

Guide for Governments

2011

How the international
humanitarian system supports
government disaster response



This guide was developed in cooperation with the Inter-Agency Working Group on Risk, Emergency and Disasters for Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC).

REDLAC was created in 2003 as an interagency workgroup inspired by the global level Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to develop an exchange platform for information and the discussion of humanitarian matters. REDLAC includes more than 27 members from United Nations agencies, the Red Cross Movement, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and donors committed to the association principles of the global humanitarian platform. Its mission is to increase the impact of humanitarian action for the benefit of vulnerable populations in Latin America and the Caribbean through the coordination of humanitarian actors and support to public institutions and civil society. Specifically, REDLAC aims to increase cooperation in disaster reduction, preparation and response through information exchange, joint planning and common activities.

Through REDLAC, interagency cooperation has improved during disaster response at regional as well as local levels, reflected in joint grant delivery and through the implementation of logistics capacity assessments in several countries.

This guide can be downloaded at <http://www.redhum.org>

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Note: This guide will be updated on a regular basis. Comments should be sent to ocha-rolac@un.org or added on the last page.

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1. INTRODUCTION



1. Introduction

In order for action to be meaningful, it must be performed within a global context.

Although disaster response begins at the local level, it is carried out within the context of the global humanitarian system.

The main purpose of the Guide for Governments is to promote basic knowledge of the international humanitarian system in national authorities in Latin America and the Caribbean in order to facilitate, when needed, the rapid mobilization of humanitarian assistance to help governments respond to the immediate needs of those most affected by natural disasters.

In addition to background information on humanitarian action and actors and the roles and responsibilities of states, the guide provides essential tools and resources in four principle areas of action: coordination, financial resource mobilization, technical team mobilization and information management.

A REDLAC Initiative

The regional interagency group REDLAC¹ has been working since 2003 to improve the preparation for disaster through the establishment of national humanitarian networks, access to better information on disasters (www.redhum.org) and an increase in sectoral support. In 2008, several national and international actors, including the subregional organizations CDEMA, CAPRADE and CEPREDENAC, formally requested more information about the multiplication of actors and tools in the region. The Guide for Governments and the Directory of Resources and Organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean are REDLAC's response to that request.

Why this guide?

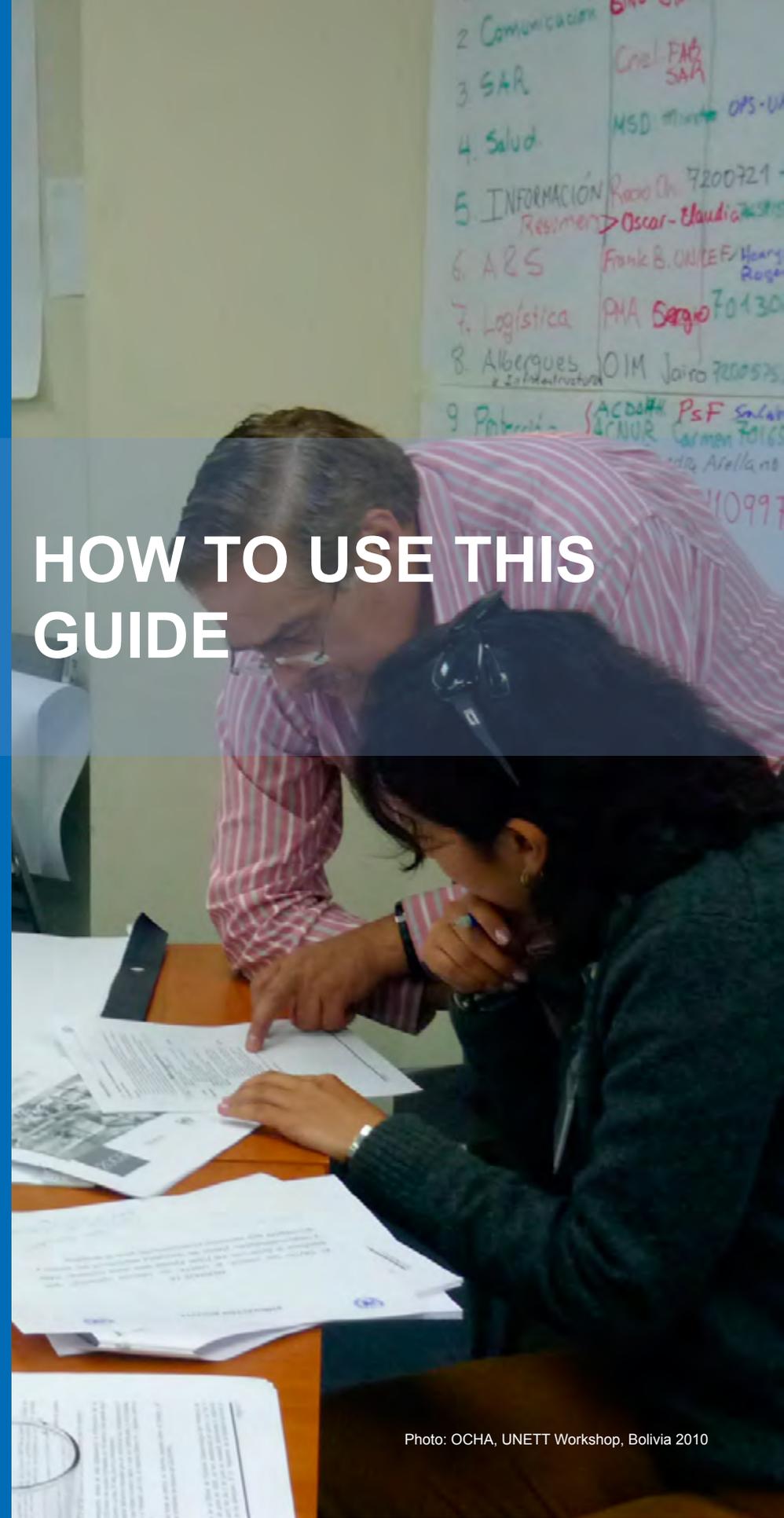
The Guide for Governments is a tool to assist national authorities in becoming familiar with humanitarian partners, the United Nations system, donors, and other agencies at various levels of aggregation and disaggregation and with their various roles and responsibilities and available tools in the event of a disaster.

Through the structured presentation of four principle areas of action (coordination, financial resource mobilization, technical team mobilization and information management), the guide helps to identify coordination spaces, existing capacities, and available tools.

¹ Inter-Agency Working Group on Risk, Emergency and Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC), inspired by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (www.humanitarianinfo.org/IASC)

2.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



2. HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Users

The Guide for Governments is intended for all government employees who work in positions related to emergency management, including defense and civil protection, and for international assistance ministries. It also serves as a reference to civil society actors and international partners both nationally and regionally.

Format

The guide identifies four principle areas of humanitarian action:

COORDINATION

FINANCIAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

TECHNICAL TEAM MOBILIZATION

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Visual emphasis is given to those tools of humanitarian response that are expected to be found at the national level to support or improve the capacity of national authorities.

For each tool, a one page file is provided for easy reference that includes summary information about how the tool functions, how it can be used, and how it can be accessed.

Contact your partners before the emergency

The tools and procedures identified in this guide are more effective in a previously agreed upon coordinated context. Each institution is encouraged to reach out to country partners through humanitarian networks or other humanitarian coordination platforms and to promote organization and coordination in alliance with the United Nations system.

The guide

- is an informative tool for authorities;
- is about the international community support to States;
- covers four areas: coordination, financial resource mobilization, technical team mobilization and information management.

Humanitarian Action

- Humanitarian Principles
- 20 years since Resolution 46/182
- The main regulations of humanitarian action, from Sphere to Hyogo

International Actors

- The multiplicity of international actors
- From local to regional
- Fact sheets on actors

State Responsibility

- Traditional responsibilities
- State responsibility in coordination, financial resource mobilization, technical team mobilization and information management

Fact Sheets

- On coordination: IASC, REDLAC, Clusters, Humanitarian Network, UNETT
- On financial resources: funds, CERF, Flash Appeal, know how to donate
- On technical teams: UNDAC, USAR/INSARAG, OSOCC, MCDA, warehouse
- On information management: RNA, reports, Redhum, ReliefWeb, 3W

3

HUMANITARIAN ACTION AND REGULATION Guiding documents



3. HUMANITARIAN ACTION and REGULATION: Guiding documents

Since 1991, challenges have emerged from the changing environment in which humanitarian assistance has been provided, evident in issues such as internal displacement, access to assistance, protection, safety and security of humanitarian personnel, relationship with the military and the frequency and magnitude of natural disasters. In spite of these challenges and the complexities of intergovernmental negotiation, the United Nations has achieved meaningful progress.

Humanitarian action seen from the perspective of humanitarian agencies is considered the need to assist and protect people affected by a disaster—their lives, livelihoods and environments. The goals of humanitarian action include saving lives, alleviating suffering, maintaining human dignity during and after a natural or human-caused crisis or disaster, and working both at disaster prevention as well as improving disaster response.

Humanitarian actors frame their work in a rights-based approach. Humanitarian assistance is fundamental for victims of disasters and other emergencies.² This means that people affected by disasters have the right to request and receive assistance and protection from governments, which hold the main responsibility for providing such assistance and protection.

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

Reaching vulnerable people is essential to provide adequate protection and assistance in the context of a natural disaster and a complex emergency as well as in the improving of local capacity to support humanitarian needs.

The humanitarian principles of Humanity, Impartiality, Neutrality and Independence³ are four of the foundational principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and are embedded in International Humanitarian Law. The humanitarian principles provide the basis of humanitarian action and are essential to ensure access to affected populations. Furthermore, compliance with the humanitarian principles in humanitarian response is critical to effective coordination.

Humanity	Impartiality	Neutrality	Independence
Human suffering must be alleviated wherever it occurs. The goal of humanitarian action is to protect life and health while ensuring respect for human beings.	Humanitarian action should be carried out according to need, giving priority to urgent cases and without make distinction on the basis of nationality, race, sex, religious beliefs, class or political opinion.	Humanitarian actors should not take part in hostilities or be involved in political, racial, religious or ideological controversies.	Humanitarian action must remain independent from political, economic, military or humanitarian actor influence that compromises the ability to act in accordance with the core principles.

² A/RES/46/182, OP2 (1991)

³ A/RES/46/182, OP2 (1991) A / RES/60/ 124, PP4 (2005)

Another important concept of humanitarian action is “do no harm,” which implies that humanitarian action must:

- avoid creating or exacerbating disparities and discrimination among the affected population
- avoid creating or exacerbating environmental degradation
- avoid creating or exacerbating conflicts in the affected population
- take into account the special needs of vulnerable groups

In the event of natural disasters, the protection of individual rights is essential but sometimes incomplete. National legal systems are the main regulatory frameworks to ensure the protection of people affected by disasters, and it is the responsibility of the State to respect, protect and guarantee these rights.

At the international level, four regulatory bodies ensure the protection of individual rights:

- (1) Laws based on treaties, conventions or protocols are binding for signatories and prevail over domestic law [e.g., Human Rights Treaties - www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries].
- (2) Customary law enshrines the peremptory norms that are so fundamental that they cannot be repealed, such as the right to life and the freedom from torture, genocide, or discrimination.
- (3) **International humanitarian law** (IHL), various binding UN Security Council resolutions, and the 1949 Geneva Conventions enshrine the protection of civilians and combatants specifically in armed combat situations (www.icrc.org). Parties not directly participating in hostilities have the right to physical protection and the right to receive goods essential to their survival, and will be, in all circumstances, protected and treated humanely without distinction. Health personnel, facilities, transportation and medical supplies will be protected. The emblem of the Red Cross or Red Crescent on a white background is the sign of such protection and must be respected.
- (4) Non-binding or Soft Law includes documents such as codes, declarations, recommendations and guiding principles issued by states, international organizations or humanitarian partners in the humanitarian field. Without mandatory nature, these principles are widely accepted and have moral authority to address humanitarian action.

UN Resolution 46/182

The goal of this UN resolution is to improve the coordination of international assistance to affected countries. Resolution 46/182 has provided the framework for emergency relief for two decades by strengthening coordination in humanitarian assistance and guiding humanitarian work.⁴

Sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States shall be fully respected in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.
In this context, humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country and in principle on the basis of a request by the affected country (Resolution 46/182, 2003).

⁴ See Annex 1 - UN General Assembly Resolutions



Resolution 46/182 of December 19, 1991, on strengthening the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations, has wide-reaching effects. Among other things, it calls for a complementary central funding mechanism (CERF) and Flash Appeal in the area of financial resource mobilization; for early warning systems to be improved and the creation of a central registry of specialized personnel and help services available to governments and humanitarian partners in the area of preparedness; and for a permanent committee to be established to improve interagency coordination (IASC). The resolution reinforces the leadership of the Secretary General with the appointment of a high level official dedicated to emergency response, the Emergency Relief Coordinator, supported by a new office, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Humanitarian Reform is an initiative of the main international humanitarian actors to improve the international community response to disasters. Humanitarian Reform started in 2006 with an analysis of responses to global disasters which led to specific recommendations to improve the predictability of financial and sectoral response, to foster more responsibility on the part of international actors, and to improve coordination among them.

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015 is the most important instrument for the implementation of disaster risk reduction adopted by United Nations Member States. Its general goal is to increase the resilience of nations and communities before disasters by achieving, by 2015, a significant reduction of losses that can be caused by disasters, not only in terms of human lives, but also social, economic and environmental losses experienced by communities and countries.

The HFA offers five priority areas for taking action to increase the resilience of communities vulnerable to disaster. Hyogo Priority Five serves to strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.

The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief (RC/NGO Code) introduces the concept of the humanitarian imperative, which expands

the principle of humanity to include the right to receive and provide humanitarian assistance. It establishes the obligation of the international community to provide humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed.

The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement

guarantee the protection of internally displaced persons in all displacement phases. The principles provide protection against arbitrary displacement, establish bases for assistance and provide guarantees for safe return, resettlement and reintegration. Although the guidelines are non-binding, the principles reflect and are consistent with IHL, human rights law and the analogous rights related to refugees.

Internally displaced persons have the right to request and receive protection and humanitarian assistance from the authorities. They will not be persecuted or punished for making such a request.

The Sphere Project was launched in July, 1997 by a group of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This project has developed a Humanitarian Charter and a set of universal minimum standards in basic areas of humanitarian assistance: supply of water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition, food help, shelter, settlement and planning of locations, and health services, which are used in many countries, in emergency situations.

The Sphere Project comes from an ethical commitment to improve the quality of humanitarian response in terms of transparency and accountability. The Sphere Handbook was developed through an extensive process of institutional participation and contains an Ethical Framework (Humanitarian Charter and Code of Conduct), a Legal Framework (International Humanitarian Law, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Convention on

Children's Rights, Geneva Conventions and the Refugee Convention among others) and a Technical Framework (common rules and standards of humanitarian response). Humanitarian bodies⁵ which are committed to respect the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards aim to provide defined levels of service to people affected by disasters or armed conflict and promote the respect for fundamental humanitarian principles. Committed organizations ensure compliance to and promote adoption of the minimum standards as accepted regulation.

