

PART 2

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION FOR PREPAREDNESS

In this part of the module you will learn:

- *three distinct roles for the UN system*
- *three obstacles to disaster preparedness at the national level*
- *four areas in which UN agencies can assist in developing disaster preparedness plans*
- *four roles of inter-agency collaboration at the field level through a UN DMT*
- *four ways UNDP can promote preparedness activities*

Disaster preparedness plans and their implementation are the responsibility of the government. The United Nations can facilitate and enhance government efforts, but the government must formally initiate and control the disaster preparedness and response processes.

In spite of government primacy in the realm of disaster preparedness, most emergency situations of significant magnitude in the developing world require some form of collaborative assistance from the international community. This part of the module focuses on ways the international community can support national government disaster preparedness activities. It also analyzes how the United Nations system can facilitate these activities.

The terms "international community" and "international system" are largely abstractions. There are few manifestations of community or system when dealing with the various nations, international governmental and non-governmental organizations that inhabit the globe. When discussing aspects of international involvement in disaster management, you will usually be dealing with a random assortment of governmental, non-governmental and international institutions that form part of an ad hoc network.

This perspective of the international community includes three obstacles that directly affect disaster preparedness at the country level. The first is that support for national disaster preparedness efforts by those who might be most able to assist, such as bilateral donors, is by no means a certainty. Their assistance is not guaranteed. Therefore, it is important from the outset to establish the type of support a government's disaster preparedness initiative might receive. This will entail not only establishing an effective means of interesting such donors in these activities, but also effective means to keep them interested.

Secondly, there are many reasons why governments are wary of including "outsiders" in the formulation of a disaster strategy or plan. One clear reason is that the planning process itself, if undertaken openly, exposes many of the inherent weaknesses of government perhaps resulting in

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embarrassing explanations about the causes of disaster vulnerabilities. These are insights that few governments wish to have paraded before the world. Yet, once a government accepts the rationale for a sound disaster preparedness plan, it will have to accept that the success of that plan may depend upon expertise, resources and technical assistance that may depend to some degree upon international contributions.

Finally, on some occasions, the inability of the United Nations "family" to work together towards a common country objective has proven disappointing. However, since much of the ability of UN agencies familiar with disaster management will be needed in the disaster preparedness formulation process, there exists an opportunity to advance effective collaboration.

Q. *Consider an example of preparedness planning in your region involving collaboration by more than three international entities. Describe the primary role of three such organizations.*

A. _____



Q. *List three obstacles related to the ad hoc structure of the international relief system which directly affect disaster preparedness at the country level.*

A. _____



The United Nations System

The role of the United Nations in disaster management is rapidly changing. A variety of arrangements need to be agreed upon amongst the agencies themselves if these changes are to lead to more effective assistance to disaster-afflicted peoples. There are already various established agency roles and functions in the realm of disaster management.

The following international agencies have functions that support the practical implementation of disaster preparedness plans.

FAO



planting assessments, crop forecast assessments and food information early warning system

UNDP



disaster-to-development projects, technical assistance for disaster preparedness plans and strategies, and in-country resident coordinator of UN system

UNDRO



information coordination, disaster assessments, mitigation and disaster preparedness planning

UNICEF



vaccination programs and supplementary feeding programming in times of emergencies for vulnerable groups and water and shelter programs

UNHCR



emergency planning for refugee influxes

WFP



relief food needs assessments and food or non-food logistics

WHO



technical assistance on epidemiological matters in times of emergencies and health preparedness

WMO



tropical storm meteorological information

Each of the above have specialist technical literature for particular fields of competence. UNDP, WFP, UNICEF and UNHCR have excellent manuals on disaster preparedness and management that should be incorporated into preparedness planning exercises. UNDRO's publication series on disaster prevention and mitigation is another valuable resource.

ANSWER (from page 32)

Answers might include specific role descriptions of UN agencies, NGOs or bilateral donors.

ANSWER (from page 32)

Support for national disaster preparedness efforts is not guaranteed, national governments may be wary of including "outsiders" in their planning processes; and UN agency collaboration may be less than ideal

As a means to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance, the Secretary-General has created a high level post of Emergency Relief Coordinator. This post will ensure better preparation for, as well as rapid and coherent response to, natural disasters and other emergencies. This will include consolidated appeals, a register of standby capacities and a central emergency revolving fund. This fund is a cash-flow mechanism to ensure the rapid and coordinated response of the organizations of the UN system. This US \$50 million fund can be advanced to the operational organizations of the system in the understanding that they will reimburse the fund.

The UN at headquarters level

In developing national disaster preparedness plans, there are at least four areas in which UN agencies can be of immediate assistance.

Headquarters support for disaster preparedness initiatives

It is important for agencies at the field level to know that disaster preparedness initiatives have the support of their respective headquarters. Beyond the intangible issue of moral support is the more practical matter of establishing the initiative as a recognized priority at the field level.

