

PART **4** UN DISASTER RESPONSE

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## PART 4 UN DISASTER RESPONSE

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading the material and completing the exercises you should be able to:

- describe the roles and resources for the UN agencies involved in disaster response
- identify the principal activities of the UN agencies in response to disasters



### CHAPTER 13

## Tasks, roles and resources

This chapter is condensed from Chapter 1 of the UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Manual. It describes the role of the UN system and its agencies in disaster management.

### Organizational tasks and general roles

Primary responsibility for all aspects of disaster management rests with the Government of the affected country. This includes: planning and implementing long-term risk reduction and preparedness measures; planning and administering disaster relief and rehabilitation operations, requesting international assistance if required; and co-ordinating all disaster-related assistance programmes, both nationally and internationally-funded.

Each UN organization or agency is responsible for providing advice and assistance to the Government of a disaster-prone or disaster-affected country, in accordance with its mandate and the resources available to it. In so doing, each agency is accountable to its own governing body, but it is also called upon to act as a member of a united team. In the case of refugee emergencies, UNHCR remains responsible for their protection and the co-ordination of international assistance for the refugees.

In relation to disaster relief and other post-disaster assistance, each organization and agency of the UN system is called on to:

- Mobilize and provide timely technical assistance and material support to disaster-affected countries, according to its own mandate and the resources available to it.
- Co-operate with the UN resident co-ordinator, UNDRO, or any other co-ordination mechanism established by the Secretary-General to ensure appropriate, co-ordinated UN system assistance in the context of a concerted plan and programme.



## **Roles and resources of UNDP, UNDRO, and other UN agencies**

### *The role of UNDP*

UNDP focuses primarily on the development-related aspects of disaster risks and occurrences, and on providing technical assistance to institution-building in relation to all aspects of disaster management. Its emphasis is therefore on:

- a) Incorporating long-term risk reduction and preparedness measures in normal development planning and programmes, including support for specific mitigation measures where required.
- b) Assisting in the planning and implementation of post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction, including the definition of new development strategies that incorporate risk reduction measures relevant to the affected area.
- c) Reviewing the impact of large settlements of refugees or displaced persons on development, and seeking ways to incorporate the refugees and displaced persons in development strategies.
- d) Providing technical assistance to the authorities managing major emergency assistance operations of extended duration (especially in relation to displaced persons and the possibilities for achieving durable solutions in such cases).

In addition, UNDP provides administrative and operational support to the resident co-ordinator function, particularly at country level, but also at headquarters.

In the event of a disaster, UNDP may grant a maximum of \$50,000 from SPR funds to provide immediate relief. UNDP is not otherwise involved in the provision of "relief" using any of its own resources or other funds administered by the Programme.

Where a major emergency substantially affects the whole development process within a country, IPF resources may be used to provide technical assistance to plan and manage the operation, with the agreement of the Government.

Technical and material assistance in support of long-term risk reduction and preparedness measures is included in the country programme, and may be funded from IPF resources or from other UNDP-administered funds. The same can also be used to assist rehabilitation and reconstruction. Special additional grants (up to \$1.1 million) may be made from SPR funds for technical assistance to such post-disaster recovery efforts following natural disasters.

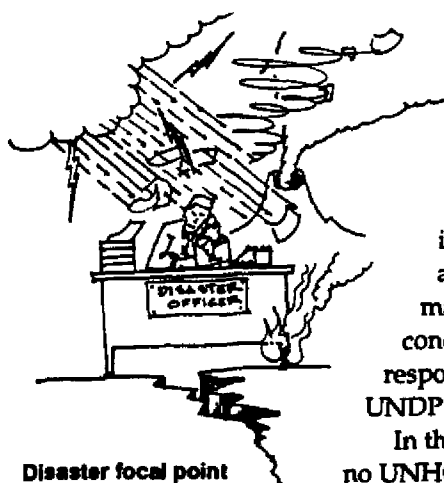
The particular responsibilities of the UNDP resident representative are summarized in the following panel.



### **Disaster management responsibilities of the UNDP resident representative**

The resident representative is responsible for:

- a) Ensuring that all concerned in planning development programmes are aware of any known or potential hazards and their likely effects, and that these are appropriately taken into account in the country programme.
- b) Designating a "disaster focal point," and ensuring that the field office is adequately prepared to respond to an emergency.
- c) In the event of a disaster:
  - Mobilizing UNDP staff and technical assistance personnel and other resources that meet the needs of the situation, particularly those needed for the initial assessment and immediate response.
  - Ensuring that UNDP assistance is used to good effect, and that the capacity of the office is strengthened if necessary to ensure effective response.