For more information visit <http://www.sphereproject.org>.

International Disaster Response Law (IDRL) emphasizes that:

- *domestic actors have the primary role*
- *international relief providers have responsibilities*
- *international actors need legal facilities*
- *some legal facilities should be conditional*

International Disaster Response Law⁶ (IDRL) recommendations (www.ifrc/what/disasters/idrl) have been developed out of a recognition of the need for a body for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international relief operations and initial recovery assistance in the event of a disaster. IDRL recommendations help governments to prepare disaster plans and legislation for the common regulatory problems in international disaster response. IDRL recommendations include a summary of the basic

responsibilities of affected States, the actors that provide assistance, and the intended use of the resources.⁷

⁵ These bodies include international and national NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, UN agencies, donors, governments, voluntary organizations and civilian society.

⁶ A/63/L.39, OP8 (2008), A/63/L53, OP5 (2008), ECOSOC Decisions, 2008, OP5 (2008). In November, 2007, the State actors and the Red Cross and Red Crescent adopted the Sphere guidelines in the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

⁷ See Annex 2, IDRL Basic Recommendations

The Oslo Guidelines is an international instrument that highlights the importance of civilian leadership in disaster response using both civilian and military resources. The guidelines regulate the use of military resources and foreign civil defense in relief operations in event of disaster, stipulating that the use of military force only be used in extreme cases.

4. HUMANITARIAN ACTORS



4. HUMANITARIAN ACTORS

Humanitarian action recognizes a multiplicity of actors who work at the same time on disaster response with different mandates and skills; however, the first actor to respond to a disaster is the affected community itself.

States

Each state has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring in its territory. Hence, the affected state has the primary role in the initiation, organization, coordination, and implementation of humanitarian assistance within its territory.⁸

If an affected state determines that a disaster situation exceeds national coping capacities, it should seek international assistance to address the needs of affected persons.

Affected states have the sovereign right to coordinate, regulate and monitor disaster relief and recovery assistance provided by assisting actors on their territory, consistent with international law.

Some of the international humanitarian actors include:

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The **International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement** is a recognized international organization, considered distinct from an NGO, composed of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and 186 National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent.

The **ICRC** is an impartial, independent and neutral organization whose mission is to protect life and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide assistance. It prevents suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and humanitarian principles. It directs and coordinates international activities conducted by the Movement in situations of armed conflict and other violence.

In 2010, the Red Cross moved from its logistics centre in Panama more than 1,000 metric tonnes in support to 28 operations in 21 countries, providing assistance to 320,000 families affected by disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The **National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** in 35 countries in the Americas work as auxiliaries to public authorities in their own countries in the humanitarian field. Based on the Movement principles, they have a substantial role in disaster preparedness and response, especially in the fields of relief and assistance such as health, WASH, and social programs. The IFRC contributes to strengthening the capacity of National Societies to carry out effective disaster preparedness, health and welfare. It directs and coordinates international assistance conducted by the Movement to the victims of disasters.

⁸ A/RES/46/182,OP2(1991)

Humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

Humanitarian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play an important role in disaster preparedness and response.

NGOs have increased significantly in number in recent years. While NGOs tend to have variable goals, they share certain characteristics. NGOs have operational capability and resources, and often work with local partners and with networks that have established common rules and standards at all levels. Many NGOs partner with UN agencies to implement projects. They play an important role in the first phase of response by having quick access to financial resources, expertise in relevant areas, flexible structures, and often, close links with the affected local population.

It is estimated that of every dollar spent on humanitarian aid, 40 cents is spent through NGOs.

The United Nations Organization

The United Nations, by mandate of the Member States, is responsible for the coordination of the international assistance in disaster response. Since its first humanitarian relief operations in Europe following the devastation and massive displacement of people in the Second World War, the international community has relied on the United Nations to respond to natural and human-caused disasters that are beyond the capacity of national authorities. Today, the United Nations is a major provider of aid and assistance in the medium and long term, a catalyst for action by governments and humanitarian agencies and an advocate for people affected by disasters.

In 2010, the World Food Program (WFP) delivered food to more than 90 million people in 73 countries; the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has provided protection to 36 million people including more than 14 million IDPs in 22 countries, work for which it twice received the Nobel Peace Prize.

To address the high costs of natural disasters, the UN works on two fronts: 1) providing immediate relief to people affected by disasters through its operating agencies 2) finding more effective strategies to prevent the occurrence of emergencies or disasters.

The sub-regional intergovernmental bodies

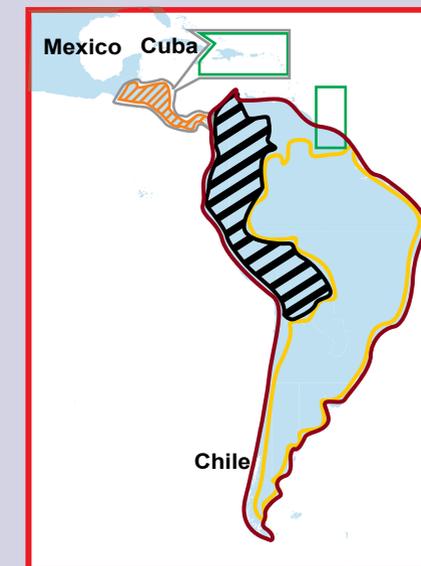
Sub-regional intergovernmental bodies such as CAPRADE, CDEMA, CEPREDENAC and REHU have strengthened the support among neighbouring countries and promoted sub-regional agreements, especially in response preparedness through coordination, training, dissemination of information, standardization of tools and discussion of common themes. Some regional mechanisms include mutual aid tools for use before disasters and coordination forums such as the Centre for Humanitarian Assistance (CAHA in Central America). In recent years, coordination forums on disaster preparedness have multiplied, making it a challenge to clearly and quickly ascertain the roles, responsibilities and operational capacity of each regional actor.

Regional Coordination Mechanism

-  OEA
-  MERCOSUR - REHU
-  CARICOM - CDEMA
-  SICA - CEPREDENAC
-  CAN - CAPRADE
-  UNASUR
-  SELA
-  AEC (ACS)

Non-members of risk management sub-regional organizations

Chile / Cuba / Mexico



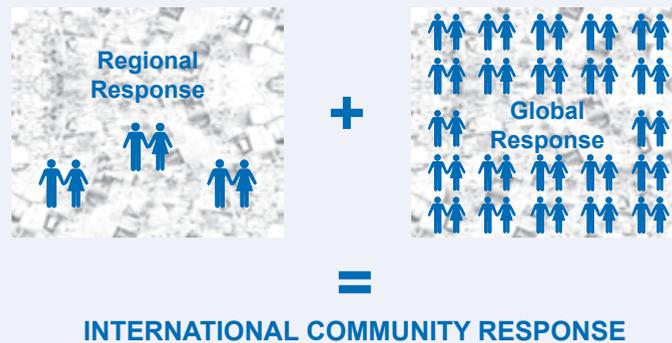
Donors

The last ten years have seen a sharp increase in the amount of official funding for humanitarian activities. The information in Global Humanitarian Assistance shows that between 2000 and 2009, the official humanitarian aid from western donors doubled to nearly \$ 11 billion⁹. Among the principle donors of humanitarian aid worldwide are the United States, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Germany, Holland, Spain, Sweden, Norway and Japan. Some of these donors also have teams that assess the relevance of the assignments or decisions. In the case of Latin America, major contributors to humanitarian response include the United States, Spain and the European Union on a multilateral basis through the humanitarian aid department (ECHO) of the European Commission.

A distinction can be made between bilateral and multilateral donations and technical cooperation and the increasing contributions from the private sector.

Governments often use indirect channels to deliver their contributions, either through NGOs, the Red Cross or United Nations agencies. Bilateral contributions, from country to country, also include the mobilization of material resources and military or civilian resources (Oslo Guidelines).

⁹ <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org>



In recent years, the private sector has been increasingly involved in humanitarian assistance in a variety of ways, especially as donors through NGOs, as service providers (logistics), as part of corporate social responsibility programs and as other pro bono service providers. Companies like DHL, Erickson, Google, and Microsoft have response teams that work in disasters in specific areas related to their experience. In the tsunami in Asia in 2005, the private sector was the second largest source of international contributions.

As a complement to this Guide for Governments, the Directory of Resources and Organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean provides a description of mandates, areas of intervention, capacities of regional response, contacts in event of emergency and regional and country office information.

5.

STATE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN DISASTER RESPONSE



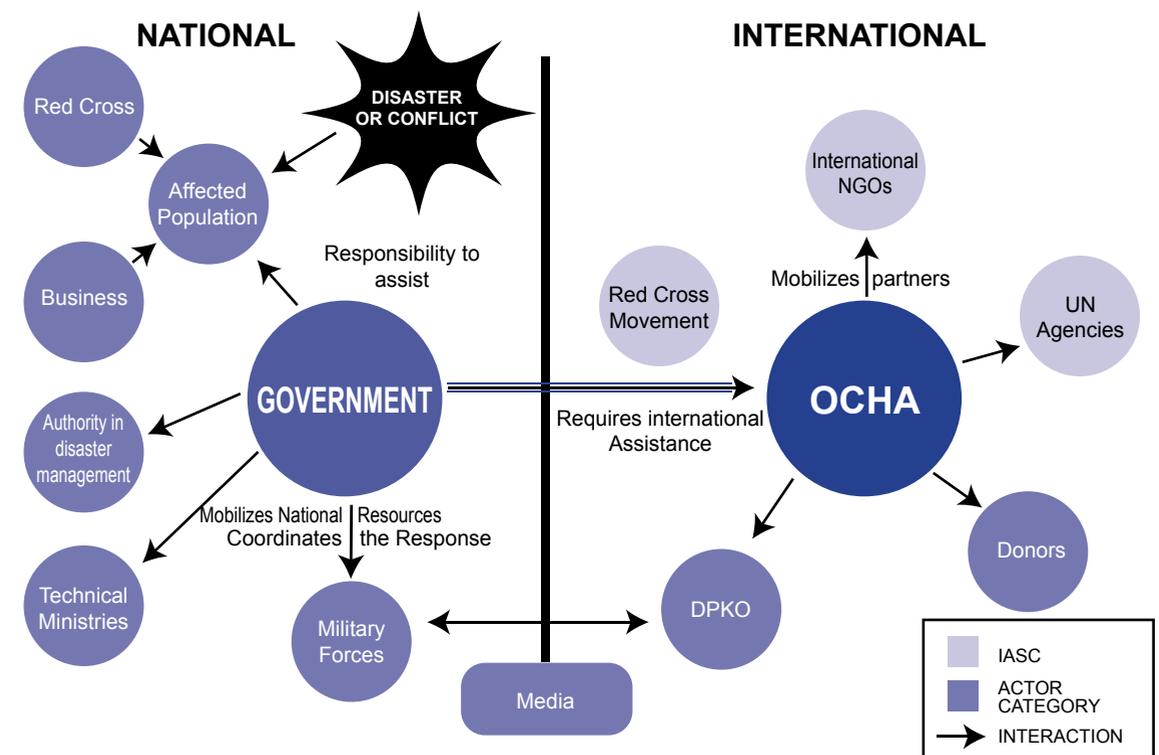
Photo: OCHA ROLAC, 2011

5. STATE ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES IN DISASTER RESPONSE

From problems to possible solutions

UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 delineates the relationship between humanitarian actors and the affected state, including State roles and responsibilities. The principles of the Resolution are fundamental to all humanitarian action, but particularly humanitarian actors acting as part of the United Nations system.

RESPONSE ACTORS



According to Resolution 46/182, the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of an affected country should be fully respected in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, and humanitarian assistance is preferably provided with the consent of the affected country on the basis of an appeal. The resolution goes on to stipulate that every State has the responsibility to care for the victims of disasters and emergencies that occur within State territory. A function of the State is to initiate, organize, coordinate and execute humanitarian assistance in its territory.¹⁰

¹⁰ See Annex 1, UN General Assembly Resolutions, Resolution 46/182

The literature on the role of the state in humanitarian action¹¹ distinguishes four responsibilities of the State:

Declare the crisis

Assist and protect the population

Monitor and coordinate assistance

Ensure the functioning of an adequate normative framework

First, competent authorities are responsible for declaring an emergency according to their internal legislative framework. Many of the international tools are not activated if there is not a clear request for international assistance. Therefore, when the authorities estimate their capacities are temporally exceeded, it is essential to declare a state of emergency.¹² This action does not undermine national sovereignty; on the contrary, it facilitates the rapid activation of international mechanisms and saves lives.

Second, it is a state responsibility to provide assistance and protection to persons affected by a disaster. The physical and legal protection of its citizens is an expression of its sovereignty over national territory.

Third, the coordination among national actors in emergencies and between the national actors and international humanitarian actors is of utmost importance to ensure appropriate and timely assistance to save lives and reduce the impact of the disaster.

Finally, it is a state responsibility to promote the adoption of international normative frameworks within national legislation such as the Hyogo Framework for Action. This includes norms to facilitate the arrival of international assistance in case of disasters and the development of a holistic view of risk management.

When the government requires assistance from the international community and neighbouring countries to face the impact of a catastrophe, the international community led by the United Nations and in accordance with the decisions of the Member States in the General Assembly has designed various support tools available.

11 Harvey, Paul. "Towards Good Government: The Role of the Affected State in Disaster Response." Humanitarian Policy Group, ODI, September 2009.

12 Even though governments may be reluctant to declare a state of emergency (for example, when it may negatively affect their economy), international assistance may be mobilized by other means, providing it is accepted by the national authorities.

The Principal Areas of Action

The previously mentioned four responsibilities of the State overlap with the principle areas of humanitarian action: coordination, financial resource mobilization, technical team mobilization, and information management. In each area of action, responsibilities of the State are explained along with the operational, strategic, financial or technical contributions of the international humanitarian system.