Short-term consultancies, study tours and exchange of experts

Agencies at headquarters level should have better insight as to which experts might be available to support field level efforts, in both the planning and implementation stages. Agencies should compile rosters of available experts. These rosters should be exchanged with other agencies. Agencies should review hiring procedures to ensure the rapid fielding of experts.

Wherever possible, agency workers should encourage government officials to discuss disaster preparedness measures at headquarters levels. These workers should take study tours to countries that have well established disaster preparedness plans. Such exchanges should be worked out between headquarters and the field office.

Emergency funding

More flexible systems will have to be developed among some of the agencies to improve the use of field office resources in times of emergencies, and to ensure additional resources for emergencies from headquarters. Such flexibility should be recognized as part of the anticipated resource base in the national disaster preparedness plan.

Headquarters procedures and scheduling

Through their field offices, agencies will have to make sure that the proposed disaster preparedness plan incorporates headquarters procedures and the scheduling necessary for an agency to respond effectively to various crisis scenarios.

The UN at field level

At the field level, inter-agency collaboration can have a positive impact on devising and implementing a disaster preparedness plan. Four components of such collaboration are essential

An interagency team

Each agency should designate an individual to become part of an inter-agency "Disaster Management Team" [UN DMT]. Because agencies increasingly have had field expertise in disaster management, the designated official would hopefully be an individual with such expertise. For example, where UNHCR is involved in relief management for refugees, a UNHCR representative should be invited to become a member of the UN DMT.

The UN DMT should be established as a permanent, functioning inter-agency body at the field level. Each member agency should have defined sectoral responsibilities. The chair of the DMT should be the Resident Coordinator. If agreed among the members of the DMT, the DMT's secretariat should be under the responsibility of UNDP's designated DMT participant, the "Disaster Focal Point."

UN DMT meetings should be held at regularly-scheduled intervals. The frequency of meetings might be adjusted in times of known potential threats, such as during rainy seasons.

Purpose of the DMT

The DMT should be a forum in which information is exchanged on a variety of matters.

- Long-term risk reduction and preparedness arrangements within the country should be reviewed. Development projects that would have some direct or indirect impact upon disaster prevention or preparedness should be part of this review.
- Reviews of preparedness arrangements within the UN should include mechanisms for the coordination of UN emergency assistance; inputs and operations between the government, bilateral donors and NGOs; location of personnel in the field when there is an immediate threat; and lists of resources available for specialized emergency activities.

UN DMT members should discuss the analysis and interpretation of data derived from early warning systems, both from within the country and from outside. They should also review information requirements needed for reporting formats, such as UN situation reports, to be disseminated either on preparedness or on relief activities.

The UN DMT as a focal point

The UN DMT should serve as the focal point for UN assistance in the preparation of national disaster preparedness plans. In collaboration with government counterparts, the DMT should review and comment upon proposals at their various stages. Representatives of the DMT should be on hand for expert advice during the policy formulation process. Where possible, these representatives should seek resources from individual agencies to bolster technical assistance and provide additional expertise.

The UN DMT and its region

The DMT should also look at disaster preparedness in a regional context. The activities of a neighboring nation may directly affect those of another. Early warnings on locust infestation, for example, is but one practical issue in which regional cooperation should be incorporated into a disaster preparedness plan. While governments will know regional and international organizations relevant to their interests, the DMT might be useful in demonstrating specific ways that such organizations might be used to enhance particular disaster preparedness programs

The UNDP in the field

UNDP's Resident Representative (ResRep), as UN Resident Coordinator at the country level and chair of the UN DMT, has a central role to play in the field of disaster preparedness. As Resident Coordinator, this person will be in a position to promote linkages between disaster preparedness initiatives and development activities. He or she will be able to use this position to promote disaster preparedness planning at senior government levels. The effectiveness of the UN DMT depends upon the leadership ability of the Resident Coordinator.

To assist the disaster preparedness planning and implementation process, the Resident Coordinator, in close collaboration with sister agencies, will have to ensure that the UN DMT is established, and that regular meetings are organized in order to cover the types of issues listed above. The Resident Coordinator must also ensure that a secretariat is established for the UN DMT, with proper facilities and staffing to enable the general functioning of the secretariat. Key functions in this regard will include the collection and dissemination of information, reports and studies. The secretariat should serve as a focal point within the UN system for essential data on:

- national policies regarding acceptance and use of international assistance, including external teams or personnel; policies concerning the use of communications equipment; and policies concerning specific types of foods and medicines
- government structures, including relevant names, telephones/fax/telex numbers of key personnel within central, regional, and local authorities
- names and telephone/fax/telex numbers of institutions outside the country that could be of assistance in times of crises
- baseline data on each distinct disaster prone area, which should be part of the ongoing process for vulnerability assessments

In close collaboration with the government and sister agencies, UNDP at the field level should review with the government the purpose and prospects for a disaster preparedness plan. If such a plan is already in place, UNDP should review with the government ways that such a plan might be enhanced. UNDP should also discuss with the government ways to sensitize its authorities at local, regional and central levels to the needs of disaster preparedness. Finally, UNDP should promote specific projects concerning disaster preparedness and disaster preparedness planning. There are a range of activities that such projects might include, such as:

- Disaster preparedness planning projects, intended to launch the entire process of disaster preparedness. Features of such a project might include aspects of sensitization, such as overseas study tours and conferences, technical assistance (including consultants who might be able to assist in the planning process), and workshops to enable formulation of the proposed plan.
- essential studies as part of an overall plan, such as a transport capacity study or vulnerability assessments
- institution-building projects, designed to strengthen already existing disaster preparedness focal points or to develop more effective early warning systems
- training projects that develop appropriate disaster planning courses within country. These projects might enable key personnel to take advantage of overseas courses. They might be designed for vulnerable communities. The range and importance of training measures must never be overlooked.