**Disaster focal point**

In all disaster-prone country field offices, a senior national officer is designated a "disaster focal point" for all disaster-related matters including mitigation, response and international UN/UNDP preparedness. Section 3A and appendix 3A of the UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Manual provide detail on the duties and qualifications of the disaster focal point.

In a major or complex emergency of extended duration (typically involving displaced populations), UNDP may temporarily assign an additional deputy resident representative. That deputy may either manage normal UNDP business while the resident representative concentrates on the resident co-ordinator functions, or may take day-to-day responsibility for matters relating to the emergency which are within the UNDP mandate.

In the event of a sudden influx of refugees into a country in which there is no UNHCR representation, the resident representative immediately notifies UNHCR and initiates the assessment process on behalf of the UNHCR. (See section 4A.7 of the manual.)

### ***The role of UNDRO***



UNDRO is the focal point for disaster management in the UN system. In relief it provides a framework for co-ordination of assistance by the UN agencies and helps to co-ordinate such assistance with that from other sources. In addition, UNDRO has an important role in mobilizing external assistance and serving as a clearing house for information concerning disasters. In the area of mitigation, UNDRO promotes long-term measures to reduce disaster-related risks and enhance preparedness in disaster-prone countries. UNDRO is represented at country level on a permanent basis by the resident co-ordinator/representative.

Co-ordination at headquarters level is often effected by contacts between the Head of Agencies concerned at the beginning of a relief operation, and through frequent ongoing contacts between the relevant focal points. At the country level, co-ordination is undertaken by the resident co-ordinator who is also the UNDRO representative. Whenever possible and required, UNDRO supports the resident co-ordinator by dispatching an UNDRO delegate or an emergency assistance team.

UNDRO concentrates on problems related to natural hazards and sudden disasters, but as its mandate covers all kinds of emergencies UNDRO may also offer its services and advice in situations including droughts, and cases of war and civil conflicts, unless and until the Secretary-General makes other arrangements.

Following a disaster, UNDRO, acting on behalf of the Secretary-General, offers its services to the Government of the disaster-stricken state in assessing the need for external relief assistance, and communicating that information to prospective donors and others concerned. (Contacts with the Government are conducted through the resident co-ordinator/representative and the country's mission in Geneva or New York.) Where international assistance is required or requested, UNDRO:

- Helps to identify priority needs on the basis of information from the Government, the resident co-ordinator/representative, UN-DMT, and other competent bodies.
- Issues international appeals and acts as a clearing house for information on needs and contributions, the assistance extended or planned by all donors, and the progress of relief operations.
- Seeks to mobilize resources and co-ordinate relief assistance by various UN organizations and agencies, bilateral donors, and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Depending on the particular situation, the request of the Government, or the request of the resident co-ordinator/representative, UNDRO may:

- Assign one or more delegates on mission to assist the national authorities in organizing the assessment and administering relief operations, and assist the resident co-ordinator/representative in information management, the local co-ordination of international relief assistance, and in his reporting responsibilities to UNDRO.
- Provide logistic support to ensure the timely arrival of relief supplies and their prompt delivery to the affected population. This may include negotiating reduced-rate international air transport or organizing shared or joint relief flights.

The Co-ordinator may approve a grant of up to US\$50,000 per disaster from funds available to UNDRO, subject to certain conditions. In some situations, UNDRO can release supplies from the emergency stockpile it administers in Pisa, Italy.

### ***UNDP/UNDRO collaboration***

UNDP and UNDRO complement each other. UNDP has a wealth of experience in development planning and administration, and well-established field offices. UNDRO has specific knowledge and experience in disaster management, and established contacts with relevant specialist bodies. The fact that the UNDP resident representative also represents UNDRO helps to ensure fruitful co-operation between the organizations.







UNDP field offices administer funds and resources channelled through UNDRO, following normal inter-agency procedures. This includes the local procurement of supplies and services, and the recruitment and appointment of temporary staff.










### ***Role of other UN organizations and agencies***

A number of other UN organizations and agencies have specific responsibilities, organizational arrangements, and capabilities relating to disaster mitigation, and/or relief or recovery assistance. UNDP, UNDRO, and resident co-ordinators must respect the mandates and skills of these agencies, and seek to ensure that all work together in harmony. All should use their expertise and resources to best effect in helping people in disaster-prone and disaster-affected areas.