	Declare the emergency	Assist and protect the population	Monitor and coordinate assistance	Ensure the functioning of a proper normative framework
Responsibilities of the State	Coordination	Financial Resource Mobilization	Technical Team Mobilization	Information Management
	Contingencies	Declare the emergency	Support search and rescue	Ensure the monitoring of threats and early warning
	Ensure coordination of the emergency	Mobilize resources	Ensure that the necessary expertise exists in the sectoral response (shelter, protection)	Quickly assess the damage and the needs
	Lead the sectoral coordination	Initiate advocacy	Maintain civil-military coordination (CIMCOORD)	Ensure the communication and a good flow of information
	Ensure protocols of communication between partners	Facilitate the entry of humanitarian assistance	Ensure that the response covers cross-sectoral issues (environment, protection)	Monitor the development of the event
	Provide humanitarian assistance to the population through basic services			
Plan early recovery and re-construction				
Tools of International Support	Coordination	Financial Resource Mobilization	Technical Team Mobilization	Information Management
	Preparatory Measures MAH Guide in the preparation of contingency plans	Support the request for funds	INSARAG, UNDAC, OSOCC	Redhum, GDACS, ReliefWeb
	IASC, HCT, UNETT, RC/HC	CERF, FA, <i>Saber donar</i> - <i>Saber pedir</i>	Ensure that the necessary expertise exists in the sectoral response (shelter, protection)	UNDAC, FACT, RNAT
	Provide humanitarian assistance to the population in basic services	Advocacy	Coordination Unit CIMCOORD	UNSAT, MAP ACTION, Redhum, UNDAC
	OCHA, Cluster approach	Customs Framework Agreement	Roster Specialists Specific Themes	Monitor the development of the event
	Ensure the logistic coordination of the emergency	IDRL recommendations	UNEP, OCHA	RNA
PDNA, DaLA, BCPR UNHRD, logistics centre				

Coordination

AREA	RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE	INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT
Contingency plans	<p>Based on the national response to the emergency plan and an analysis of the risks related to imminent threats, prepare contingency plans with the relevant humanitarian actors defining the capabilities and the specific actions to take.</p> <p>Strengthen national and international coordination and ensure that there are no ill-defined areas of responsibility.</p> <p>Define the structures and architecture of the coordination between national and international actors.</p> <p>Convene a meeting with humanitarian partners and jointly establish the possible scenario of impact. Activate the national tools for coordination with the international humanitarian community.</p> <p>Activate sectoral committees to establish needs and coordinate efforts in every sector. Likewise, identify the corresponding committees with humanitarian sectors or clusters (water, shelter, health, food safety, logistics)</p> <p>Plan for an early recuperation and reconstruction.</p> <p>Establish the timely flow of information towards and from the actors of the international community. Define links to international teams. Establish and communicate the schedule of joint meetings and products of information. Establish contact lists and resource mapping.</p> <p>Mobilize sectoral response for basic humanitarian needs and ensure efficient provision of assistance to most vulnerable population.</p>	<p>Hyogo Framework for Action: Preparation Measures</p> <p>Guides for the preparation of contingency plans (IASC)</p> <p>International Advisory Group of Search and Rescue (INSARAG) and UNDAC coordinate the efforts of SAR teams</p> <p>Reception Centre to register SAR teams and Coordinating Centre in situ (OSOCC)</p> <p>Humanitarian Country Teams or UNETT</p> <p>Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) of the UN system in the country is accountable to the Assistant Secretary of Humanitarian Affairs</p> <p>Situation Report (SITREP), Situation Room, UNETT, Centre of Humanitarian Information, maps and satellite imagery, "Who Does What and Where?" (3W), Matrix of International Resources</p> <p>Redhum / ReliefWeb, GDACS Instruments for the assessment of sectoral damage, RNA, methodology and tools developed by REDLAC</p> <p>UNETT and HCT UN teams for evaluation and coordination (UNDAC) Teams of experts in international technical cooperation (European Union, USAID, RNAT in the Caribbean)</p>
Ensure the coordination of the emergency		
Lead Sectoral Coordination		
Ensure communication protocols between partners		
Provide humanitarian assistance to the population through basic services		

Coordination

Financial Resource Mobilization

Financial Resource Mobilization

AREA	RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE	INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT
Declare the emergency	<p>Declaring the emergency is the affected State's essential first step. The international community response, including sending basic emergency teams and making financial decisions, is set in motion by the clear and timely declaration of the emergency. If this is not done, or is done too late, it may not be possible to request or receive international assistance, resulting in the loss of lives.</p> <p>Should it be a national emergency declaration, a request for specific assistance or the acceptance of international assistance is an internal process in each country</p> <p>Preparedness and capacity are partly based on the ability to access humanitarian assistance through an established framework.</p> <p>Activate customs and legal mechanisms that help with the tariff free entry of inputs, materials and humanitarian teams for emergency assistance.</p>	<p>Support in maintaining information and a shared scenario of the emergency: RC, OCHA, UNDAC</p> <p>International community mechanisms such as the Flash Appeal, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and the Responsible Donor Campaign</p> <p>SITREPS, Reports for the international community, work with mass media, HIC</p> <p>Contingency plans, Clusters, SITREPS monitoring websites, RNA</p>
Resource Mobilization		
Advocacy		
Facilitate the entry of humanitarian assistance		

Technical Team Mobilization

Technical Team Mobilization

AREA	RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE	INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT
Facilitate Search and Rescue	Develop and activate national bodies for search and rescue under the norms of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). Authorities should be willing to receive international teams when required and should give immediate indication of such need through a pre-identified focal point (INSARAG).	The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) and UNDAC coordinate the SAR team reception centre, SAR registration and SAR coordination centre in situ (OSOCC), the response teams in technical cooperation (EU, USA) and the humanitarian organizations (NGO).
Identify necessary technical support	Be attentive to the needs of technical support for particular situations. This support can be thematic or in relation to other sectors.	OCHA and REDLAC emergency teams Sectoral approach Thematic experts from other states and mechanism for fund mobilization of humanitarian partners (NGOs)
Attend to environmental problems	In addition to natural disasters, there are technological and environmental disasters. Natural disasters may cause impacts that result in secondary environmental problems requiring special attention, requiring the mobilization of specialized national or international experts to evaluate and respond.	UNEP / OCHA Environmental Unit Environmental assessment methodology
Ensure civil-military coordination	If the support of military forces is necessary from neighbouring countries, establish the mechanisms of coordination between the military and the civil organizations of humanitarian aid.	Civil-military Coordination Unit World central registry of civil-military resources Request of military resources from OCHA to other states under recognized intervention guidelines (Oslo)
Facilitate the entry of teams and humanitarian personnel	Activate customs and legal mechanism that help with the tariff free entry of inputs, materials and humanitarian teams.	IDRL recommendation Framework agreement on customs

Information Management

Information Management

AREA	RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE	INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT
Ensure the monitoring of threats and early warning	In addition to national monitoring systems, consult international reference websites to try to establish the possible impacts before an event (as in the case of the hurricane) or immediately after the event; communicate this information.	Websites designed to monitor and follow threats and emergencies, Redhum, Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS), ReliefWeb, NOAA, Flood Observatory
Quickly assess the damage and the needs	After the impact of an event, establish the magnitude of its humanitarian consequences as well as what actions will be performed to collect and process information. Take advantage of assessment groups or start an evaluation system based on an agreed upon methodology using interdisciplinary instruments that provide a consolidated multi-sectoral view on the impact and the immediate needs.	Websites like Redhum, GDACS, ReliefWeb Instruments like RNA, International Teams like UNDAC, FACT, RNAT, UNEP, OCHA
Ensure communication and flow of information	Activate the situation room or national COE. Establish a good flow of information toward and from the international community actors and define a link to international teams, even if international support is not solicited, to help to facilitate accurate communication. Establish and communicate the schedule of joint meetings, products of information, lists of contacts, and mapping tools that improve communication and the flow of information.	Support teams and tools such as the HCT, UNDAC, UNETT, Humanitarian Information Centre, maps or satellite images, UNSAT, Map Action Tools like SITREP, Who does What and Where (3W), Matrix of resources
Monitor the development of the event	An event may lead to a series of secondary impacts that could affect the population; for this reason, properly monitor the event development as well as the implementation of humanitarian aid to identify gaps and non-covered needs.	Contingency plans, Clusters, SITREP, monitoring websites, RNA

6.

FACT SHEETS ON TOOLS AND RESOURCES

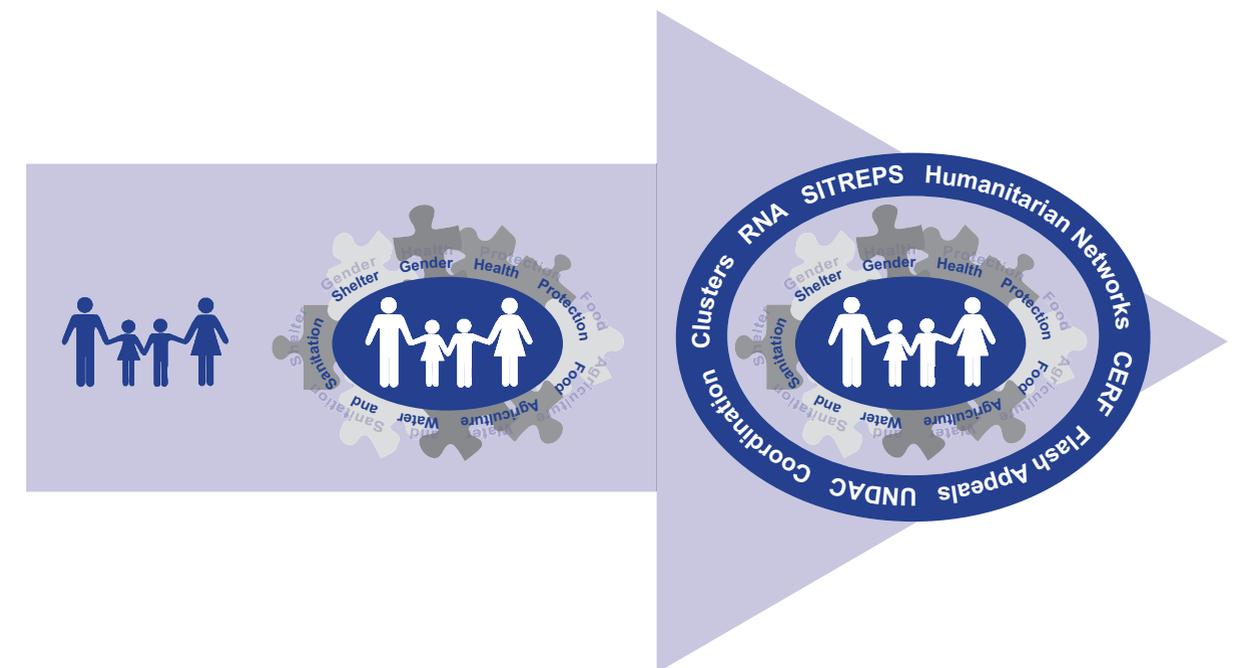


6. TOOLS AND RESOURCES

The next three chapters of the guide present fact sheets in the principle areas of action: coordination (Chapter 7), financial resource mobilization (Chapter 8) technical team mobilization (Chapter 9) and information management (Chapter 10).

These tools have been developed by international actors to enable them to meet their support obligations to national authorities and ensure coordinated support in disaster response.

Humanitarian assistance, above all, focuses on the affected people, who are the primary beneficiaries. In the case of disasters, assistance is organized by area, such as water and sanitation, hygiene, food assistance, education and shelter, among others. For every assistance area, there are tools at the disposal of humanitarian workers developed by the international community such as EDAN, CERF, UNDAC, and RNA. The many procedures, protocols and tools should never obscure the main goal of humanitarian action, which is to assist the affected people.



Responsibility for the Coordination of International Humanitarian Assistance While governments are responsible for attending to the victims of disasters in their territories, the UN, led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and OCHA have the obligation, established in Resolution 46/182 of the General Assembly, to support governments to ensure the coordination of international humanitarian assistance. This assistance from the UN comes into force from the time that a State requests or accepts international assistance based on its evaluation of whether its capabilities have been exceeded partially or in great measure or in the long term or temporarily.¹³

Shared Responsibilities The governments and international actors have shared roles and responsibilities. The following table describes some of these responsibilities at a national and international level.

Areas	Responsibility	National	International
Coordination	Responsibility for the response	the government is responsible to attend the affected population	UN & OCHA are responsible to assist the government in the coordination of international assistance (UN Res 46/182)
	Accountability	to its people and institutions	UN and associates, towards the international community, affected government, donors and affected populations
	Leadership	strategic and operational	coordination of international actors: RC/HC
	Organization	sectorial tables	clusters
Financial resource and technical team mobilization	Funding	state budget national emergency fund bilateral contributions loans contributions from civil society contributions from the private sector national emergency team management	emergency funds CERF bilateral donations contributions from the international civil society Flash Appeal international emergency team management
Information management	Communication	news LEMA situation reports	SITREPS, OCHA and other partners

7. COORDINATION



¹³ The assessment of national capacity for response is a matter of national interpretation, which depends of the level of information available after the emergency, as well as the different realities of national organization that can lead to refining the required assistance level. Currently, there is not a tool that supports the analysis of national post-disaster capacities.

Photo: OCHA,UNDAC Mission, Nicaragua 2009

7. COORDINATION

Humanitarian assistance has increased in complexity due to the changing political, social and environmental context in which it occurs and the multiplication of public and private actors, making the coordination of disaster response a true challenge.

Although coordination is voluntary in nature, some basic requirements must be met in order for it to be efficient. Among them is a common plan or vision, access to resources, agreed upon leadership of the coordination, pre-established mechanisms and funds for the coordination. The tools that allow improvement in coordination are as follows:

Coordination Fact Sheets

There are three levels of coordination:

- global (IASC)
- regional (REDLAC)

i. Interagency Standing Committee (IASC)

What is it?

The Interagency Standing Committee (IASC), established by the General Assembly of the United Nations, is an inter-institutional forum of coordination, formulation of policies and adoption of decisions on behalf of executive representatives of the main organisms of humanitarian assistance (organizations of United Nations, Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and consortia of non-governmental organizations of humanitarian assistance).

What is its purpose?

The IASC guarantees the process that makes decisions at an inter-institutional level in response to natural disasters and complex emergency situations, including the evaluation of needs, consolidated appeals for funds, agreements on coordination and the development of humanitarian policies.

At the operational level, the IASC has a group made up of representatives that fulfill the role of humanitarian management in the participating entities, chaired by OCHA in Geneva, from which various committees are derived to develop specific aspects of the humanitarian agenda.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- IASC was established in June 1992 in response to the UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 as a principal coordination interagency mechanism related to humanitarian aid.
- IASC operates under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), which is also the Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs.
- IASC selects the ERC.
- IASC is responsible for designing and agreeing upon humanitarian policies at the international level to improve the response to emergencies..
- IASC participants are the responsible UN agencies, NGOs, representatives of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, OIM and other partners.

Through its working group, IASC has developed guides for contingency planning and created simulations and risk analysis exercises to test the contingency plans .

IASC has been the driving force behind the development of guides of reference for the protection of displaced persons in natural disasters.

IASC initiated the Humanitarian Reform in 2005.

Need more information?

<http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/content/about/default.asp>

ii. Inter-Agency Working Group on Risk, Emergencies and Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean (REDLAC)

What is it?

