbailey@dailyemerald.com



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