#### **Disaster-related roles of the core members of the UN-DMTs**

FAO		Provides technical advice in reducing vulnerability and helps in the rehabilitation of agriculture, livestock, and fisheries, with emphasis on local food production. Monitors food production, exports and imports, and forecasts any requirements of exceptional food assistance.
UNDP		Promotes the incorporation of disaster mitigation in development planning, and funds technical assistance for all aspects of disaster management. Provides administrative support to the resident co-ordinator and UN-DMT.
UNDRO		Mobilizes and co-ordinates international emergency relief assistance, issuing consolidated appeals. Assists in assessments and relief management if required. Provides advice and guidance on risk assessments and in planning and implementing mitigation measures.
UNHCR		Assures the protection of refugees and seeks durable solutions to their problems. Helps to mobilize and assure the delivery of necessary assistance in the country of asylum if it is a developing country.
UNICEF		Attends to the well-being of children and women, especially child health and nutrition. Assistance activities may include: social programmes; child feeding (in collaboration with WFP); water supplies, sanitation and direct health interventions (in collaboration with WHO). Provides related management and logistical support.
WFP		Provides "targeted" food aid for humanitarian relief, and to support rehabilitation, reconstruction, and risk-reducing development programmes. Mobilizes and co-ordinates the delivery of complementary emergency and "programme" food aid from bilateral and other sources.
WHO		Provides advice and assistance in all aspects of preventive and curative health care, including the preparedness of health services for rapid response to disasters.

### UN system resources available to initiate responses to disasters and emergency needs

FAO		Up to \$20,000 at discretion of FAOR within the context of an ongoing emergency or long-term aid project.
UNDP		Up to \$50,000 per occurrence for immediate relief; approved by the Director DOF following a request from the resident representative. •Up to \$1.1 million for technical assistance for rehabilitation and reconstruction; approved by the Administrator or Governing Council. •IPF funds for technical assistance to emergency management in major operations agreed with Government; approved by Director PCO.
UNDRO		Up to \$50,000 per disaster, subject to the availability of resources; approved by the UNDRO co-ordinator following a request by the Government and proposal by the resident representative or other UN organization or agency.
UNHCR		Allocations from a global emergency reserve for assistance to refugees; approved by the High Commissioner.
UNICEF		Up to \$25,000 diversion of existing programme funds or in-country supplies at discretion of the country representative in agreement with Government. •Larger amounts from global emergency reserve (\$4 million per year); approved by Executive Director following a specific proposal by the country representative. •Possibility of diverting some existing country programme funds in case of a major national catastrophe.
WFP		Possibility of borrowing food aid commodities from ongoing WFP-assisted development projects, governmental or other donor stocks, subject to headquarters approval to assure replacement. •Up to \$50,000 for local purchases of commodities at the discretion of the Director of Operations where there are no other means of arranging timely deliveries. •Allocations primarily from the International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR), managed by WFP, and from WFP general resources (\$45 million annually).
WHO		Global reserve from which allocations can be made for priority medical needs in anticipation of special donor contributions; approved by the Director ERO.

### Co-ordination: the resident co-ordinator and the UN-DMT

The national Government is ultimately responsible for requesting and co-ordinating all international assistance. It also approves all programmes and emergency work in the country. However, the UN system stands ready to assist upon request. At the country level, the resident co-ordinator/representative and the UN Disaster Management Team (UN-DMT) are the essential UN co-ordinating institutions. Their responsibilities apply to all situations which require significant interventions from more than one UN organization or agency. At the international level, UNDRO promotes the co-ordination of responses to particular disaster situations, both within the UN system and in the wider international community, essentially through information-sharing.



### **Co-ordination**

Co-ordination, as used in the manual, means:

- The intelligent sharing of information and the frank, constructive discussion of issues and possible courses of action.
- Achieving consensus on objectives and an overall strategy.
- The voluntary adoption by those concerned of specific responsibilities and tasks in the context of the agreed objectives and strategy.

Co-ordination is based on mutual respect for the competences and agreed responsibilities of each party, and willingness to co-operate in addressing and solving problems in pursuit of a common aim.

### ***Role of the UN resident co-ordinator***

The resident co-ordinator, also representing UNDRO, is both the UN system's team leader at country level, and chairman of the UN-DMT. Following the occurrence of a major disaster, the resident co-ordinator/representative must be ready to give absolute priority to this co-ordination role, which also includes helping to ensure the co-ordination of all international emergency assistance.

The resident co-ordinator should fulfill the general responsibilities indicated in the following panel.