UN agencies and development projects

An essential role for UN agencies should be to review those projects that are within the Country Program that might be linked with disaster preparedness planning. Present development projects should be reviewed in an effort to determine how these projects might be effectively linked to preparedness measures. Conversely, UN agency staff should consider how preparedness measures might enhance the development process. Through the UN DMT, other agencies might review their own projects along similar lines.¹

Well-established working relations with government authorities are essential if UN agencies are to provide effective assistance in the disaster preparedness planning process. The relations which UN agencies have with the non-governmental and bilateral communities are equally important. UNDP, through the UN DMT, should seek wherever feasible and politic to support the NGO community. This may involve attending meetings when invited to discuss initiatives being undertaken by the UN system. If acceptable to sister agencies and the NGOs, other members of the UN system should attend such meetings to give briefings on their respective activities.

UN agencies should establish means to promote disaster preparedness activities proposed for the NGO community, such as workshops at training sites. If acceptable to government and NGOs, UN agencies should make every effort to incorporate the roles of NGOs into the formal structure of national disaster preparedness planning and implementation. Finally, UN agencies should ensure that the bilateral community is kept apprised of events in the disaster preparedness planning process. Regular meetings with donors are one means of establishing sound working relations. However, whether such meetings should be held under the auspices of the UN is an issue that may prove sensitive to the government as well as to bilateral donors. The appropriate mechanism for bilateral liaison will have to depend upon the conditions within each country.

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¹ See also the UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Training Programme module titled *Disasters and Development*.

While effective means for bilateral consultation are generally important in light of the roles that bilateral donors play in disaster relief, it is important to keep in mind that:

- effective measures for bilateral involvement expedite obtaining resources for disaster preparedness planning and implementation
- In particularly disaster-prone countries, donor governments have occasionally provided a fund for the Resident Coordinator to use for disaster preparedness and relief purposes. This fund has been used at the discretion of the Resident Coordinator, based upon the monitoring authority of bilateral ambassadors.

Information dissemination is vitally important during a relief operation and only slightly less so in the disaster planning process period. It should be an essential responsibility of UNDP, in conjunction with the DMT, to devise appropriate public information formats. These formats should serve to provide a regular flow of information to the international community (including UN agencies at headquarters levels and capitals of key bilateral donors) as well as members of the international community in-country and relevant government departments.

Information on relief assessments or preparedness measures, intended to be of benefit to the nation, can be regarded as highly sensitive. This is true not only for the government but also for sister agencies and NGOs. You must therefore think carefully about the contents of your various outputs. Two common types of information formats include situation reports ("Sitreps") and newsletters.

Sitreps have become the standard source of information about activities concerning emergency activities throughout the UN system. There is no rigid format for these reports. The message should include key activities related to preparedness, relief and needs assessments, noting requirements fulfilled and unfulfilled. The frequency of sending in Sitreps normally depends upon the level of crisis at hand.

If time allows, newsletters covering disaster preparedness activities serve to keep a wider community informed about events being undertaken in the field. Newsletters normally serve more as a promotional vehicle and do not cover issues that might be deemed sensitive. The intervals at which newsletters are published depends upon the amount of time at hand in the UN DMT secretariat and the number of activities that the DMT considers worth publicizing

IMPLEMENTING DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLANS

In this part of the module you will learn:

- four problematic reactions related to promoting preparedness plans at the national level
- three ways to avoid common promotional pitfalls
- four approaches for establishing a reliable base of information
- four plausible institutional structures for preparedness planning
- three lists of advice related to institutional structures, NGOs and bilateral donors

Promote the plan at the national level

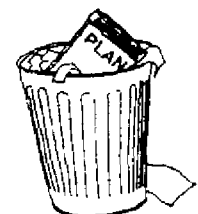
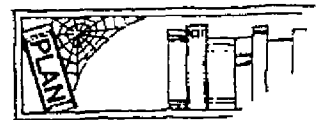
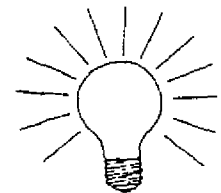
Many government officials will be skeptical about the benefits of disaster preparedness plans. Introducing the subject of disaster preparedness strategies or plans to government officials may elicit at least one of the following responses:

A tremendous idea! This is just the answer all who are concerned with disaster management want to hear. In reality, the respondent may have little idea of what such a plan entails. Even if this person appreciates the broad principles that are involved, he or she may become wary when the full range of necessary measures begins to unfold.