REDLAC is the adaptation of IASC at a regional level. REDLAC is a regional coordination platform of humanitarian affairs composed of members of the United Nations Regional Offices with a humanitarian mandate, such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Federation Societies, international NGOs and humanitarian donors. Humanitarian topics of regional interest are discussed with the aim of increasing the efficiency of humanitarian actions.

What is its purpose?

REDLAC provides a platform of information exchange, reflection and activities that allow the optimization of actions for the preparation and response aimed at preventing and alleviating the suffering of vulnerable populations to natural disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean.

How can REDLAC be accessed?

Humanitarian actors can request REDLAC support in contingency planning, situation analysis, capacity building and other activities through contacting OCHA, its Secretariat..

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- REDLAC is not an operative team. It is the grouping of 27 organizations under the theme of coordinating actions to seek value added.
- One of its functions is to serve as a means for the operative information exchange during the first hours of a disaster
- It is based on the principles of the Global Humanitarian Platform, 2007: equality, complementarity, transparency, mutual respect, responsibility and diversity.
- REDLAC supports the national level with products, training and missions.
- REDLAC produces concrete products such as the Guide for Governments, Fact Sheets of International Organizations, Overview of Trends, Roster of Humanitarian Personnel, Redhum, analysis of the sub-regional organization's strategic framework, and Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA), among others.

Tuesday, 12 January 2010, 1800 hours, Panama. One hour has elapsed since the earthquake in Haiti ended more than 220,000 lives. REDLAC is gathered in the City of Knowledge to exchange information and decide on joint deployment actions with 17 attending agencies. The following morning, the first members arrive in Haiti from the Dominican Republic to support the humanitarian coordination in situ.

Need more information?

Redhum / REDLAC in action from the City of Knowledge <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wvj2pR5dJJA>

OCHA, REDLAC Secretariat
119 Vicente Bonilla Street, PO-Box 0843-03096
City of Knowledge, Clayton, Balboa, Ancon, Panama
+ (507) 317 1748 ocha-rolac@un.org

iii. Cluster (Sector) Approach

What is it?

The cluster approach is the grouping of international humanitarian actors around a humanitarian sector such as water and sanitation, health, and shelter to coordinate the international actor response more efficiently. It recognizes a leading agency on behalf of the international community that facilitates the coordination of a cluster/sector. The leading agency acts as a point of reference and unique entry for the counterparts of the affected government, which should report to the RC/HC.

At the global level, each humanitarian sector has a leading agency where principal technical instruments are developed for humanitarian action. If the global lead agency does not have presence or capacity in a particular country, the cluster lead in that country may be another agency chosen on the basis of its in-country capacity. The designation of in-country cluster leads should be communicated to IASC and approved by the global cluster leads and the ERC.

At the national level, clusters/sectors should be developed in preparation for disaster response and should reflect national reality and organization. They should be inclusive for all humanitarian actors in a particular sector and include organizations such as the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and civil society actors committed to participating in coordinated agreements. The leading agency is responsible for establishing and maintaining strong coordination with national authorities, government and donors.

What is its purpose?

The cluster approach organizes the international response in support of the affected country by covering each key humanitarian sector.

The cluster approach arranges the division and complementation of work between organizations to better define the functions and responsibilities of the humanitarian organizations within each sector.

Who can activate the cluster approach?

The cluster approach is the structure with which the international system responds to the request for international assistance from the government. It should be used in preparedness as well as response; however, when additional support is required for adequate coordination of a sector, the RC/HC will request activation of the global cluster.

In the framework of international response to humanitarian crises, few sectors benefited from having international organizations with clear mandates for the sector. This situation has repeatedly resulted in an unpredictable and ad hoc humanitarian response with the inevitable gaps in capacity and response in some areas.

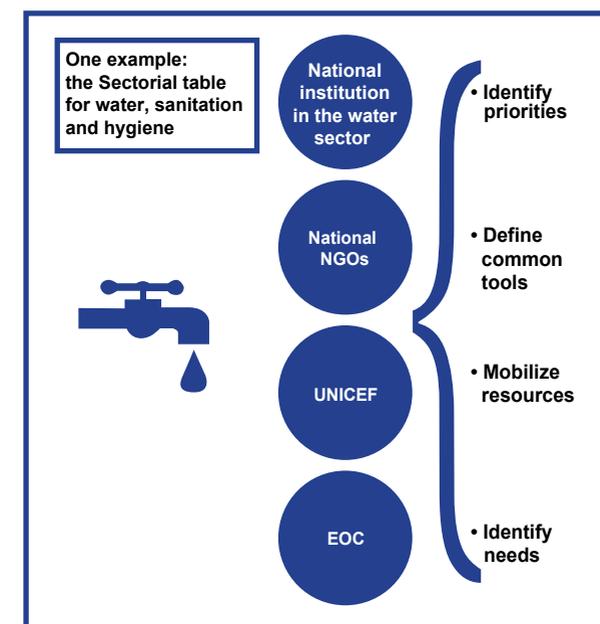
Where to go for more information?

In English: Platform: <http://onerresponse.info>

In Spanish: www.redhum.org

Guidance Note on the use of the sectorial approach to strengthen humanitarian response, (Inter-agency Standing Committee) November 24, 2006.

NATIONAL



THINGS TO REMEMBER

- The approach to multi-sectoral or cross sectoral issues should be performed jointly by several clusters/sectors.
- If there is no capacity in the country for the leader role of a cluster/sector to be assumed by a leading agency, the global leader should assist with the capacity and/or appropriate technical support.
- If an agency does not fulfill its role, the RC/HC should study alternatives jointly with national authorities to fill the gap.
- A cluster/sector may be led by more than one agency through a memorandum of agreement.
- Special care should be given to the topic of protection of the affected population, with emphasis given to vulnerable groups.
- Leaders of clusters/sectors are responsible for identifying the appropriate coordination mechanisms at the national and local levels.

- local (Humanitarian Country Teams, Cluster Approach, UNETT)

Global Cluster Leads¹⁴

Sector or area of activity	Global Leading Agency of Cluster/Sector
agriculture	FAO
camp coordination / conflict management related to displacements: related to disasters	UNHCR IOM
early recovery	UNDP
education	UNICEF/Save the Children Alliance
temporary shelters in emergency: related to conflict related to disasters	UNHCR IFRC (Convener) ¹⁵
emergency telecommunications	WFP
health	WHO
logistics	WFP
nutrition	UNICEF
protection	UNHCR
water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)	UNICEF

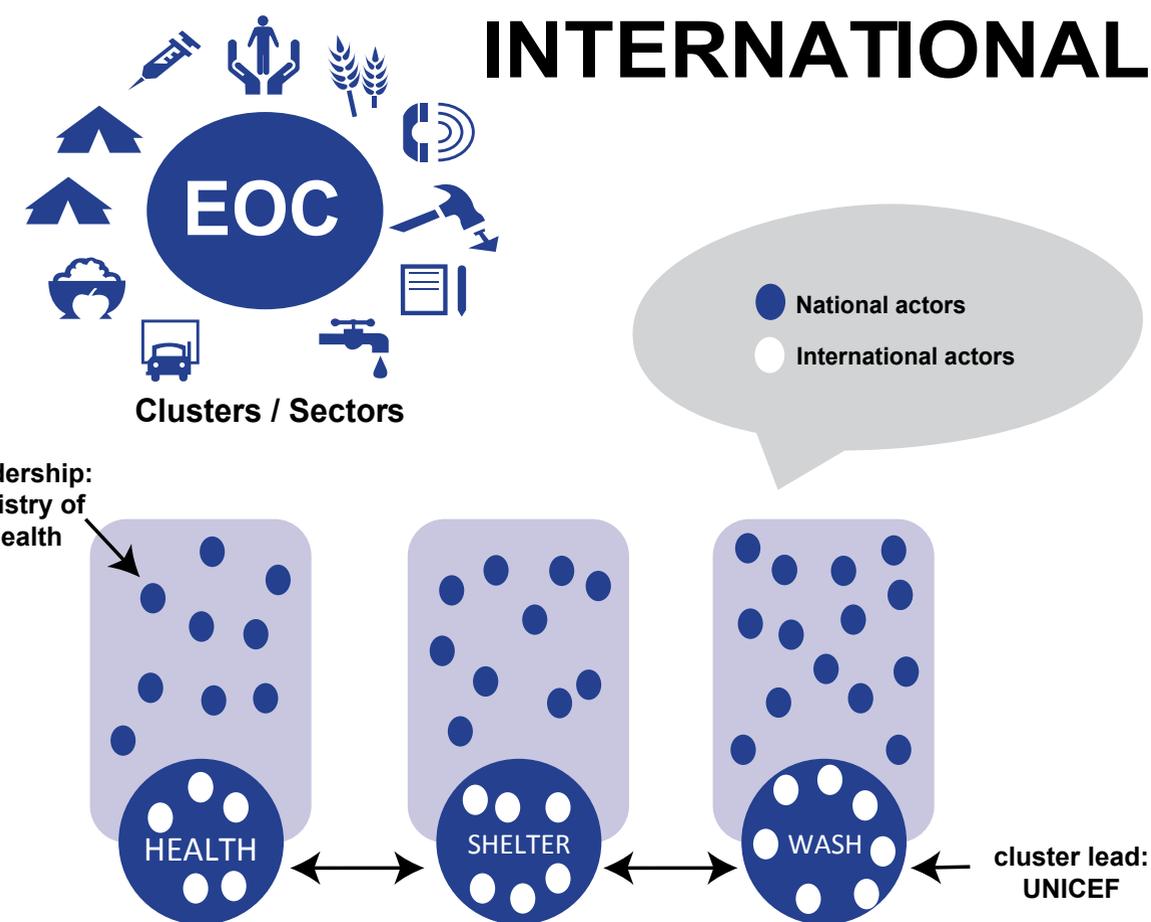
Specific actions of a cluster/sector

All the clusters/sectors will carry out the following activities, if possible, in cooperation with national authorities:

- ensure adequate planning of contingency and preparation
- lead the development of strategies and planning
- establish proper coordination mechanisms
- ensure an effective and coherent evaluation and analysis of the needs
- advocate for the mobilization of resources and advise on the allocation of joint funds
- ensure inclusion and work on priority cross-cutting issues such as age, diversity, environment, gender equity, HIV/AIDS, psychosocial support
- ensure that the participating humanitarian actors adhere to the existent technical standards and political guides
- ensure adequate monitoring, report, and diffusion of information
- lead training and construction of humanitarian worker capacities of the agencies as well as national and civil society authorities
- ensure that the humanitarian response be constructed based on the local ability to establish effective relationships with the national/local authorities and civil society
- **establish effective relationships with other cluster/sectors**

¹⁴ Sectors where the leadership and responsibility between the international humanitarian actors is clear are not included. This includes, for example, food assistance led by WFP and refugee themes led by UNHCR.

¹⁵ The IFRC is committed to provide leadership for the humanitarian community in emergency shelter in the event of a disaster. In a memorandum of understanding with OCHA, it was agreed that IFRC would be convener rather than cluster lead, would not accept accountability beyond its statutes and policies, would not be provider of last resort, and would not be accountable to any member of the UN system.



The clusters work to support the priority actions in each sector with the goal to fill gaps and fulfill immediate needs through inter-sectoral coordination, responsibility, accountability and predictability. The clusters are organized to provide a better-coordinated and more transparent response international requests of affected states.

iv. Humanitarian Country Team

What is it?

The Humanitarian Country Team is a coordination platform of humanitarian action at the national level. The RC/HC chairs the HCT. It is governed by the following principles: equality, transparency, a result-oriented approach, and complementarity. In Latin America, the HCTs are also known as *Redes Humanitarias* and are frequently co-facilitated by governments.

What is its purpose?

The purpose of the HCT is to provide a forum for the international humanitarian community present in-country for defining strategies and setting directions and policies for the preparedness, response and transition to recovery in disaster response coordination with national authorities

How is an HCT established?

The RC/HC invites the directors of international humanitarian organizations in-country to participate in the HCT.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- The HCT should seek to build on existing coordination structures as much as possible.
- Whenever possible, the HCT structures should complement all of the government led coordination.
- The representatives of lead cluster organizations give a sectoral perspective in HCT meetings as well as the views and opinions of their own organization.
- HCTs have several levels of decision-making: a strategic level chaired by the RC/HC and co-chaired by a representative of the national system; and a technical working group.
- A useful distinction: A UN Country Team (UNCT) comprises all heads of UN agencies, while the HCT includes only heads of relevant UN agencies and non-UN humanitarian actors. The UNCT focuses on the UN community as a whole, whereas the HCT addresses strategic issues of the humanitarian community. The HCT provides strategic and policy guidance to the overall response efforts, while country level clusters implement the strategy by coordinating operational response in their respective areas of expertise.

The creation of a humanitarian network has led to the development of joint response plans and disaster coordination protocols in August 2010 between humanitarian partners, the National System for Prevention, and the Nicaragua Disaster Prevention and Mitigation System, SINAPRED (Sistema Nacional de Prevención, Mitigación y Atención a Desastres).

In Peru, 40 members of the humanitarian network recently worked on a drill at the national level with the earthquake authorities in Lima and Callao. Eleven sectoral committees were founded, including committees specialized in protection, emergency shelters and logistics. Founded in 2006, the humanitarian network in Guatemala recently deployed a joint assessment of the drought in the north of the country, using a common methodology that facilitated the analysis of the needed response.

Need more information?
Guide for Humanitarian Country Team, IASC, 2009

v. United Nations National Emergency Technical Team (UNETT)

What is it?

UNETT brings together all technical focal points of United Nations and IOM. It is the technical body of the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) and is chaired by the RC/HC, who is normally also the UNDP resident representative in the country. UNETT reports directly to the UNDMT on issues of preparedness and response. UNETT is chaired by an annually rotating coordinator.

What is its purpose?

Under normal circumstances:

- to update the interagency emergency response plan and contingency plan for each scenario
- to establish contacts with technical counterparts and maintain the emergency directory / provider directory
- to alert the UNDMT about dangers or potential threats based on secondary information
- to participate in the construction of a national interagency emergency information system
- to prepare proposals for significant fund raising / emergency prevention activities

In situations of imminent danger or disaster:

- to participate in interagency assessment missions
- to analyze and evaluate requests for international assistance
- to support and facilitate the coordination of operations
- to make UN Information Centre available
- to prepare status reports and calls for humanitarian aid
- to support the UNDAC team

How is an UNETT established?

It is the responsibility of the UN RC/HC.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- There are currently about 22 UNETTs in the region.
- Each year, coordinators are trained in regional UNETT workshops in addition to their regular training.
- Some UNETTs are led by heads of agencies.

UNETT has been the cornerstone of United Nations emergency preparedness and response in Latin America and the Caribbean since 2003. UNETT has improved the level of preparedness in the region by implementing response plans, publishing standard emergency situation reports, creating a more efficient mobilization of funds and strengthening partnerships with other organizations, such as governments, NGOs and IFRC.