#### **Disaster management responsibilities of the resident co-ordinator (also representing UNDRO)**

**On an ongoing basis, the resident co-ordinator must:**

- Ensure that the UN organizations and agencies active in a disaster-prone country are collectively "prepared" to offer appropriate technical and material assistance as part of an overall international response in the event of a disaster.
- Ensure that the same agencies take account of disaster risks in their long-term development programmes, and provide concerted assistance in relation to disaster mitigation, in consultation with any national IDNDR committee.

**In the event of a "multi-sectoral" disaster:**

- Bring the various agencies of the UN system together and ensure the provision of prompt, effective, and concerted multi-disciplinary advice and assistance.
- Maintain contact with the government authority responsible for conducting relief operations. Ensure concerted UN assistance to that authority in assessing the situation and the requirements for international assistance.
- Keep UNDRO informed of the situation and needs for international assistance. Provide a clear statement of priority needs for international assistance rapidly to UNDRO for distribution internationally, and provide similar information to the local representatives of the international community. Update the information continuously to keep it current.
- Recommend that the UN team be reinforced by the appropriate agencies at the country level when necessary.
- Help to secure co-operation and co-ordination between all international assistance bodies, the Government, and other national organizations to ensure proper management of international assistance.

**In case of a refugee influx or "mono-sectoral" disaster:**

- Consult with the local representative of the competent UN organization or agency (UNHCR or other) to determine what the resident co-ordinator and UN-DMT should do to support that agency.





## CHAPTER 14

# Responding to a sudden disaster<sup>1</sup>

## Aims of emergency and post-disaster assistance

The overall aims of emergency and post-disaster assistance are:

- To ensure the survival of the maximum possible number of victims, keeping them in the best possible health in the circumstances.
- To re-establish self-sufficiency and essential services as quickly as possible for all population groups, with special attention to those whose needs are greatest: the most vulnerable and underprivileged.
- To repair or replace damaged infrastructure and regenerate viable economic activities. To do this in a manner that contributes to long-term development goals and reduces vulnerability to any future recurrence of potentially damaging hazards.



In situations of civil or international conflict, the aim is to protect and assist the civilian population, in close collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and in compliance with international conventions.

In cases involving population displacements (due to any type of disaster), the aim is to find durable solutions as quickly as possible, while ensuring protection and assistance as necessary in the mean time.

## Principal elements and actions in response to a sudden disaster

The vast majority of international emergency and post-disaster assistance is funded by special contributions to the UN agencies, or is delivered bilaterally or through NGOs. Action by UNDRO, the resident co-ordinator/representative and the UN-DMT is therefore extremely important: information management and exchange, co-ordination, preparation of appeals, and the mobilization of resources. The extent to which the resident co-ordinator/representative and the UN-DMT are involved in these activities, and in the provision of direct operational support to the Government, will depend on the nature and scale of the emergency situation, on the capacity and wishes of the national authorities, and on the resources which can be mobilized.

The above applies in emergency situations which require action by a number of UN organizations/agencies (possibly including UNDP) and, in consequence, co-ordination by the resident co-ordinator and UNDRO. In situations which fall entirely within the mandate of one specific organ of the UN system (e.g. an epidemic or crop pest attack), primary responsibility rests with the appropriate agency (e.g. WHO, FAO) although the country-level UN Disaster Management Team may, if required, play a role in support of that agency. (The information dissemination services of UNDRO may also be made available to the agency concerned at the international level.

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is condensed from the UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Manual Chapter 4.

The following is a list of the principal actions to be taken by the resident coordinator/representative and the UN-DMT immediately before and during a disaster.

### ***Actions to be taken on receipt of a disaster warning***

#### **On receipt of a warning of an imminent disaster threat:**

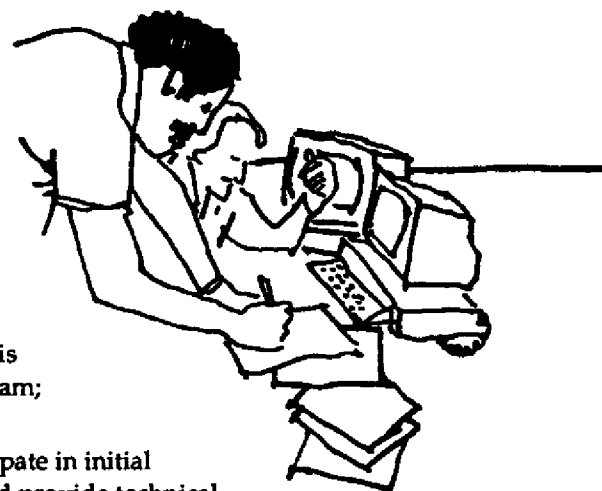
- ✓ Contact and exchange information with UNDRO: review need for precautionary measures.
- ✓ Contact the relevant government authorities: confirm readiness of UNDRO and UN-DMT to assist, if needed.
- ✓ Convene the UN-DMT, review preparedness arrangements, alert personnel and review the UN security plan.