We need development, not disaster preparedness! A difficult argument to refute, particularly if an official assumes that the two are mutually exclusive. Ministries of finance and economic planning are often the most reluctant to dedicate time and funds to a proposal that seems tangential to their major concern of development. Focusing on development projects often reflects institutional success and generates considerable external assistance.

We already have one. Excellent, but what does the official mean? The government may have a designated disaster relief office in some back ministerial corridor. That one room and one officer hardly constitute an effective disaster preparedness plan. It is not an easy task to suggest that efforts which the government has made to date are not adequate.

We don't need one. This response is usually followed by a description of the effective role played by national Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies in times of disasters; or the way the government handles these matters effectively on an ad hoc basis; or an explanation that the government has other priorities.



Q. Review the common reactions listed above. How would you respond to each of these reactions in promoting a disaster preparedness plan?

A. _____



Given these common responses, it is important to sensitize reluctant government officials to the virtues of disaster preparedness. A combination of the following measures may assist in the process.

Clarify essential points

There is no trade-off between disaster preparedness and development. The two are closely linked, conceptually and practically. An effective disaster preparedness strategy or plan will:

- **Protect development.** Disasters delay, or, in the worst case, destroy progress that has been made to date. An effective disaster preparedness plan should be integrated into the development process so that the former can protect the latter.
- **Introduce disaster mitigation.** Disaster mitigation measures such as safer buildings, "off-the-shelf" food-for-work programs or cash-for-work public works programs not only protect people and their assets, but also speed up the development process if they are adequately designed.
- **Strengthen the local infrastructure.** For example, the institutional and communications structure required in disaster preparedness necessarily strengthens the overall local infrastructure.
- **Exert pressure on traditional aid donors.** This may affect the overall amounts these donors allot to development. Conversely, donors are increasingly interested in spending resources on disaster preparedness measures. Many donors now realize that disaster preparedness is cost effective when compared to the price of emergency response.

Seeing is believing

For those government officials who doubt the overall value of disaster preparedness, organize study tours to countries where disaster preparedness plans (for example, China) and strategies (for example, India) have proven highly effective.

Organize conferences and workshops

If this stage is reached, there are converts already on the way. However, since a disaster preparedness plan will require the commitment of the government and relevant non-governmental organizations, conferences and workshops afford good opportunities to convince those in doubt.

Establish a reliable information base

The more disaster-prone a country, the less reliable the information base is likely to be. This point goes to the heart of what disaster vulnerability is all about: extensive poverty, weak infrastructure, and inadequate administration. Under such conditions, it is difficult to maintain a reliable information base.

There is often a "data game" that is played before, during and after a disaster. Sometimes there are political reasons for governments to provide unreliable data. Certain demographic data might, for example, reflect an official's regional affiliation. Infrastructural data might reflect the wishful thinking of a ministry that has not completed a project as well as it suggests. Agricultural data might reflect an optimistic forecast of the minister for agriculture. Such games are also played by international organizations. An agency might exaggerate the number of water projects it has completed, or assume that there are more primary health care facilities in a particular region than in fact is the case. At times agencies assume that food needs are greater than they are to avoid being accused of underestimating the extent of a possible crisis.

Even under the best of circumstances, baseline data and information systems cannot be perfect. Gathering sensible data and approximate information is a far more realistic information goal. It is highly recommended to implement the following information systems at the beginning of the planning process.

Vulnerability assessments

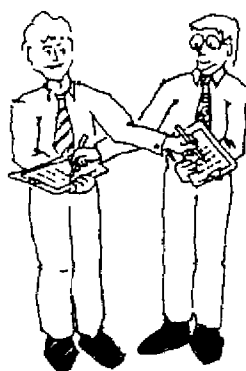
These assessments are particularly important for planning design purposes and for establishing a basis for information flows and updates. These assessments should be undertaken with the same rigor as any development project. With a team leader that knows a particular region well, sectoral experts from UN organizations should join with their national counterparts to undertake the sort of full-scale assessment.

Joint-information programs

Joint data and information systems between the UN disaster preparedness focal point and this person's government counterpart are vital for both the planning process and the plan itself. The fact that the government is working from the same information base that the UN focal point is using will smooth debates that might arise. In project proposals relating to the disaster preparedness plan, be sure to allot funds for computer equipment, training, and whatever else the counterpart office might require to maintain an effective system.

ANSWER (from page 40)

See the following section for three measures which might assist in your response



Cross-checking

Even in the most disaster-prone country, lack of data is less often a problem than a plethora of conflicting data. Non-governmental organizations often know more about particular areas than government offices. Some procedure should be established, in agreement with the government counterpart, to cross-check information with other organizations, including other government ministries at central and regional levels.

