

"Documento original en mal estado"

ed to the Soviet authorities that a two-man mission go to Erevan to help identify and co-ordinate the international response to the emergency needs of the stricken population. The mission was welcomed and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Council of Ministers of Armenia.

On reaching Erevan on December 9, the UNDRO relief co-ordination officers undertook two-day field visits to assess the situation in Spitak and Leninakan. Hospitals, clinics and education institutes had suffered most from the earthquake and immediate action was required to locate and rescue people trapped under the ruins and provide medical care to the injured.

Rescue Operations

Experience derived from other major earthquakes in urban areas (Bucharest, Managua and Mexico City) has proved that the proportion of survivors among people trapped in the rubble of multi-storied buildings is approximately 3.5 times higher for the ground



UNDRO/N Solomatine

In Leninakan, the damage resulted mainly from the collapse of 120 high-rise modern buildings made of prefabricated concrete blocks.

floor than for higher floors. In fact, although the Government brought in a large number of cranes and other heavy equipment, most of the life-saving rescue operations were carried out at ground level.

The work of 47 international rescue and medical teams from 35 countries was essential in finding and rescuing survivors trapped in the debris. The first international teams — from France and Switzerland — arrived in Erevan by noon of Dec. 9, and proceeded to the stricken area to start search and rescue work the same evening. These and other teams from the Fed. Rep. of Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom arrived fully equipped and totally self-sufficient. Unfortunately, a few volunteer groups arriving without adequate equipment, means of transport or communication, experienced some problems in co-operating with the local population.



A shopping centre in Leninakan.

USPHS/Kade

As in many similar disasters, rescue efforts had already begun before external assistance arrived. The UNDRO delegates noted that