### ***Actions to be taken following the occurrence of a disaster***

#### **Immediate action in all cases:**

- ✓ Ensure the security of all UN personnel: activate the security plan, if necessary.
- ✓ Ensure reliable telecommunications between the field office and Geneva, New York and the affected areas.
- ✓ Contact and exchange information with UNDRO: send an alert message and then regular field sitreps, and maintain telephone contact, if possible.
- ✓ Contact the government emergency management authorities: get information, offer UN assistance and reaffirm the capabilities of the various agencies; confirm arrangements for ongoing contacts and collaboration.
- ✓ Determine whether the Government requires international assistance and wishes UNDRO to launch an international appeal. Consider needs for:
  - Search and rescue (SAR), or other specialist assistance
  - Relief assistance.
- ✓ Convene the UN-DMT: review whatever information is available; confirm/define responsibilities within the team; arrange follow-up meetings and information-sharing.
- ✓ Gather and collate information on the situation; participate in initial reconnaissance visits to the affected areas. Mobilize and provide technical assistance for the assessment process.



#### **If international emergency assistance is required:**

##### **1) Immediate needs and action**

- Determine, on a provisional basis, the specific functions to be undertaken by the UN at country level in the light of the particular situation and the capacity of the Government.
- Define any needs for SAR teams or other specialist assistance; inform and consult with UNDRO immediately.

- Consult with UNDRO concerning the possible assignment of one or more UNDRO delegates.
- Ensure the convening of an early, broad-based co-ordination meeting to co-ordinate immediate responses and arrangements for assessment.
- Institute necessary organizational arrangements and systems within the field office: redeploy staff, define work priorities, and ensure the availability of office equipment and clerical and administrative support to staff engaged in emergency activities.
- Put information systems into operation to record and track needs and contributions of international assistance.
- Consider and, where appropriate, make recommendations for the provision of emergency grants by UNDRO and UNDP, or the release of supplies by UNDRO from Pisa.

**2) Continuing action during the early days of emergency assistance operations:**

- Maintain close contact and exchange information with the Government and other concerned parties (donors, NGOs); participate in and support in-country co-ordination mechanisms.
- Maintain a dialogue and frequent information exchanges with UNDRO (through field sitreps and by telephone).
- Help to define priority needs for international assistance:
  - Participate in the overall assessment
  - Make an independent judgement of the priority needs for international emergency assistance
  - Help in formulating and screening requests
- Develop a concerted programme of assistance and a consolidated UN appeal including the proposals and requirements of all UN agencies.
- Disseminate information on needs for international assistance to local representatives of donors and NGOs, and help to mobilize resources to cover unmet needs.
- Help to monitor assistance operations, and provide operational assistance, where required.
- Make arrangements for relations with the news media, and the reception and servicing of visiting missions.
- Undertake a review (post mortem) of the UN assistance to the emergency operation as it draws to a close.

If there are political complications or humanitarian needs which are not being met, advise the Secretary-General through the Director-General DIEC or UNDRO.

**Additional support functions (on a continuous basis) depending on the need and the capacity of the Government:**

- Convening and providing secretariat services to broad-based co-ordination meetings.
- Providing operational support to management information systems, logistics, or communications.

**Assistance to rehabilitation and reconstruction:**

- Help to plan and introduce assistance to rehabilitation and reconstruction in phases from the earliest possible moment.

**Contacting UNDRO, Geneva**

UNDRO maintains a 24-hour duty system, 365 days-a-year. To contact:

**Telephone** (4122)-7332010 (Direct line for use in case of an emergency: out of office hours the call is received by Air Call answering service which conveys the message to the UNDRO duty officer who then calls back)

or (4122)-7346011 (United Nations Office Geneva switchboard: ask for UNDRO duty officer)

**Telex** 414242 DRO CH

**Fax** (4122)- 7335623

**Electronic mail** UNX008 Use the UNDP E-mail facility. (Message is delivered to UNDRO via UNIENET)



**Nature and demands of situation: arrangements within the UN system**

- ☐ Determine whether:
  - The situation requires a multi-sectoral response, and therefore co-ordination within the UN system.
  - Requirements for international assistance fall almost entirely within the competence or mandate of a single organization or agency.
  - Situation and need for special international assistance is likely to be of short or long duration (weeks or months).
  - The UN team is likely to be required to assist significantly in local co-ordination, information management and, possibly, other forms of operational support.
- ☐ Define and agree on the specific functions to be undertaken by each organization or agency within UN-DMT, ensuring that all relevant sectors are covered. (Consider designating one organization to take lead at country level, if clearly appropriate.)
- ☐ Consult with UNDRO on arrangements being made locally.
- ☐ Specify, on preliminary, provisional basis, any support functions to be undertaken by the UN team; identify resources available in-country to the UN-DMT for such tasks, and those needed from outside; inform UNDRO and regional bureau.