Joint-assessment process

As part of the disaster preparedness plan, it should be formally agreed that in times of emergencies, a team or teams comprising agency representatives of the government focal point, the UN DMT, the government focal point and non-governmental organizations familiar with the affected area assess the situation jointly.

Such procedures should be formally adopted within the proposed disaster plan. Joint assessments can reduce duplication of efforts, promote a degree of consensus about damage and needs, and ensure that subsequent appeals have national as well as international endorsement (when external aid is needed).

Define appropriate institutional structures

It is not easy to determine the home base for a disaster focal point. There are advantages and disadvantages to consider related to various options: in the Prime Minister's office, in one of the ministries, or as a separate entity.

A key feature of a disaster preparedness plan must be to ensure that line ministries have vested interests in the disaster preparedness proposal. This means that resources and responsibilities should be parcelled out amongst all those deemed important to the plan. The idea is not to take away the medical functions of a ministry of health, but rather to enhance its capabilities to respond in coordination with other ministries. That does not necessarily mean that a ministry of health would be responsible for the logistics of emergency medicines. It might mean that its responsibility for ensuring emergency medical provisions would be acknowledged, that its institutional strength at local levels would be enhanced, and that its commitment to the plan might be greater.

Q. *In your country, which government agency is the focal point for disaster preparedness?*

A. _____



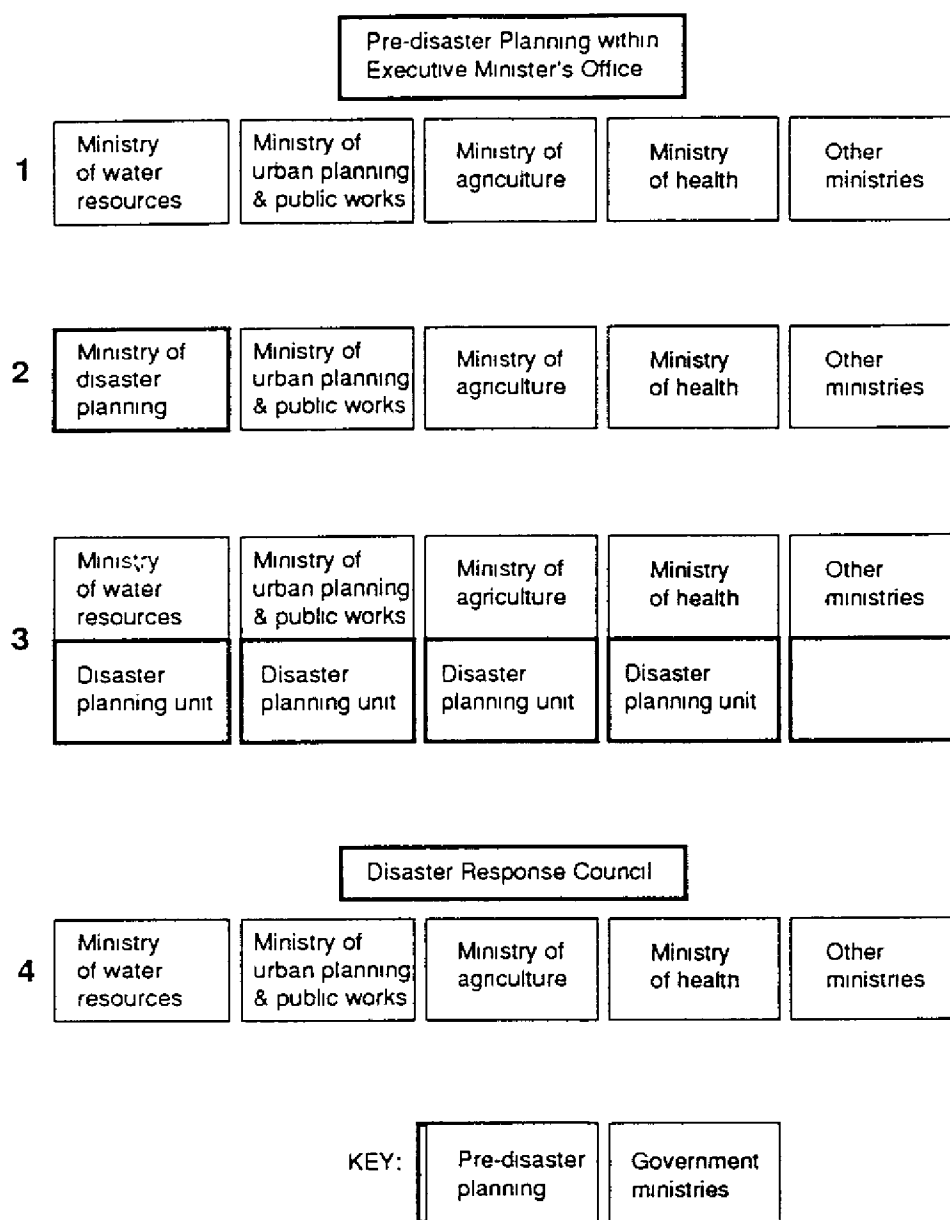


FIGURE 4
Options for integrating disaster preparedness within government structures

In a disaster situation, all responsible officials must have a clear idea of their roles and functions. This is what a disaster plan establishes and what rehearsals test. The effectiveness of implementation can be judged by an inter-ministerial committee and supported by the findings of a secretariat.