In line with humanitarian reform, the rapprochement with other partners outside of the preparation and disaster response systems is achieved through the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), in which UNETT plays an indispensable role.

Need more information?
Consult with the UN system in country

8

FINANCIAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION



8. FINANCIAL RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

During the first phase of response, international organizations have their own resources that initiate their response programs or ensure the purchase of relief items. Emergency funds from UN agencies and NGOs are intended to be used as a first response to emergency needs, which are by definition limited.

When the magnitude of an event requires more funding during the first phase of humanitarian response, more actors become involved such as bilateral actors (countries, international organizations and private sector organizations) as well as the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). In addition to the offer of support, it is important that the request for assistance be clearly structured. Donors require a coherent request from international humanitarian actors. A consolidated emergency appeal (Flash Appeal) with a common assessment of the need and coherent strategies is critical for mobilizing humanitarian assistance.

Financial Resource Mobilization Fact Sheets

i) OCHA Emergency Response Fund

What is it?

The OCHA Emergency Response Fund is used for first-aid activities and immediate response after a disaster. Established by UN General Assembly Resolution 59/141 (2004), its maximum amount is USD 100,000. The funds are accessed when a disaster exceeds the country or agency capacity to respond or when the RC/HC deems it necessary. OCHA Emergency Response Funds are usually channeled through the UNDP for local procurement or transportation of relief goods placed at the disposal of the RC/HC. However, the RC/HC may request and obtain consent from OCHA to transfer the funds to local authorities or NGOs.

What is its purpose?

The fund can be used to cover the most urgent needs of affected populations from natural, environmental and technological disasters. The fund provides an initial injection of capital so that agencies can launch humanitarian assistance.

This money is used for:

- local purchases of relief supplies, logistical support and, exceptionally, short-term recruitment to assist the RC/HC in relief coordination.

The fund does not finance:

- rehabilitation and reconstruction activities that establish mechanisms of coordination or recruitment.

How can OCHA Emergency Response Fund be accessed?

The RC/HC, the national or regional OCHA offices and the government of the country concerned can make an application through its permanent UN mission.


THINGS TO REMEMBER

- The amount allocated is based on the magnitude of the event /number of people affected.
- Once approved, the fund is disbursed within 10 days and must be spent within two months of the date of authorization.
- Funds are requested by the RC/HC and implemented directly by the authorities.
- The application must be submitted with a simplified budget.
- A resource request may be submitted for each different disaster within the same country.
- A narrative or financial report should be submitted within four months of the grant date of authorization.

In 2009, OCHA disbursed over USD 390,000 in Latin America and the Caribbean which accounts for 55 per cent of globally available OCHA ECG funds.

These emergency funds allowed for the purchase of basic relief items in eight countries in 2009 in order to help affected populations.

CALL THE OCHA REGIONAL OFFICE
E-mail to the Director of the Coordination Division of OCHA in New York, at ging@un.org or by Fax at +1- (212) 963-3630 or +1- (212) 963-1314).

ii) Other emergency funds from international partners

Following is a non-exhaustive list of United Nations agency funds:

- **The UNDP TRAC 1.1.3.** allows for immediate crisis response which includes the following areas of activity:

Support to the coordination functions of the RC/HC, including staffing of emergency management to assist the government, UNDMT, or UNDP office; supporting and contributing to the coordination, needs assessment, information and mobilization of resources, including making appeals to the international community for early recovery

Develop a basis for recovery, including helping formulate planning and management, recovery and transition plans in order to ensure a rapid deployment of technical experts.

Support for government appeals, including support for government initiatives through national disaster management agencies. UNDP resources can be used to supplement emergency funds provided by OCHA through the RC system.

To trigger the release of these funds, the government of the affected country must make an international appeal for assistance. The request is reviewed by the United Nations RC/HC.. The maximum available amount is USD 100,000.

- In the event of a disaster, **UNICEF** can respond to the emergency using funds from the national program. The national UNICEF representative can transfer up to USD 50,000 of the national program resources for emergency activities. These funds can also be transferred with the consent of the government and approval from headquarters.

- The **WFP** has the Immediate Response Account (IRA) which provides cash without restrictions for emergency operations. The IRA global account target is approximately USD 33 million. The IRA can be used to start emergency operations and relieve logistics bottlenecks by establishing, for example, emergency air bridges. Country offices have been given authority by the IRA to approve emergency operations up to USD 300,000.
- Depending on the magnitude of the disaster, the director-general of the **FAO** may approve projects of up to USD 400,000 at the request of the recipient government using the resources of the technical cooperation program.
- **UNHCR** has a limited reserve of central emergency equipment and support facilities for staff, such as vehicles, office equipment, and survival equipment in the communications field. The UNHCR also keeps an emergency fund of USD 25 million.
- In case of disaster, **PAHO/WHO** can respond to emergencies using regional funds for the mobilization of response teams and national program funds. The national PAHO/WHO representative can transfer resources for emergency activities with the consent of the government and the approval of headquarters.
- **The International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC)** created the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) in 1985 to ensure that immediate financial support is available for Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in case of emergency. DREF is designed to cover initial start up operations in emergencies.
- Several NGOs have emergency funds. Among them, **CARE** International Emergency Group, representing national member agencies, manages a fund for emergency response in order to respond to disasters in countries with a CARE presence or a CARE response team in countries without a CARE presence. The headquarters of **PLAN** International also have an emergency fund of USD 2 million that can be used immediately during first response in PLAN countries.
- Donors also have first response funding. To mention a few : **USAID**: A total of USD 100,000 in immediate relief funds for disasters are licensed by the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which is disbursed by the U.S. Embassy. **ECHO**: The European Union has several mechanisms of quick financing in the case of an emergency; primary emergency decisions (EUR 3 million in 72 hours and within 3 months), emergency decisions (EUR 30 million - 6 months) and non-urgent decisions (EUR 10 million).

Where can you find more information?

- <http://www.undp.org/cpr>
- <http://www.unicef.org>
- <http://www.wfp.org>
- <http://www.fao.org>
- <http://www.unhcr.org>
- <http://www.ifrc.org/sp/index.asp>
- <http://www.care.org>
- <http://www.worldvision.org>
- <http://www.oxfam.org>
- <http://www.usaid.gov/espanol>
- <http://europa.eu.int/comm/echo>

iii) United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund *Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF)*

What is it?

CERF is an emergency fund set up by the UN General Assembly in March 2006 for the purpose of providing economic resources more quickly, predictably and equitably to all of those affected by natural disasters and those facing complex emergencies. Administered by OCHA, the fund consists of a loan element (USD 50 million) and a grant element (USD 450 million). The grant element has two windows: the window for rapid response and the window for underfunded emergencies.

The response fund is used for the rapid disbursement of critical lifesaving activities during (1) sudden disasters (2) sudden deteriorations of an existing crisis or (3) interventions where time is critical.

What is its purpose?

The purpose of CERF is to give priority to providing assistance that saves the lives of people in need. It provides an initial injection of funds in order to allow agencies to launch humanitarian assistance.

How can CERF be accessed?

UN agencies and the IOM can apply for CERF funding through the preparation of a CERF funding request submitted to the CERF secretariat by the RC/HC. In-country sectoral lead agencies have the responsibility for preparing funding requests for their respective sector under the overall leadership of the RC/HC. Other humanitarian actors can receive funding indirectly by being implementing partners in projects receiving CERF funding.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Funding provided is commensurate with the magnitude of the emergency.
- The provision of CERF funding is dependent on the quality of the grant application.
- According to the criteria of a life-saving fund, CERF projects must address critical needs that have not been funded from other sources.
- The grant application must be based on evidence and humanitarian assessments, be inclusive, be made in consultation with NGOs and government and be transparent.
- NGO and other humanitarian partners should be part of the prioritization and implementation process.
- Projects must be essential for disaster response and meet the objectives of each budget.
- A plan for humanitarian response or Flash Appeal should form the basis for the selection of projects.

Since it was launched in 2006, CERF has contributed more than USD 1.8 billion for projects in 78 different countries.

In 2010, CERF disbursed some USD 238 million for rapid response in 33 countries. Another USD 139 million was used for underfunded emergencies in 17 countries.

CERF has more donors than any fund in UN history, with more than 120 countries and numerous other private actors making a total contribution of almost USD 2 billion since 2006.

Need more information?

CERF website: <http://cerf.un.org>

Submit applications through the UNRC to the CERF Secretariat - New York
Fax: 1 917 367 3171 cerf@un.org

iv) Flash Appeal

What is it?

The Flash Appeal is a strategy of initial inter-agency humanitarian response and a fund raising tool based on a rapid assessment of the magnitude and gravity of the disaster situation. It describes the roles and responsibilities, sectoral response plans and activities that require funding. It presents common financing needs over the course of up to six months.

What is its purpose?

- to provide a framework for a strategic, coordinated and inclusive plan
- to facilitate contributions
- to serve as an inventory of priority project proposals and therefore a barometer of financing response
- to avoid duplication and overlap of various organization appeals

Who can request a Flash Appeal?

The concerned government, the humanitarian country team and the RC/HC.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Since the first edition of the appeal must be sent no later than seven days after the disaster, estimates are only as good as the initial available information; therefore, the focus is on urgent needs.
- The appeal and its projects should be reviewed within a month after the release as new and more accurate information is made available.
- Agencies that publish their projects receive finances directly from donors or funds.
- All humanitarian partners and authorities partake in the construction of the humanitarian response plan.
- International humanitarian actors and NGOs can include projects in the Flash Appeal.
- The government is consulted in the formulation of the appeal.

International appeals channel approximately 60 per cent of total humanitarian assistance funds in the region. They have demonstrated their value as a tool for inter-agency coordination, advocacy and funding. Between 2007 and 2009, more than USD 150 million has been raised for less apparent emergencies such as droughts and landslides.

Need more information?

<http://ochaonline.un.org/humanitarianappeal/> www.reliefweb.int/FTS

Contact your counterpart at the UN or within the HCT.

v) Responsible donation (*Saber donar-Saber pedir*; Learn how to donate - Learn how to request)

What is it?

The Responsible Donor Campaign (*Saber donar-Saber pedir*) is an inter-agency initiative to promote quality and efficiency of humanitarian donations in Latin America and the Caribbean. It targets three priority audiences: the donor community, the national authorities and the media. It also provides tools to facilitate decision-making at the time of donation and at the time of requesting international assistance.

What is its purpose?

- to increase the amount of donations in order to raise standards and ensure quality relief at the time of a disaster
- to contribute to planning, practice and management of humanitarian donations, a two-way process that is the responsibility of both donors and recipients of aid

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Do not promote and/or spread myths that often circulate in disaster situations. It is not true that any aid, whatever it may be, is “better than nothing.”
- The sudden influx of large amounts of donations to disaster-affected countries presents a huge organization and management challenge for humanitarian actors, which can be an additional burden to manage and administer. If the situation is properly managed, this influx of donations can provide valuable and relevant help.
- The quality of aid is tied to the quality of the request.
- Humanitarian aid must respect the rights of affected communities and fundamental humanitarian principles.
- Donations should be based on a damage assessment and a needs analysis.
- If possible, encourage cash donations.
- There are specific donation recommendations in the areas of health, medicine, water, sanitation, hygiene, children and food.

Did you know that after the earthquake in El Salvador in 2001, approximately 37 per cent of donated medicines were found to be deficient?

After the earthquake in Pisco, Peru, there were 4,615 bags of donated used shoes. Were they necessary?

There is a similar responsible donation initiative at a global level. In 2003, a group of 17 donors launched Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) in an effort to improve humanitarian response. There are currently 37 countries working to accurately report their donations and be consistent and responsible in their grants to make funding more predictable.

Need more information?

<http://www.saberdonar.info/>

<http://www.goodhumanitariandonorship.org>

9.

TECHNICAL TEAM MOBILIZATION



Photo: OCHA, UNDAC Mission, Haiti, 2010.

9. TECHNICAL TEAM MOBILIZATION

Technical Team Mobilization Fact Sheets

i. UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC)

What is it?

UNDAC is a stand-by team of disaster management professionals who belong to government agencies, the UN and other disaster response organizations that may be deployed within 12 to 24 hours from the onset of an emergency. The team usually stays in the affected area during the initial phase of emergency response (2 to 4 weeks).

What is its purpose?

The purpose of UNDAC is to support the UN humanitarian network and the government concerned in assessment and needs analysis, to coordinate the international response and to carry out the management of information and liaison activities. UNDAC also sets up facilities for incoming international urban search and rescue teams (USAR) and establishes the operations focal point (OSOCC).

How is an UNDAC team requested?

The concerned government and /or the RC/HC requests an UNDAC team through OCHA.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- You may request an UNDAC team to support coordination efforts without a government request for international assistance.
- An UNDAC team deployment is free of charge. Team members are funded through preliminary agreements made with agencies and governments.
- The UNDAC team members chosen for deployment depend on need and may include an UNDSS security officer, an expert in environmental assessment, a civil military coordination officer, etc.
- An UNDAC team may request additional technical support for maps and relief-related software solutions through partnerships with organizations such as MapAction, *Télécoms sans Frontières*, the Americas Support Team (USAID), etc.
- An UNDAC team does not make detailed or sectoral evaluations, does not deliver humanitarian aid, and does not carry out sectoral coordination.
- An UNDAC team can also be requested to evaluate national disaster response capabilities (two weeks).
- Each country should have a national UNDAC focal point and provide OCHA with contact information.

Since 1993, UNDAC has conducted over 207 missions in over 90 countries or a third of the planet. In Latin America and the Caribbean, 72 missions have been carried out, half of them since 2004.

During the 2008 hurricane season, a series of UNDAC teams were mobilized to support the affected states. These were pre-positioned before the arrival of the hurricanes, making a rapid establishment of effective coordination possible by avoiding delays due to the closure of airports.

Between 2005 and 2010, six missions were carried out to evaluate the national response capabilities in Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Honduras, Peru and El Salvador.

UNDAC members benefit from regular training and high standards. There are 67 active UNDAC members in the Americas.

Need more information?

<http://ochaonline.un.org>

http://www.redhum.org/archivos/pdf/ID_113_Redhum-LAC-Guia-Solicitar_al_Equipo_UNDAC-OCHA-20080206.pdf

To request an UNDAC team:
Contact the Resident Coordinator of the UN, OCHA or contact your permanent mission to the UN in Geneva or New York.

Emergency Number
(4122) 917-1600

ii. Urban Search and Rescue (USAR)

International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG)

What is it?

USAR teams are trained experts who provide rescue and medical attention to save the lives of people trapped under structures collapsed in urban areas. The teams use specialized search and rescue equipment including search dogs. Teams can be operational in the country affected within 24 to 48 hours of the disaster and are self-sufficient throughout the duration of their deployment (usually 7 to 10 days).