## **Appeals for international assistance**

This section describes the action to be taken by the resident co-ordinator/representative and the UN-DMT in determining the requirements for international assistance, preparing consolidated statements of UN agencies' requirements, and keeping UNDRO informed.

In all cases the resident co-ordinator/representative must discuss the situation with the responsible government authorities and determine whether:

- There are any unmet needs
- Any international assistance is required
- These needs should be announced by UNDRO at the international level

Inform UNDRO accordingly. A verbal request from the Government is sufficient in the first instance, but when the Government wants UNDRO to disseminate a request (or appeal), it should be confirmed rapidly in writing.

Requests may be received from various bodies, for example: the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the national disaster management authority, the Ministry of Health. In all cases:

- Inform UNDRO immediately of the request and its source
- Cross-check with other government bodies, in particular the designated focal point for international emergency assistance, to determine the relationship between requests from different bodies
- Up-date the field office records and the information to UNDRO

Any request to an individual UN agency should be brought to the attention of the UN-DMT which should discuss whether any action by the resident co-ordinator or any other agencies is required. If a Government's mission in Geneva or New York approaches UNDRO directly, or through the Secretary-General, the resident co-ordinator/representative will be immediately informed.

When a Government does not want international assistance, or it addresses specific requests to particular bilateral donors or international organizations but does not want to make any general international appeal, the resident co-ordinator/representative should inform UNDRO accordingly. This enables UNDRO to reply to queries at the international level and inform interested donor governments and organizations.

In some instances, for political or cultural reasons, a Government may indicate that it "does not wish to make an international appeal, but would welcome offers of assistance." In such cases, the resident co-ordinator/representative should nonetheless strive to define with the Government the specific types and quantities of assistance which would be valuable, and inform UNDRO accordingly. At the very least, give a clear indication of the kinds of assistance not needed, but which well-meaning aid organizations might assume to be required.

UNDRO needs specific information on what is not required — or is no longer needed — in order to be able to try to stop unwanted goods being shipped. However, the responsibility and the authority to control the dispatch of assistance rests with the Government, which may be encouraged to exert strict control. This might include refusing landing permits for relief flights of unknown or unspecified contents.

In all cases, help to ensure that the resources available locally are mobilized. Form an independent judgement on the priority needs for international assistance. In general, the only supplies and personnel which should be sought from outside are ones which are not available in the country.

If there are urgent humanitarian needs which the Government is not adequately recognizing, the resident co-ordinator should discuss the matter with the responsible authorities. If no agreement can be reached on the need for national or international intervention, the resident co-ordinator should inform the Secretary-General.

## **Sitreps—exchanging information with UNDRO**

This section describes the responsibilities of the resident co-ordinator/representative in respect of reporting to UNDRO, and provides guidelines for the preparation of the required field sitreps. It describes UNDRO's reporting (information dissemination) system in the context of international information flows.

### **Alert message and field sitreps**

To ensure a timely, appropriate, and co-ordinated international response, it is essential that the resident co-ordinator report rapidly to UNDRO any disaster occurrence, with an early assessment of damage and needs, however tentative. This must then be followed up by regular and systematic reporting of increasing detail.

Send an alert message to UNDRO as soon as information of a disaster occurrence is received, or an occurrence in a remote area is confirmed. This serves to let UNDRO know that something has happened and that the field office is following up. Do not delay while waiting to get more information.

Send the first field sitrep as quickly as possible, and in any case not more than 24 hours after the disaster occurrence. Send whatever relevant information is available: do not delay because certain information is lacking. Send information as it becomes available, indicating what additional information is anticipated and arrangements made to gather more.

Send field sitreps regularly, at least daily during the initial emergency period (typically 10-20 days) and until a reduced frequency is agreed with UNDRO. Always follow the basic format but, if necessary, adapt the sub-headings of the individual sections depending on the needs of the particular situation.

Send sitreps by fax (or Email) when possible. This takes full advantage of word processing facilities in preparing and updating the reports.