It is advisable to have a secretariat to liaise with designated ministries: before implementation of a plan (for information updates, training requirements, and rehearsals); during implementation periods, (for coordinated assessments); and after the first stages of implementation (for second phase programs for recovery and rehabilitation). The roles and resources brought by non-governmental organizations for disaster preparedness, mitigation, prevention and relief purposes should be incorporated into the information required by the inter-ministerial committee on disaster preparedness. The government should also have a mechanism to determine the amount and type of assistance provided by bilateral donors as well as international agencies

ANSWER (from page 42)
See the following figure for help in defining the government agency

It is important to bring the planning process to the regional and local levels. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways. Having established a broad framework for the plan, take the plan and relevant officials to the field to work out the most effective ways to implement the proposal. The means of implementation should include attention to resources for preparedness at the family and local levels. The more centralized administrative planning systems should be in support of local efforts, not vice versa.

A national disaster preparedness strategy or plan should allow regional variations to meet the specific conditions of particular areas. This is essential for ensuring that the institutional structure of the plan has the support of regional and local officials. Establish local working groups to review the plans on a periodic basis and be sure that the substance of these reviews is considered. Where relevant, incorporate these reviews into updates of the overall plan. Such working groups are essential when it comes to warning systems, evacuation measures, and health or nutritional assessments.

Be sure that disaster plan rehearsals are not conducted merely at the central level, but that they combine central, regional and local level interaction. Distinguish in the plan the types of disasters that do, or do not require central government approval.

Consider this advice

Some warnings are in order related to appropriate institutional structures for disaster preparedness plans.

The exchange of information must be an active undertaking. Do not wait for another agency to approach the UN DMT secretariat for information. Be sure that there is an established and effective system to disseminate information.

Ensure that agency representatives are briefed regularly on what is happening about the disaster preparedness plan. Encourage relevant agencies to participate in the planning process.

Be sure that any national disaster preparedness plan fully recognizes the particular specializations of relevant UN agencies.

See to it that no decision about such specializations is discussed without a representative of the agency present. If that is impossible, be sure to brief the agency about the discussions that have ensued.

Do not assume that what is written in the plan is what any individual agency might follow. Before any point of implementation, such as conducting joint assessment missions, be sure to double check specific commitments.

See how specific agency interests might be developed within the context of the proposed disaster preparedness plan. Could an international child welfare agency, at its own behest, play a more active part in health preparedness?

Do not assume instant cooperation from non-governmental organizations. There is frequently a degree of wariness that pervades relations between NGOs and government and between NGOs and the UN system. Nevertheless, NGOs can be vital components to a national disaster preparedness plan. Where willing and able, NGOs should be incorporated into the plan.

A few more warnings are in order related to NGOs in disaster preparedness plans.

Avoid dictates. Effective NGOs are normally represented by people with considerable field experience. These people frequently have grass-roots experiences with disaster relief operations. They know their business, so remember that the exchanges are between equals.

Share experiences. See whether there is an NGO forum in which UN activities concerning disaster preparedness might be discussed. Consider holding special workshops on particular technical matters for NGO staff, on topics such as emergency logistics.

Exchange information. One of the standard responses from NGOs when discussing UN information-gathering is that it is a one-way process. The UN gets the information, and the NGO gets nothing in return. Both UN and government workers benefit considerably from certain insights and information provided by NGOs. Therefore, the exchange of information should be more open. The door of the DMT secretariat should be open to NGOs.

Incorporate NGOs in disaster preparedness activities. Governments might agree and even welcome the opportunity to collaborate with NGOs. However, be certain that a government's enthusiasm for incorporating an NGO into a preparedness plan is not a measure to constrain NGO activities. Both the government and NGOs must ensure that their agendas are not compromised.

Advice is also in order related to including bilateral donors in plan implementation.

Be sure that donors are in the know. In the disaster preparedness plan, there will be an officially designated focal point in the government that will monitor the relief contributions coming into the country. However, the information may not get through. In times of emergencies, the UN DMT should meet regularly with donors to be sure they know what is needed, what has arrived and the status of ports, airports and other distribution links.

Conduct disaster preparedness briefings. Even before donors provide assistance, be sure they know the procedures set forth in the disaster preparedness plan on how assessments will be made and how subsequent appeals will be issued. Be sure donors know how relief is to be delivered, according to the disaster preparedness plan.

Pulling it all together

This module has reviewed the breadth and scope of disaster preparedness. The following appendix can be used as a tool to not only review the subject but also to help structure what is in a disaster preparedness plan. A useful exercise is to review each item on the checklist to determine if the information exists in your country and where to obtain it. If the information is unavailable or doesn't exist, filling that gap will be an important step in implementing disaster preparedness.