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) is a network of natural disaster-prone countries especially involving collapsed structures. INSARAG member countries and organizations are dedicated to search and rescue in urban areas and operational coordination in the field, following an accepted methodology and standards. In 2005, INSARAG established a classification system for the international USAR. To facilitate international participation, INSARAG is organized within the framework of the United Nations. OCHA serves as the secretariat of INSARAG.

What is its purpose?

- to achieve greater efficiency in emergency preparedness and response to save lives, reduce suffering and minimize adverse consequences
- to improve efficiency in cooperation between international search and rescue teams working in disaster and the concerned government
- to develop internationally accepted procedures and systems for cooperation between the internationally operating USAR teams
- to develop skilled teams through training, adherence to international standards, self reliance and capacity building to avoid being a burden on the affected state or a danger to those trapped
- to promote and facilitate the development of national USAR capacity in disaster-prone countries

How is a USAR accessed?

The affected government, through the INSARAG focal point, requests USAR through the OCHA Secretariat.


THINGS TO REMEMBER

- International USAR teams are crucial when the national response teams are overwhelmed in their ability to rescue trapped victims.
- Having international USAR teams certified by the INSARAG and operating according to INSARAG standards is essential in allowing national authorities to establish effective coordination platforms for incoming USAR even before the arrival of an UNDAC team.
- The USAR team remains under the authority of its home country but operational deployment tasks are under the direction of the OSOCC.
- International USAR teams must adhere to the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) to ensure minimum standards of response. The classification of the national USAR teams is the responsibility of national authorities. INSARAG encourages countries to adopt the guidelines for national USAR teams found in Chapter G of the INSARAG guidelines (2011).
- Within the INSARAG network, each region has a regional group that meets once a year to discuss their experience during the previous response operations and make recommendations on global issues to the INSARAG Steering Group. In Costa Rica, USA/USAID/OFDA-LAC assumes the presidency of the regional group of the Americas, with the Emergency National Commission (CNE) of Costa Rica and the Institute of Civil Defense (INDECI), assuming the two vice presidencies.
- Each government should nominate a national focal point and if necessary, an operational focal point for INSARAG and inform the INSARAG Secretariat at OCHA Geneva.

When the earthquake in Haiti took place on 12 January 2010, it was 10:53 p.m. in Geneva.

At 11:15 p.m., OCHA-Geneva was alerted, as well as the INSARAG Secretariat.

At 11:33 p.m., the UNDAC and USAR teams were alerted. The virtual OSOCC provided an online communication platform for 5,000 disaster responders who helped to coordinate the more than 1,900 USAR team members from some 30 countries in Haiti.

50 teams with 175 dogs saved about 132 people in Haiti.

For humanitarian reasons, it is very important to arrive as soon as possible with teams trained to international standards.

There are currently two teams certified by INSARAG in the Americas, both in the U.S. In the next few years, the goal is to create more national USAR teams using INSARAG guidelines and that more teams will be internationally INSARAG certified. The INSARAG External Classification (IEC) rates international USAR teams as “medium” or “heavy” and is the responsibility of the INSARAG Secretary.

Need more information?

<http://ochaonline.un.org/insarag>

Contact the Resident Coordinator of the UN, OCHA or contact your permanent mission to the UN in Geneva or New York.

Emergency Number
(4122) 917-1600

iii. On Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC)

What is it?

OSOCC is a humanitarian coordination platform at the national level expected to be operational during the first phase of emergency response until the government of the country concerned, together with UN agencies and NGOs, takes responsibility for coordinating international teams. The structure of an OSOCC should be designed to assist the government in the concerned country with coordination and facilitation of international humanitarian assistance. The OSOCC role is to work closely with the Local Emergency Management Agency (LEMA) and to facilitate cooperation and coordination of international humanitarian assistance. It should also serve as a platform for information exchange between LEMA and different provider services during a disaster where international assistance is received.

What is its purpose?

- to act as a liaison between international actors and the government response in the affected country
- to provide a system to coordinate and facilitate the activities of international relief efforts at the site of a disaster, especially in an earthquake, where the coordination of many international USAR teams is critical to ensure optimal rescue efforts
- to provide a platform for cooperation, coordination and management of information among international aid agencies
- originally developed by INSARAG and OCHA to assist affected countries in coordinating international efforts in search and rescue after earthquakes; however, the principles of emergency management concept make OSOCC a valuable tool during any disaster that involves relief resources

When is an OSOCC established?

An OSOCC is established according to international standards as a matter of routine by the first arriving international humanitarian actors (after the UNDAC team) or the first arriving USAR who hands it over to UNDAC.


THINGS TO REMEMBER

- The virtual OSOCC coordination platform on the internet provides real time information on emergency and allows the exchange of information. Its aim is to update organizations and governments on the emergency situation, identify needs and plan the ongoing response efforts. Users must register online at: <http://vosocc.unocha.org/>
- Both USAR and humanitarian actors gather at a coordination center in the early hours of a disaster.
- The OSOCC does not replace existing mechanisms of coordination but facilitates the integration of international actors in the system of national response. It disappears when international players depart.
- The UNDAC team, members of a USAR team or OCHA can handle the installation and management of OSOCC in the first weeks of an emergency until international actors depart and the authorities assume full control of operations.
- The OSOCC concept is an internationally agreed upon methodology.

The creation of an OSOCC in Haiti in the early hours of the emergency allowed the coordination of a search and rescue phase of 50 teams, 1,900 rescuers, and 75 dogs.

The OSOCC helped coordinate the work of most of the 1,200 organizations that arrived in Haiti within the first month. They began the first sectoral meetings and also provided a platform for technical and political coordination with the authorities in the early weeks.

More than just a platform, the OSOCC was the control center for the first few weeks in Haiti.

Need more information?
<http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc>

iv. Military and Civil Defense Assets (MCDA)

What is it?

MCDA include relief personnel, equipment (air, ground and maritime transport and communication), supplies and services (medical support services, security) that are contributed by foreign military and civil defense organizations for humanitarian assistance. MCDA is provided at no cost to the affected country or the United Nations and is regulated by international agreements (Oslo Convention 1994, revised in 2007).

What is its purpose?

The purpose of MCDA is to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance as an option of last resort when all other sources are inadequate, exhausted or unavailable. The arrival of foreign troops to a disaster scenario requires proper civil-military coordination, which can be facilitated by the UN through the UN CMCOORD unit working under the auspices of OCHA.

How can MCDA be accessed?

The RC or national governments can request MCDA. A mechanism of centralized request for MCDA, facilitated by OCHA, was established in 1994 to avoid having the affected state deal with bilateral requests for assistance of civilian and military assets.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Any use of MCDA must be clearly limited in time and scale and include an exit strategy.
- MCDA personnel should be clearly distinguished from forces engaged in other military missions.
- The humanitarian community should use military assets only as a last resort when the commercial and civilian solutions have been exhausted or are not readily available.
- When they are under UN control, these assets are called "MCDA of the United Nations."
- Cooperation between civilians and international military forces cannot be improvised and requires previous training and support personnel.
- MCDA is free to the recipient state and is provided in accordance with the Oslo Guidelines on indirect assistance.

In situations like Haiti where there were more than 25,000 foreign troops in January 2010 from 15 nations, an additional 17 nations represented in the UN peacekeeping mission (MINUSTAH), more than 59 ships docking and 150 flights landing daily, and more than 1,200 registered organizations in the first month, the coordination between military and civilians becomes a real challenge for any state.

For this purpose, experienced UN civil-military liaison officers were sent.

A coordination platform to support the need of the humanitarian community needs and military logistic capacities was created.

Both sides were trained in humanitarian principles and the Oslo Convention.

Need more information?
<http://ochaonline.un.org/cmcs>

Contact OCHA - through your permanent mission to the UN or directly.
 Telephone: +41-22917-2010 Fax: +41-22917-0023 (Geneva)
 Email: ochagva@un.org

v. OCHA / UNEP Joint Environment Unit

What is it?

The Unit UNEP / OCHA Joint Environment Unit is the United Nations mechanism to mobilize and coordinate emergency assistance to countries facing environmental emergencies and natural disasters with significant environmental impacts.

What is its purpose?

The Joint Environment Unit is specifically focused on mobilizing and coordinating international assistance in environmental emergencies. Such assistance may be used in two ways:

- to respond to environmental emergencies
- to assist developing countries increase their preparedness for response to environmental emergencies

How can the OCHA/UNEP Joint Environment Unit be accessed?

The Joint Environment Unit can be requested by the concerned country.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Environmental emergencies can be either technological/industrial accidents or secondary environmental impacts of natural disasters or complex emergencies. Environmental emergencies are considered to cause or threaten to cause severe environmental damage and loss of lives and livelihoods.
- The Joint Environment Unit has a 24/7 system with a dedicated phone.
- Specialists, chemical experts in the management of waste, geologists and engineers can be dispatched to the area to make specific evaluations.
- The Joint Environment Unit can contact the affected countries with specific donors.
- The Joint Environmental Unit has assessment tools such as the Flash Environmental Assessment Tool (FEAT) and the Hazard Identification Tool (HIT) designed specifically for environmental disasters.
- The Unit may be requested as support to the UNDAC team.

In October 2008, by request of government of Honduras, a UNEP / OCHA Joint Environment Unit conducted a risk assessment of nine geological flood-affected areas. The recommendations on monitoring and prevention resulted in a recommendation not to rebuild in this high risk area.

In 2007, after the earthquake in Pisco, Peru, international experts arrived to oversee the safe handling of medical waste, garbage and debris in an unsafe landfill on a beach in the natural reserve of Pisco.

Need more information?
<http://ochaonline.un.org/OCHAHome/AboutUs/Coordination/EnvironmentalEmergencies/tabid/6037/language/en-US/Default.aspx>
<http://ochaonline.un.org/ochaunep>

Emergency contacts for the unit

During office hours: Tel: +41 22 917 44 19, Fax: +41 22 917 02 57

24/7: Duty Officer: +41 79 506 1516, via OCHA GVA ochaunep@un.org & Duty Officer: +41 22 917 2010

vi) Humanitarian Warehouse

What is it?

Several international organizations have supply warehouses in their region, particularly in Panama. These include the United Nations (WFP, UNICEF), the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), the Spanish Agency for Development Cooperation (AECI) and Doctors without Borders (MSF).

What is its purpose?

- to provide logistical support for humanitarian agencies to enable them to respond to emergencies 24 to 48 hours after a request
- to ensure secure sources of supply of essential goods

The UN Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) in Panama also offers various services to members, such as:

- free pre-positioning of supplies
- real-time inventory reports
- quick and easy customs settlements
- cargo consolidating
- access to virtual inputs at competitive prices
- the ability to borrow and provide inputs

In addition to regional warehouses, the United Nations maintains a warehouse of relief supplies in Brindisi, Italy, managed by WFP, with a stockpile of basic non-food survival items such as tents, blankets, kitchen sets, generators, water purification and distribution equipment and tools donated by various governments.

How can UNHRD services and stocks be accessed?

Governments can access UNHRD services directly through contact with UNHRD; warehouse stocks are owned by the various humanitarian actors and are allocated by them.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- The regional logistics group in Panama, REDLAC, aims to establish a register of relief items, database suppliers, logistics capacity assessments (LCA), management and exchange of logistics information and standard operating procedures for shipment.

In 2010, the UNHRD in Panama dispatched more than 35 shipments of 523 tonnes of essential goods.

After the earthquake in Peru in June 2001, a WFP-chartered airplane from Brindisi brought UNHRD plastic sheeting and other non-food items to the affected area to accommodate more than 60,000 families whose homes were destroyed during the earthquake.

Need more information?

www.logisticscluster.org/Panama

unhrd.customerservice@wfp.org
Office + (507) 317 6319

10. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT



Photo: OCHA, UNDAC Mission, Haiti, 2010

10. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Achieving an effective plan of action depends on the efficient collection and analysis of a great amount of information. Information management during emergencies refers to the set of processes that, when applied properly, improve the efficiency of individual or group response actions. If we consider that all action is based on information, the best actions are taken when the information is quickly accessible, easily understandable and reliable.

Resolution 59/212 of the United Nations of March 2004 calls on Member States, UN agencies and international organizations to act together to minimize gaps in disaster management. All humanitarian actors should identify ways to improve processes, systems and information networks for data collection on the premise that appropriate analysis of accurate information facilitates sound decision making.

The absence of pre-established critical variables, common protocols and standardized tools leads to the loss of resources, time and valuable opportunities in humanitarian response, which is most often reflected in the duplication of efforts.

Several tools and services of OCHA are available to assist national authorities and the national and international humanitarian community in the management of information in emergencies. These good practices seek to harmonize actions and concepts related to the good management of information.

We invite all humanitarian actors to learn about these products and services to improve efficiency in humanitarian response. The following are some key products and services available to national and international humanitarian community:

Information Management Fact Sheet

i. REDLAC Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA)

What is it?

In 2006, the regional interagency group REDLAC designed a methodology for rapid assessment of humanitarian needs for humanitarian teams in countries to facilitate the preliminary assessment of damage in the initial stages of an emergency. It is an agreed methodology for over 27 humanitarian actors (UN, NGOs, IFRC, donors) from various technical specialties. Revised in 2008, the methodology offers a holistic humanitarian approach to response.

What is its purpose?

Whereas many organizations or institutions have their own tool of evaluation, none had been designed based on a holistic consensus of interagency concerns for rapid use.

The RNA regional methodology proposes various tools (guide, questions, and verification short list) to facilitate the collection of data for analysis and decision making. It covers comprehensive topics such as protection, shelter, and livelihoods, which are usually absent from traditional methodologies.

The basic data collected through this methodology should be classified by sector to facilitate future operations of the specialized agencies.

How can RNA materials and resources be accessed?

All humanitarian agencies have access to RNA methodologies and tools, which can be found on Redhum. Support for training or the application of RNA can be requested of the HCT, REDLAC, or OCHA.

Originally designed for HCTs, RNA has benefited some national systems by updating its national damage and needs assessment instruments and has been adapted at sub-regional levels, providing a more comprehensive approach beyond the traditional counting of destroyed homes and affected people.

This methodology has been used in approximately ten countries, benefitting national authorities, humanitarian country teams and UNDAC missions.

For preparedness, HCTs should be aware of the importance of rapid assessments and agree on procedures before disasters happen.

Need more information?
<http://www.redhum.org>

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- The REDLAC RNA focuses on speed above accuracy, based on an agreed-upon methodology.
- It is different from a sectoral assessment in its range, specificity, time of collection and analysis of data.
- RNA does not replace the existing methodologies, but serves as guide to improve national methodologies.
- RNA is based in the selection of main sectoral indicators and favors the inclusion of various multidisciplinary actors and cross-cutting issues such as gender and HIV/AIDS.
- RNA is more precise when groups collecting the information are familiar with the methodology.
- For governments, this methodology offers a guide to improve National Needs Assessment, a toolbox for standard emergency operations with humanitarian actors and a holistic humanitarian approach.

ii. Post-disaster assessment

Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) and Damage and Loss Assessment (DaLA)

What is it?