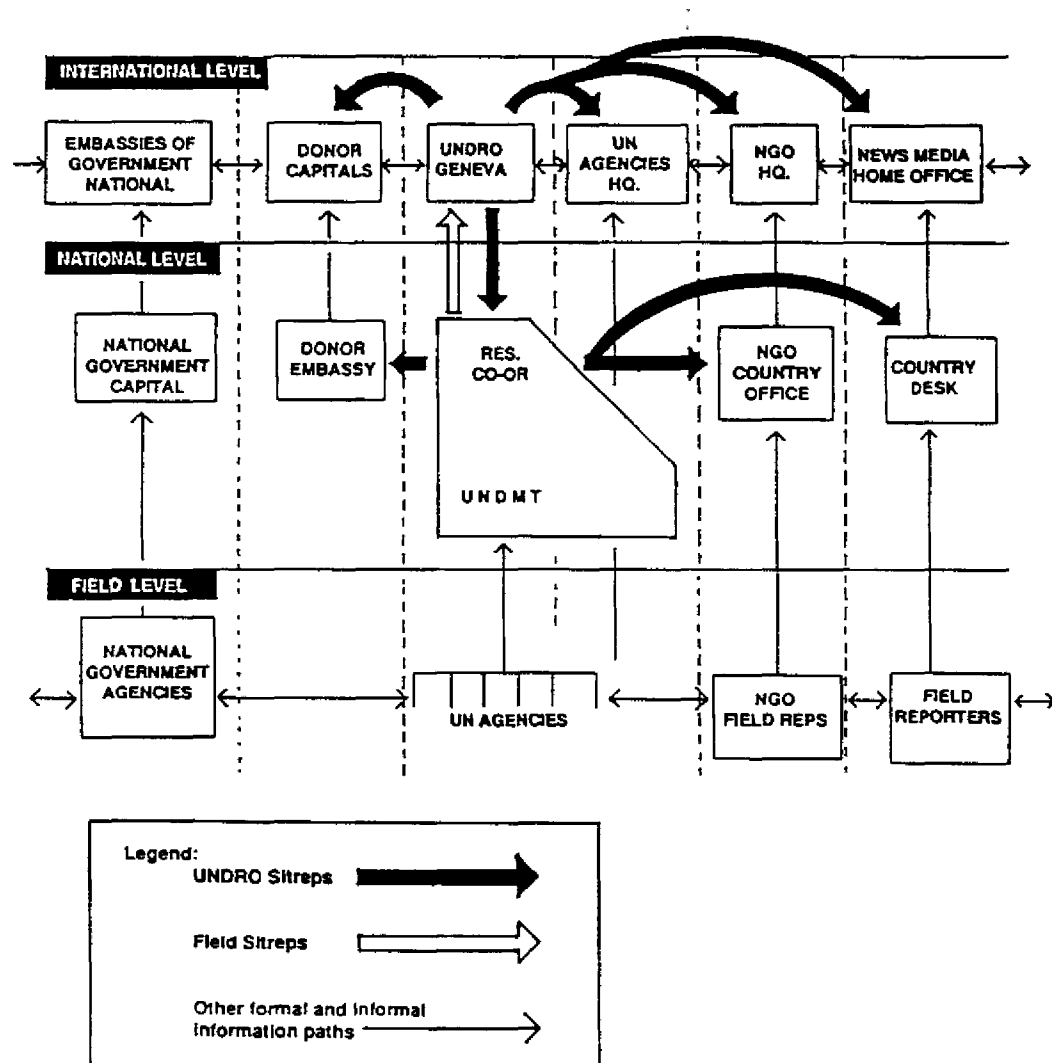
Involve the UN-DMT in the preparation of the sitreps to help ensure comprehensive reporting and a unified UN system presentation to the Government and the international community. The UNDP disaster focal point should normally be responsible for collating information from the various agencies and preparing the first draft. Arrange for copies of the field sitreps to be sent promptly to the headquarters of the UN agencies most directly concerned (normally the core members of the UN-DMT).



For detailed guidelines for the format of the field sitrep see the UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Manual Chapter 4 Appendix 4A.

### Main headings for field sitreps

1. General situation
2. National response
3. Country-level international response
4. Requirements for international assistance
5. Channels for delivery of international aid
6. International pledges and contributions
7. Other information



**Fig. 14.1**  
*Sitreps and international information flows.*



## The importance of co-ordination and information

Co-ordination is even more important in emergency assistance operations than in development work: lives might be at risk, logistic and other resources are likely to be limited, and decisions are made quickly. There are many possibilities for duplicating effort, wasting resources, and leaving gaps in both geographic and sectoral coverage.