NOTES

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Checklist of basic information required by a UN-DMT¹

This checklist often refers to agency or organizational "contacts." To keep your information current, you should have for all contacts:



- name
- office address and telephone, fax, and telex numbers
- home address and telephone number
- electronic mail address, if the person has one

You should have the same information for any alternates or deputies.



Disaster profile of country

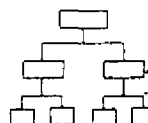
- ☐ The history of the incidence and magnitude of particular types of disasters in different areas; their impacts on the population and the economy.
- ☐ The types of emergency and post-disaster assistance provided from all sources in the past; the effectiveness of that assistance given the problems faced—the "lessons" learned.
- ☐ The kinds of needs which can therefore be anticipated in particular areas and circumstances, and the kinds of assistance interventions which might be required



National policies, objectives and standards

- ☐ Policies with regard to the soliciting, acceptance and use of international assistance, including external personnel
- ☐ The authority delegated to local institutions, and the possible roles of national NGOs and outside assistance agencies.
- ☐ Policies (both "whether or not" and "how") regarding vaccinations, prophylactic distribution of drugs, the care of unaccompanied children, and salvaging of materials
- ☐ Policies and criteria for any distribution of relief: whether to be on a free, for-sale or on-credit basis, what, if any, differentiation should be encouraged within and between different population subgroups.
- ☐ The particular objectives and standards which should be applied to ration scales for food and water, and any distribution of shelter materials and household supplies.

- ☐ Specification of the kinds of food and other commodities which are appropriate and acceptable as donations, and those which are not.
- ☐ General specifications for the kind of energy sources normally preferred for vehicles (diesel or petrol) and generators and pumps (diesel or electric).
- ☐ General priorities for the restoration of infrastructure and services
- ☐ Policies and arrangements for importing emergency assistance supplies, such as arrangements for waiving fees and taxes or the clearance of special relief flights.



Government structures for warning and emergency response

- ☐ The contact responsible for all national hazard forecasting and warning systems.
- ☐ The government contact (and deputy) normally responsible for the management of emergency relief and post-disaster assistance operations in a central co-ordination body, if one exists. Contacts in individual ministries.
- ☐ The address and telephone/fax/telex numbers of any national disaster co-ordination centre, and whether and how foreign donor officials will have access to the centre during emergencies.
- ☐ The procedures established (at national and local levels) for assessing damage, needs and resources following the impact of a disaster
- ☐ The contacts in the national disaster management body or the sectoral ministries responsible for arranging and assuring:
 - Co-ordination and liaison with the international community (UN system, embassies, NGOs)
 - Search and rescue operations
 - Post-disaster surveys and assessments
 - Food supply assistance, where needed
 - Medical and preventive health care
 - Water supplies
 - Environmental sanitation
 - Emergency shelter and other relief supplies
 - Communications
 - Logistic services (transport, storage and handling)
 - Information management (including records and reports)
 - Security
- ☐ Role of the national armed forces and the relationship between civil and military authorities in directing operations

¹ Source: UNDP/UNDRO DISASTER MANAGEMENT MANUAL (1 MAY 1997)

Other external and national assistance organizations

- ☐ The contacts at the principal embassies and donor agencies, the potential contributions of their governments and organizations to post-disaster assistance operations, and the resources they have on immediate call locally
- ☐ The contacts at the national Red Cross/Red Crescent Society and the principal NGOs, their potential contributions to emergency and post-disaster assistance operations, and the resources (human, material, and financial) they have on immediate call.

Base-line data on each distinct disaster-prone area

- ☐ Demographic details the location, size and socio-economic characteristics of communities, including average family size, sources and levels of income, and any traditional patterns of seasonal migration.
- ☐ Formal and informal leadership structures, any particular social or religious considerations, traditional community support processes at times of disaster, and any taboos.
- ☐ General climatic conditions, including day and night temperatures at different times of year.
- ☐ Local food habits, including weaning practices, of the various socio-economic groups.
- ☐ "Normal" nutritional status of children, including any normal seasonal variations
- ☐ Diseases endemic to the area, including prevailing patterns of mortality and morbidity.
- ☐ Normal sources of water: sources and methods of extraction; treatment; and distribution.
- ☐ Food supply systems and local production: types, seasonal production cycles and normal yields of both major crops and small gardens, and average on-farm stock retention levels.
- ☐ Services operating (official and non-official): health, education, rural development, public works, and social welfare. This should include the location and specific nature of the services provided and the personnel employed.
- ☐ Coverage and general condition of the infrastructure, including roads, telecommunications, and electricity supplies.

Resources: material and human

"Resources" include supplies and services which can be mobilized in-country for emergency and post-disaster assistance operations. Potential sources include government bodies, commercial companies (locally or in a neighbouring country), NGOs and other aid organizations and development projects operating in or near the areas at risk.

Medical/health care¹

- ☐ Hospitals, clinics and other health facilities: number of beds, ambulances, availability of special equipment, number of trained doctors, nurses and nurses' aides; contacts at all facilities.
- ☐ Stocks and sources of medical supplies: names, addresses, and telephone/fax/telex numbers of all medical supply stores; manufacturers of pharmaceuticals and supplies; and laboratories producing vaccines and serums.