These two methodologies were developed by the international community to support the states in the multi-sectoral quantification of the economic impact of disasters and priorities that will be set during the rehabilitation and reconstruction phases.

The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) is a government-led exercise that gathers information on the disaster impact in a wide range of sectors, early and long term recovery needs, and practices into a single and comprehensive report. The Damage and Loss Assessment (DaLA) of the Economic Commission for Latin America and Caribbean (ECLAC) analyzes in detail the damage to infrastructure and property, the loss of income and related costs, and macroeconomic and social side effects after an event.

What is its purpose?

The PDNA provides an estimate of the value of disaster related damages and of needs related to the human development of the affected population. The final product of the PDNA is an early recovery framework defining recovery needs and priorities.

How can PDNA and DaLA be initiated?

PDNA can be requested by the concerned government from UNDP; DaLA, with a cost of USD 50,000, can be requested from ECLAC.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- PDNA is based on initial rapid humanitarian assessments to extract data related to recovery. It complements other assessments.
- A PDNA is completed within 4 to 6 weeks.
- Globally, PDNA is governed by a tripartite agreement between the World Bank, UN system and the European Union.
- PDNA is the method of choice of these actors to maximize consistency in order to (a) ensure leadership of government in the assessment of recovery, planning and resource mobilization and (b) facilitate the coordination of demands from the international organizations to governments to deal with post-disasters scenarios.

In June 2010, the government of Guatemala requested the cooperation of the international community to assist in the quantification of damages, losses and needs generated by two disasters: the eruption of Pacaya volcano and Tropical Storm Agatha.

It was performed according to methodologies developed by PDNA and DaLA to identify damage and losses and the estimated increase in of human development needs to define a framework for post-disaster recovery.

Need more information?
www.eclac.org / www.undp.org

iii. Emergency Situation Report (SITREP)

What is it?

SITREP is a UN system product produced by UNCTAD to report a situation after a disaster or natural event of magnitude. It is a precise report of easy understanding that communicates information about an emergency and consolidates information about response activities carried out during the event. It is a *sin qua non* condition to additional support of funds and response teams.

What is its purpose?

A SITREP summarizes quickly and accurately the overall situation of an emergency and the activities developed by humanitarian agencies. It advocates for less visible humanitarian issues or forgotten emergencies such as droughts.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- SITREP is the tool for reporting emergencies at the global level, which is an OCHA mandate.
- Reporting on ongoing emergencies is essential for the UN system at the country level.
- The SITREP methodology ensures a comprehensive view of the needs and the partner actions, providing a common analysis of the situation.
- The SITREP format is standard in the 22 UNCTADs of the region. Its structure can also be used for other reports.

Some guidelines for SITREPs:

- A SITREP is a short document using a pre-established format and HCT editorial guidelines.
- The actors who contribute to a SITREP should consider editorial style in addition to quantitative information.
- A quality SITREP will establish a flow of information and include timeframes and responsible people.
- Statistics should highlight key/critical areas for humanitarian action.
- A SITREP is neither an historical nor a technical document; rather, it is a quick and informative decision-making tool.
- Organizing needs and activities by sector facilitates the wide use of a SITREP.

In 2010, 47 OCHA SITREPs were published in the region.

In addition, more than 400 SITREPs by other organizations were published on Redhum.

In the preparation phase, humanitarian groups should agree on the required processes to maintain a good flow of information during the emergency phase.

The UN system SITREPs provide a common general analysis of a situation by highlighting the emergency essentials.

Need more information?
<http://www.redhum.org/kitemergencia.php>

iv. Humanitarian Information Network Redhum

What is it?

Redhum is both a website (www.redhum.org) and a regional network with 11 representatives within emergency management offices. It is an interagency regional project coordinated by the OCHA Regional Office and supported by organizations in the REDLAC group to promote efficient information management.

What is its purpose?

Redhum's purpose is to make the processes of information management known in order to facilitate the relationship between humanitarian actors. This includes promoting and establishing access to timely, high quality information.

How can Redhum be accessed?

Humanitarian actors can disseminate information to a growing number of readers by sending it to: submit@redhum.org.
For questions or suggestions, send to: webmaster@redhum.org

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- The Redhum team is present in ten countries of the region through information officers located in the offices of civil defense / protection.
- The Redhum site receives and disseminates not only official documents but also news, maps, activities, work vacancies, contact lists and images related to humanitarian issues.
- The Redhum site has a list over 1.200 humanitarian actors working in the region, which is constantly updated through contributions from the humanitarian community.
- The Redhum team supports in-country humanitarian team members in activities and workshops related to information management.
- The Redhum team works to disseminate concepts and good practices about information management to the humanitarian community.
- The Redhum team seeks to associate with successful initiatives in other humanitarian areas to create alliances and strengthen the union of platforms.

Redhum has a database with over 35,000 records and information which is easy to access through search engines and filters. Since 2007, Redhum has stored information on approximately 100 emergencies. In 3 years of operation, Redhum has captured an audience of about 250,000 regular visitors and over 1 million page visits. Redhum maintains a presence on several social networks like Facebook and Twitter, with a subscription service via email or SMS alerts to mobile phones.

Need more information?
<http://www.redhum.org>

v. ReliefWeb

What is it?

ReliefWeb provides timely, reliable and relevant information as events are developing in a disaster. ReliefWeb is the website leader in online information in English about humanitarian emergencies and disasters and also emphasizes the coverage of "forgotten emergencies."

What is its purpose?

ReliefWeb was designed specifically to help the international humanitarian community to carry out humanitarian assistance in emergency situations efficiently.

How can ReliefWeb be accessed?

Humanitarian actors can disseminate information to a growing number of readers by sending it to: submit@reliefweb.int.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

ReliefWeb is used to highlight important information and interesting facts for governments:

- ReliefWeb was launched in 1996 and is administered by OCHA.
- ReliefWeb has three offices located in different time zones (Kobe, Geneva and New York).
- ReliefWeb has more than one million visitors per month and more than 150,000 email subscribers.
- ReliefWeb provides the latest information about requests for emergency funds and financial tracking.
- ReliefWeb provides maps that illustrate humanitarian needs and assistance activities.
- ReliefWeb provides a syndicated web service to send custom content to partnering websites.
- ReliefWeb is on Facebook and Twitter.

Need more information?
<http://www.reliefweb.int>



“Knowing is not enough;
we must apply. Willing is
not enough; we must do.”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe



11. ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

AECID Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation

CAPRADE Andean Committee for Disaster, Prevention and Relief

CAAH Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Centre

CDEMA The Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency

Central Registry Registry of Military and Civilian Defense Resources

CEPREDENAC The Coordination Centre for Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America

CERF United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund

ChildFund Childfund International

DPKO Department of Peacekeeping Operations

ECHO European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office

ECLAC Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

EDAN Damage and Needs Assessment

ERC Emergency Response Coordinator

FACT Field Assessment Coordination Teams of the IFRC

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

FCSS/ESB Field Coordination Support Section / Emergency Services Branch – OCHA

GDACS Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (Web)

GEF Global Environment Fund

HIC Humanitarian Information Centre

IASC Inter-agency Standing Committee

IFRC International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

INEE Interagency Network on Education in Emergencies

INSARAG The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group

IOM International Organization for Migration

LEMA Local Emergency Management Authority

MCDA Military Civil Defense Assets

MSF Doctors without Borders

NGO Non-governmental organization

NOAA National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

OCHA Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

OHCHR Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

OSOCC On-Site Operations Coordination Centre

PADRU Pan-American Disaster Response Unit
PAHO/WHO Pan American Health Organization/ World Health Organization

RC/HC United Nations Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator in the country
Redhum Humanitarian Information Network for Latin America and the Caribbean
REDLAC Inter-Agency Working Group for Risk, Emergency and Disasters in Latin America and the Caribbean
RIT Regional Intervention Teams of the IFRC
RMCD Registry of Military and Civilian Defense Resources
RNA Rapid Needs Assessment
RNAT Rapid Needs Assessment Team
ROLAC OCHA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean

SG Secretary-General of the United Nations
SICA Central American Integration System
SINAPRED Nicaragua National System for Prevention, Mitigation and Disaster Response
SITREPS Situation Reports
SUMA PAHO/WHO Supply Management System

TACRO The Americas and Caribbean Regional Office

UN United Nations Organization
UN-CIMCOORD United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination
UN-Habitat United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNAIDS United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT United Nations Country Team
UNDAC United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDMT United Nations Disaster Management Team
UNDP / BCPR United Nations Development Programme / Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
UNDSS United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNEP United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNETT United Nations Emergency Technical Team
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
UNHCHR United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHRD United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot, Brindisi, Italia
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
UNISDR United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
UNOPS United Nations Office for Project Services
USAID/OFDA/ROLAC United States Agency for International Development. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
USAR Urban Search and Rescue

WFP World Food Programme

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13. ADDENDUM

ANNEX 1 - Resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly

Resolutions of United Nations General Assembly

46/182, 19 December 1991, strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system:

BO1 Humanitarian assistance is of fundamental importance for the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies.

BO2 Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

BO3 The sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of the States will have to be fully respected, in accordance with the Accreditation of the United Nations. In this context, humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country and in principle, on the basis of a request issued by the affected country.

BO4 Each state has the responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring on its territory. Therefore, the affected State has the lead role in the initiation, organization, coordination and delivery of humanitarian assistance within its territory.

BO5 The magnitude and duration of many emergencies may be beyond the response capacity of many affected countries. Therefore international cooperation is extremely important in order to deal with emergencies and strengthen the resilience of affected countries. Such cooperation should be provided in accordance with international and national laws. Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations working impartially and with strictly humanitarian purposes should continue to make its important contribution with the task of complementing the efforts of the countries.

BO6 It calls upon States whose populations are in need of humanitarian assistance to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance by such humanitarian organizations, especially the provision of food, medicine, shelter and medical care, for which access to the victims is essential.

BO7 States located near the emergency zones are urged upon to be closely involved in international cooperative efforts with the affected countries to facilitate as far as possible, the transit of humanitarian assistance.

BO12 The United Nations have a central and unique role to play in the task of providing leadership and coordinating the efforts of the international community to support affected countries.

49/139, 3 February 1995, strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system:

BO3... recognizes the need to develop and further strengthen the coordination across the system, including cooperation among operational agencies, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and non-governmental organizations, in accordance with the settlements of the 46/182 resolution, to improve the rapid response and coordinated response to natural disasters and other emergencies, while maintaining the non-political, neutral and impartial character of humanitarian activities.

51/194, 17 December 1996, strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations system:

BP12 The urgent need to guarantee, respect and promote international humanitarian laws, principles and international standards in this field as well as security of humanitarian personnel and the need for the States whose populations are in need of humanitarian assistance to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations who provide such assistance, including food supplies, medicines, shelter and health care, for which access to the victims is essential, and restating that humanitarian assistance should be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

54/233, 22 December 1999, international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in case of natural disasters, from relief to development:

BP4 Emphasizing that the affected State has the primary responsibility for initiating, organizing, coordinating and providing humanitarian assistance within its territory and facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations to mitigate the consequences of natural disasters.

58/114, 17 December 2003, strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations:

BP4 Restating the principles of neutrality, humanity and impartiality of humanitarian assistance.

BP5 Recognizing that the independence, meaning the humanitarian objectives are distinct from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any agent may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented, is also an important guiding principle of the provided humanitarian assistance.

BP8 Restating that the States are those who have the primary responsibility to deal with victims of humanitarian emergencies occurring on its territory, while recognizing that the magnitude and duration of many emergencies may be beyond the response capacity of many affected countries.

59/141, 15 December 2004, strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations:

BP8 Also restating that States whose population is in need of humanitarian assistance should facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations and that nearby states of where there are humanitarian emergencies, should facilitate, as far as possible the free movement of humanitarian assistance.

BO9 It calls upon the First Secretary to ensure that in the concept and implementation of integrated missions of the United Nations, the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality as well as independence in the provision of humanitarian assistance are taken into account.

60/124, 15 December 2005, strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations:

BP4 Restating the principles of neutrality, humanity, impartiality and independence for the provision of humanitarian assistance.

BO8 Recognizes the importance of the work of regional organizations to support the efforts of the States to enhance the international cooperation in disaster response and encourages the Member States and where appropriate, regional organizations to strengthen international legal frameworks and operational relief in case of natural disaster, taking into account, as appropriate, in the National Facilitating Guidelines, the International Regulations for Disaster Relief and the initial recovery assistance, adopted within the thirtieth Red Cross and Red Crescent International Conference held in Geneva in November 2007.

60/124, 15 December 2005-2, strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations:

OP14 Urges donors to take further steps to improve their policies and practices with respect to humanitarian action in this regard, welcomes the continuing efforts on the initiative of the good humanitarian donation.

OP15 Decides to extend the current Central Emergency Revolving Fund and become the central fund for emergency action by including a component of donations based on voluntary contributions, to be replenished at regular intervals, so as to ensure more predictable and timely response to humanitarian emergencies, with the objectives of promoting early action and response to reduce loss of life, improve the response to the needs in time is critical and strengthen the core elements of humanitarian response in crises in insufficient funding situations, based on demonstrable needs and priorities established in consultation with the affected State, as appropriate.

OP17 Affirms its role to provide overall policy guidance on the use of the fund to maximize its impact and improve its performance and encourages the Economic and Social Council to examine the well functioning of the funding.

OP19 It calls upon the First Secretary, based on its report on improving the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, to make the administrative and management arrangements necessary to facilitate the creation of the donations component and develop appropriate mechanisms of reports and accountability to ensure that the resources allocated by the Fund are used in the most efficient, effective and transparent way possible.

OP20 Urges all Member States and invites the private sector and all interested individuals and institutions to consider voluntary contributions to the fund, welcomes the financial commitments already made and emphasizes that contributions should be additional to the existing commitments of humanitarian programming and not at the expense of resources for international cooperation for development.

OP22 Also requests the First Secretary to commission an independent audit of the Fund at the end of the second year of operation to assess, inter alia, renewable and donation components of the Fund, its administration, criteria for allocating resources, the actions and responses through which they took place, as well as its ability to meet its objectives, and to submit a report thereon at its sixty-third session.

61/134, 14 December 2006, strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

OP13 Urges to donors to provide adequate, predictable and flexible resources based on estimated needs and in relation to them and encourages efforts to implement the principles of good humanitarian donation.

OP15 Also welcomes the efforts of the First Secretary to establish reports and mechanisms for accountability of the Fund and underlines the importance of ensuring that the resources are allocated and used efficiently, effectively and transparently as possible.