Timely, reliable information is crucial to planning and implementing emergency and post-disaster assistance operations, and to mobilizing national and international resources. The regular dissemination of relevant information is a precondition for effective co-ordination and co-operation — at national and local levels — between sectors and between Government, operational agencies, and donors.

### Key action points in co-ordination and information management

- ☐ Maintain frequent, direct contacts with government focal point, operational departments, donors, and NGOs.
- ☐ Review within the UN-DMT and discuss with the government focal point whether help from the resident co-ordinator or UN-DMT is required in:
  - Compiling and analyzing information and preparing reports on needs for and use of international assistance
  - Establishing and operating more comprehensive management information systems in support of the responsible government authorities
  - Convening information and co-ordination meetings involving government bodies, donors, NGOs, and the UN organizations and agencies
- ☐ Ensure the convening of regular, broad-based co-ordination meetings (probably weekly); encourage constructive discussion; promote consensus on actions by all concerned; provide secretarial service, if required.
- ☐ Specify the information management functions to be fulfilled by the resident co-ordinator and UN-DMT, and the resources (staff, equipment, office space, budget) required.
- ☐ Initiate the needed information systems and services using existing staff and facilities; inform UNDRO, the regional bureau, and local donor representatives of requirements to develop and continue.
- ☐ Establish an emergency information and co-ordination (EIC) support unit, where needed, as a collaborative UN-DMT effort; encourage all UN-DMT members to second staff, co-operate in mobilizing other needed resources, and use the facilities.
- ☐ Disseminate information regularly to all concerned government departments, donors and NGOs; fax copies to UNDRO.
- ☐ Encourage all concerned to be consistent in the use of agreed criteria, standards, and terminology, and to harmonize reporting periods to the extent feasible.
- ☐ Help direct the attention of NGOs to areas and activities where they can make the greatest contribution (not necessarily in the most affected areas).

**Q.** *In your position with a United Nations agency, what would you do in the event of the most likely disaster to strike your country in terms of the following:*

**A.**

Learning of a warning of an imminent disaster?

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Would you be on the UN-DMT?

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Do you know the UN personnel security plan? What would you do?

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What would be your contribution to the field sitrep to UNDRO?

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What would be your role in an assessment? Concerning which sectors?

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## CHAPTER 15

# Further resources

There are many resources for additional information on disaster management as well as disaster management training. The following pages represent many of those sources. Please note that some of the training referenced can be accessed through distance learning.

## Disaster mitigation planning: a short bibliography

by Ian Davis

Although disaster mitigation is still in its early stages as a subject of study and practice, it has already produced a sizeable literature. This bibliography selects the most important writings on the topic, including those books reviewed in the preceding pages.

BURTON, I., R.W. Kates & G.F. White *The Environment as Hazard* Oxford University Press, New York, 1978.

An excellent overview of the subject of both natural and man made hazards by three of the leading US Geographers who have both founded and developed the field of hazard mitigation.

CAMPBELL, D.J. & D.D. TRECHTER, 'Strategies for Coping with Food Consumption Shortage in the Mandara Mountains Region of North Cameroon' *Social Science Medicine* vol. 16, No. 24 pp 2117-2127., 1982.

CUNY, F.C. *Disasters and Development* Oxford University Press, New York, 1983. (See Review earlier in this issue.)

CUTLER, P. 'Famine Forecasting: Prices and Peasant Behaviour in Northern Ethiopia' *Disasters* Vol 8, No 1 p 48-55.

DAVIS, Ian, ed *Disasters and the Small Dwelling* Pergamon, Oxford, United Kingdom, 1981.

GOUDIE, Andrew. *The Human Impact Man's Role in Environmental Change* Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1981. (See review earlier in this issue.)

INTERTECT. Five 'Study and Recommendations' prepared for the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance, Agency for International Development, Washington DC. (See review earlier in this issue.)

KRIMGOLD, Frederick, *Pre-Disaster Planning: The Role of International Aid for Pre-Disaster Planning in Developing Countries* Avdeling for Arkitektetur KTH, Stockholm, Sweden, 1974.

Now out of print – but still available in specialist libraries – the pioneer attempt to develop the subject of pre-disaster planning in Developing Countries

LEWIS, James. *A Primer of Precautionary Planning for Natural Disasters* Disaster Research Unit, Bradford University, United Kingdom, 1977.

MASON, J.B., J.P. HABICHT, H. TABATAI, V. VALVERDE *Nutritional Surveillance*, World Health Organisation, Geneva, 1984.

