# Africa needs better emergency response organ

Special to Sentinel-Voice

SUN CITY, South Africa (PANA) — The leadership role of the World Health Organization (WHO) in emergency preparedness and response in African countries should be strengthened since health and emergencies can never be separated, a WHO official said.

"Because WHO has offices in all the 46 member states in the African region, it can sometimes predict and, therefore, take necessary action in preparation for emergencies," Gambion surgeon and WHO regional director Ebrahim Samba said in Sun City, South Africa.

He said the organization's offices in African countries enable improved management, the reduction of waste and duplication during emergencies, citing examples in West Africa and countries

# U.N. council sets meeting on Africa

Special to Sentinel-Voice

UNITED NATIONS — The Security Council agreed last week to hold a ministerial-level meeting Sept. 25 on how to make Africa better, council president Bill Richardson of the United States said.

Richardson told reporters after council consultations on problems in several African countries and other issues, that foreign ministers will attend the meeting. Many will be in New York then for the General Assembly session opening on Sept. 16.

The meeting's objective, "to make a positive statement on Africa," Richardson said. "Africa takes up 65 percent of the council's actions. We want to focus on conflict resolution, on development. We hope to circulate a draft very soon on this issue in the days ahead," he said.

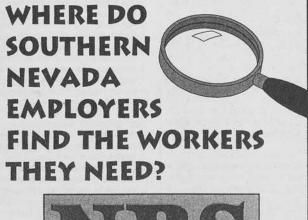
"We think this should be the month of Africa in the United Nations, particularly in the Security Council," he said.

"Our goal is to focus international attention on Africa, to develop a more coherent approach to both the conflicts and the long-term needs of the continent," he said. In addition, a statement was issued calling for a special, comprehensive report by the secretary-general on the situation in Africa.

"This report would focus on the sources of conflict in Africa, how to resolve conflict in Africa and how to build a long-term peace following the resolution of conflicts in the continent," Richardson said.

Expected to participate in the meeting are: The Organization of African Unity, the African group of states at the United Nations, foreign ministers or other senior representatives of the 15 council members and a number of African non-members of the council. The current African members of the council are Egypt and Guinea-Bissau.

African issues that the council has been concerned with in recent months include the situations in Angola, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), Sierra Leone, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and the disputed territory of Western Sahara.





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of the Great Lakes region.

"We know the people and can assess the situation ahead of any other organization," he said. "We are present before, during and after emergencies, hence the importance of our role."

He said the organization was one of the last agencies to leave the Congolese capital of Kinshasa when, this year, rebels entered the city and overthrew the government of Mobutu Sese Seko. It was also among the first groups to return, he said.

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But Samba said operations like these were undertaken "over and above the meager resources" of the organization since there is no budget for emergencies.

"Despite this, we shall continue to maintain our lead in emergency preparedness and response and post-crisis (See Africa, Page 16)

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Published: LasVegas Sentinel-Voice — September 11, 1997