62/94, 17 December 2007, strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations:

OP15 Urges donors to provide adequate, timely, predictable and flexible resources based on estimated needs and in relation to them, including for emergency situations that do not benefit of sufficient funding, and encourages them to apply the principles of good practices in humanitarian donations.

OP17 Restates the goal of 500 million U.S. dollars for 2008, urges all Member States and invites the private sector and all interested individuals and institutions to consider voluntary contributions to the Central Fund for Emergency Response and highlights that contributions should be additional to existing commitments of humanitarian programming and resources for international cooperation for development.

ANNEX 2 - Basic Recommendations of International Disaster Response Law (IDRL)**Facilitation and National Regulations of International Disaster Relief Operations and Initial Recovery Assistance Guidelines (IDRL)**

Part I: Core responsibilities

3. Responsibilities of the affected States

1. The affected State has the primary responsibility of ensuring risk reduction, disaster relief and initial recovery assistance within its territory. The Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies, as auxiliaries to public authorities in the humanitarian environment, and other agents in national civil society, play an important role in national support.
2. The affected State which determines that a disaster situation exceeds its national capacity to cope should seek international and / or regional assistance to meet the needs of those affected.
3. The affected State has the sovereign right to coordinate, regularize and monitor disaster relief and recovery assistance (30IC/07/R4/Addendum 4) supplied by the actors who offer assistance in its territory, in accordance with international law.

4. Responsibilities of the assisting agents

1. The agents who provide assistance and staff should at all times observe the national law of the affected State and the applicable international law, co-ordinate their actions with the national authorities and respect the human dignity of those affected by a disaster.
2. Agents who provide assistance should ensure that disaster relief and initial recovery assistance is provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality and particularly that;
 - a) aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need;
 - b) aid is provided without discrimination on grounds of nationality, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, class, gender, disability, age or political opinion to all those affected by a disaster;
 - c) aid is provided without intent to further a political or religious view, intervene in the internal affairs of the affected State or to obtain a commercial profit from the charitable assistance;
 - d) aid is not used as a mean to gather sensitive information of political, economic or military nature, which are unrelated to the rescue operations in case of disaster or initial recovery assistance.
3. As soon as possible, assisting agents should ensure disaster relief and initial recovery assistance that;
 - a) suits the special needs, if any, of women and particularly vulnerable groups, which may include children, displaced persons, the elderly, people with disabilities and people living with HIV and other debilitating diseases;
 - b) is adequate to the needs of victims and in agreement with applicable international quality standards
 - c) coordinates with other national and international actors who provide assistance;
 - d) provides and is conducted in a manner respecting the customs and cultural, social and religious traditions (30IC/07/R4/Addendum 5).
 - e) is carried out with appropriate involvement of victims, including women, young and old, in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
 - f) is provided by qualified personnel with adequate training;
 - g) is consistent with the organizational capacities of the agency;
 - h) is based on local capacities to reduce disaster risks, and is executed with the purpose to strengthen and reduce future vulnerabilities to disasters;
 - i) is carried out so as to minimize negative impacts on the community, economy, labor markets, the objectives of development and on the local environment; and
 - j) is supplied in a transparent manner with appropriate communication over the activities and the financing.

5. Additional responsibilities of all States

1. The States providing funding to other agents who provide assistance should do their work in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4.
2. All States should actively encourage people interested in making financial contributions or donations to international operations of disaster relief or initial recovery, as much as possible, or else to donate only those items specifically requested by the affected State.

6. Responsibility for acts of diversion and the intended use of resources

1. The States and humanitarian organizations providing assistance should cooperate to prevent the illicit diversion, misappropriation or fraud in relation to property, equipment or resources destined for disaster relief and initial recovery and initiate appropriate action.
2. The affected States should use the funds and relief goods received through donations and which were accepted during a crisis situation in a manner consistent with the stated intention for which they were given.

ANNEX 3 – Main steps of humanitarian response

Following is a summary the key steps for activating some of the mechanisms of response which, in case of disaster, the international humanitarian system makes available to governments through the United Nations Resident Coordinator (RC/HC), many of which are mobilized and managed through the United Nations Office for the Humanitarian Affairs Coordination (OCHA).

Main steps of humanitarian response

- In principle, the affected country must maintain a focal point, develop contingency plans and maintain domestic USAR teams according to INSARAG Guidelines and Methodology, implement and maintain a process for launching a call for international assistance in a timely manner and have the procedures established for receiving international teams in the country in case of disaster.
- The management actions of international cooperation must be initiated by governments from the phase of alert; this includes exchanging information through the foreign ministries on the situation with international organizations and diplomatic missions accredited in the country so that they can send them to their headquarters and take precautions accordingly.
- Before an imminent danger, the RC/ HC in the country will contact and exchange information with the key government authorities, OCHA and UNDMT.
- OCHA Regional Office will monitor the situation in the region through the status reports sent by members of REDLAC, news and websites, among others. Once the event occurs, it will provide appropriate and timely assistance to the United Nations teams in the country and support in mobilizing and coordinating international aid for natural disaster response and humanitarian emergencies.
- After the situation of crisis is presented, the government of an affected country must bring forth the “declaration of emergency.” From this point on, the management of international cooperation is the responsibility of the foreign ministries, which are the government agencies responsible for coordinating the request and arrival of humanitarian assistance to the affected country, always depending on the needs of disaster relief, identified by the lead institution at a national level. The request for assistance must accurately indicate the type, quantity and urgency of the assistance required.
- At a global level, the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in New York is responsible for coordinating the international response to natural disasters and complex emergencies.
- The RC/HC must activate the emergency operations center and organize an initial meeting of information and evaluation with the disaster management team of the United Nations (UNDP, PAHO / WHO, WFP, FAO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, among others) and other humanitarian agents. The roles and responsibilities must be defined along with the frequency of meetings. If necessary, a team of UN staff may be formed to support the UNDMT to conduct disaster response functions.
- The RC/HC initiates the development process of the appeal for international aid (Flash Appeal) after consulting with UNDMT and government of the country concerned. It then sends it to the Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) section of OCHA, who officially presents it to donors and shares it through ReliefWeb.
- When necessary, the RC/HC in consultation with the HCT can prepare a CERF funding request simultaneous to the preparation of an emergency Flash Appeal.
- The RC/HC may request emergency funds from OCHA.

- If the RC/HC or the affected country needs the help of the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team (UNDAC), the request for mobilization should be immediately sent out to OCHA.
- OCHA, UNDAC and the UNDMT should prepare SITREPs to be distributed to alert and inform the international community about the impact of the disaster and the need for international assistance.
- The RC/HC or the affected country can request to OCHA for the mobilization of international Urban Search and Rescue Teams (USAR) from the member states in the case of a collapsed structure emergency.
- The UNDAC team or the first international USAR team to reach the focal point will establish the coordination centre at the site (OSOCC). The main purpose of the OSOCC is to assist local response teams with the coordination of national and international USAR teams. OCHA will activate a virtual OSOCC to facilitate 24-hour global communication. (www.reliefweb.int / virtual.osoc.org)
- The RC/ HC or the affected country may request from OCHA the mobilization, deployment and coordination of civil-military protection units and civil defense assets (MCDU) of countries and multinational organizations.
- The RC/HC or the affected country may ask OCHA to organize the immediate transportation of basic survival items (such as tents, blankets, generators, tools) to the affected areas according to the agreement with the donor and the availability of the items in the depots. Goods and transportation are provided free of charge to countries affected by disasters.
- The RC/HC should support actions to assess damage and priority needs for the humanitarian aid necessities which are not addressed to ensure a smooth transition from the response phase to the rehabilitation phase.
- The RC/HC should support the government in creating a strategy for mobilizing international support for the reconstruction phase.
- Once the demobilization phase has passed, OCHA will carry out a post-mission analysis of the team operations using as a reference all reports of the teams issued after the mission and convey a meeting of "Lessons Learned" for all those affected, if necessary; the "Lessons Learned" report is revealed to all those affected and is afterwards published on the Internet.

Government communication with international humanitarian partners before or immediately after a disaster event contributes to efficient assistance.

With support of the UN in-country, the national authorities should:

- convene a meeting with humanitarian partners
- jointly establish the possible impact scenarios
- review the response or contingency plan.
- activate national mechanisms for coordination with the international humanitarian community, for example, Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Centres (HACC)

If possible, it is very beneficial to define the possible impact scenario of a threat and to review with international partners the respective capacities and responsibilities listed in the Response or Contingency Plan.

ANNEX 4 - Application form for environmental emergencies support

ENVIRONMENT UNIT UNEP / OCHA
 EUROPEAN COMMISSION COOPERATION MECHANISM FOR THE CIVIL PROTECTION
 CONVENTION ON THE BORDER EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS -
 UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

URGENT

Assistance Request Report - Serial number: _____

Date/Time: _____ / _____ UTC _____ local **Pages (including the cover):** _____

From/country emergency: _____ **A (Environment Unit / CMI / Contact Point)** _____

Name and surname/Function: _____ **Fax:** _____

Fax/Phone no.: _____ **Electronic mail:** _____

Electronic mail: _____

Types of accidents or emergencies

Accidents	Accident types	Attacks with	Natural
Chemical accident <input type="checkbox"/>	Fire <input type="checkbox"/>	Explosives <input type="checkbox"/>	catastrophes <input type="checkbox"/>
Mining dump <input type="checkbox"/>	Explosion <input type="checkbox"/>	Chemical agents <input type="checkbox"/>	Earthquake <input type="checkbox"/>
Transport <input type="checkbox"/>	Water contamination <input type="checkbox"/>	Biological agents <input type="checkbox"/>	Landslide / avalanche <input type="checkbox"/>
Sea pollution <input type="checkbox"/>	Atmospheric emission <input type="checkbox"/>	Radioactive agents <input type="checkbox"/>	Wildfire <input type="checkbox"/>
_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>	_____ <input type="checkbox"/>

001	Emergency / accident date			
002	Emergency / accident hour	UTC		Local
Place				
011	Country / City / Area			
012	Latitude	Degrees/minutes		North/South
013	Longitude	Degrees/minutes		East/West
Assistance Request				
071	Assesment / advice site			
072	Personnel / response team	Fire <input type="checkbox"/>	Dangerous materials <input type="checkbox"/>	Search and Rescue <input type="checkbox"/> Disaster medicine <input type="checkbox"/>
		Others: _____		
073	Humanitarian Assistance			
074	Sampling and analysis			
075	Cleaning and rehabilitation			
When and how (delivery of assistance)				
081	When			
082	How			
083	Contact person			
Logistics				Brief description of the emergency and its immediate effects
091	Necessities			
Emergency and mitigation measures already taken				
101	Evacuation		km radius	
102	Accommodation		km radius	
103	Others			
Other information				
111				
	Valid Report: (Date): _____/(Hour): _____UTC			Should be acknowledged receipt of this report by fax or email as soon as possible
CONTACT: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Emergency Phone no. (24 hours): + 41 22 917 2010 Emergency Fax (24 hours): +41 22 917 0023 OCHA/ESB/2005/24 GE.05-02435 (S) 071005 071005				

14. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **Who is this guide addressed to?**

The Guide for Governments is primarily for national authorities responsible for emergency management, risk management and foreign policy regarding international assistance in natural disasters. This guide also provides information to the international community, donors and organizations dedicated to humanitarian aid.

- **When should this guide be used?**

The Guide for Governments can be consulted at all times since it serves as a reference on how to deal with the international community in times of emergency. It is a reference for what to do in case of disaster if international assistance is required. It explains the available tools, which are supported by international legal frameworks and are useful for risk management and disaster response.

- **What is meant by governments, authorities and state?**

By “government” we mean a set of authorities who manage, control and administrate the institutions of a state. The government and its authorities are transient, while the State is permanent. This guide will serve the State governing authorities to relate better to the international system for humanitarian assistance.

- **Is this only intended to guide disaster response personnel?**

No. The Guide for Governments is intended both as a framework for decision-makers at a country level and as a tool of reference and action for disaster response personnel.

- **What is IASC? What is REDLAC?**

They are humanitarian coordination mechanisms at the global and regional level with representatives of the UN, NGOs, IFRC and other partners with the purpose of improving policies and practices in humanitarian response. They are a source of products that facilitate the work of states in disaster preparedness and response.

- **What is the relationship between the Guide for Governments and the Directory of resources and Organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean?**

The directory is an inventory of resources that a country can access when international assistance is required. The Guide for Governments directs government authorities on how to access international aid offered by members who appear in the directory.

- **How can I access emergency funds and CERF?**

Emergency funds can be accessed through the United Nations representative in your country, the Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC). OCHA also provides technical advice on these financial tools.

- **Do I need a formal request for international assistance in order to access the assistance mechanisms?**

No. However, for intergovernmental organizations like the UN, the declaration of national emergency is required and / or application or declaration of acceptance of international humanitarian assistance for the activation of mechanisms for international assistance. Many partners such as ally countries, humanitarian representatives and other agents are part of the response criteria but in a more flexible manner.

- **What is understood as a natural disaster?**

According to IASC Operational Guidelines (2006), natural disasters are events brought about by natural hazards that seriously affect the society, economy and/or infrastructure of a region and often pose challenges and problems of a humanitarian nature. The extent of the consequences of a natural disaster is determined by human action or lack thereof.

- **How important is coordination?**

To achieve integral coverage in a natural disaster situation, there are top actors in each sector in humanitarian response. Coordination is essential to achieve an effective response.

- **If a disaster occurs, who is my immediate contact to activate the relief mechanism?**

The UN representative in the country and the HCT.

15. CONTACTS

Después de sucedido un desastre, contactos inmediatos		
1	The UNETT coordinator is your first contact in case of emergency.	Contact in your country
2	The UN Resident Coordinator is the first contact to facilitate international humanitarian assistance.	Contact in your country
3	OCHA ROLAC Office in Panama	Phone no: +507 3171748 Phone no: +507 66791861
4	If your country needs support and for some reason you cannot reach us at the previous numbers, please call: OCHA Emergency Relief Coordinator Centre (ERCC), Geneva, 24/7	Phone no: +41 22 917 2010

Other contacts	
Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) – New York Mrs. Valerie Amos	Phone no: +1 212 963 2738 Email
OCHA Coordination and Response Division – New York Mr. John Ging	Phone no: +1 212 963 1522 Fax: +1 212 963 3630 Email: ging@un.org
INSARAG Secretariat – OCHA Geneva (earthquakes)	Phone no: +41 22 917 1600 Fax: +41 22 917 0023
UNDAC – OCHA Geneva	Phone no: +41 22 917 1600 Fax: +41 22 917 0023 Email: undac_alert@un.org

16. SUGGESTIONS

- Did you find the information you needed in this guide?

- Was the information clear and easy to find?

- Is it in a helpful format?

- Are the graphics satisfactory?

- What did you find unnecessary?

- How would you improve a second version?

Send comments to ocha-rolac@un.org



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