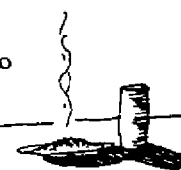


Food supplies

- ☐ Location, capacities, and normal stock levels of food stores; telephone/fax/telex numbers of government marketing boards, food supply departments, commercial importers, food wholesalers, and food aid donors
- ☐ Details of existing food rationing and distribution programmes (including food-for-work), their organizational arrangements, procedures, and capacity to meet emergency needs.

Nutrition and epidemiology²

- ☐ Nature, location, and capacity of any nutritional rehabilitation (therapeutic feeding) activities, their organizational arrangements, procedures and capacity to meet emergency needs.
- ☐ Extent and validity of any nutritional status surveys or surveillance programmes; in-country sources of nutritional expertise (with relevant field experience).
- ☐ Location and capacity of epidemiological surveillance and survey expertise linked to communicable disease control programmes.



¹ This information should be assured by WHO staff in the context of the preparedness profiles issued by WHO headquarters.

² Nutrition aspects may not be a priority concern in the immediate aftermath of a sudden natural disaster, but are crucial in all emergency situations of extended duration, especially droughts, famines, and in all cases involving population displacements

Water supplies, hygiene and environmental sanitation

- ☐ Names, addresses, telephone/telex numbers of producers, large wholesalers, and retail outlets for the following types of supplies, including location and usual stock levels on inventory:
 - Water pumps, tanks, pipes and fittings
 - Road tankers for hire or purchase
 - Lime or other chemicals for water disinfection
 - Hard bar soap, detergents, and disinfectants
 - Materials for establishing temporary latrines
 - Supplies and equipment for vector control operations
- ☐ The quantities of these supplies normally available in government stocks in specified locations
- ☐ The availability of mobile water treatment units and generators through the military or major contractors.
- ☐ Sources of trained personnel and tools to undertake rapid repairs or to construct new or temporary installations.



Emergency shelter and relief materials

- ☐ Names, addresses, telephone/telex numbers of producers, large wholesalers, and retail outlets for the following types of supplies, including location and usual stock levels on inventory:
 - Heavy-duty tents, tarpaulins, thick polythene sheeting
 - Corrugated roofing sheets, lumber, cement
 - Blankets
 - Cooking pots and utensils (household size, and institutional size for communal kitchens)
- ☐ The quantities of these supplies normally available in government stocks in specified locations.

Construction equipment

- ☐ Names, addresses, telephone/telex numbers of road and building contractors, including their approximate availabilities of bulldozers, drag-lines, hoists, cranes, hydraulic jacks, mobile generators, and pumps.
- ☐ Contact points of government sources for the same types of equipment, for example, within the Ministry of Public Works or Defense.

Communications

- ☐ Contacts within the responsible authorities for establishing telecommunications services, including the repair of normal systems and the installation of temporary radio networks, where needed.
- ☐ Policies concerning the use of communications equipment by international teams and aid organizations



Logistic systems and facilities

Logistics considerations include details of normal transport routes and capacities to and within the disaster-prone areas, and knowledge of the specific logistical problems likely to be faced moving supplies following a disaster.

- ☐ Roads
 - Have copies of the best available maps
 - Identify essential road links and best alternative routes.
 - Mark potential constraints on truck traffic (such as bridge load capacities and ferry movement capacities), and any points vulnerable to occurrences such as flooding or landslides.
- ☐ Trucking capacity
 - Government fleets: the number and condition of trucks of specified types and capacities in different departments and locations which might be available to transport relief supplies.
 - Commercial capacity: the contacts at private transport contractors able to operate to or within the areas concerned, including details of their fleets, the locations of their offices and maintenance facilities, and normal rates.
- ☐ Railways
 - Track gauges, wagon capacities, and any loading constraints on various lines.
 - Daily movement capacities on various lines, and the numbers of locomotives and wagons which might be available during each season.
 - Reliability and operational constraints, including any feasible measures to improve performance.
- ☐ Sea and river ports
 - Harbour depths, quay lengths, cargo handling equipment.
 - Daily discharge capacity, and seasonal patterns of exports and imports.
 - Size of covered and open storage areas, and amount normally available at different seasons.
 - Normal offtake capacities road and rail.



Disaster Preparedness

☐ Coastal and river craft

- Government craft: the numbers and condition of boats, tugs and barges (of specified types and capacities) in different locations which might be available for rescue operations or to transport relief supplies.
- Commercial capacity: contacts within private shipping contractors able to operate to or within the areas concerned, including details of their fleets and normal rates

☐ Airports and air-strips

- The precise locations and the length, width, surface and load classification of runways in the affected areas
- Largest type of aircraft able to operate.
- Fuel availability (avgas and jet fuel).
- Navigation and landing aids, and hours open for flying.
- Cargo handling equipment and storage capacity.

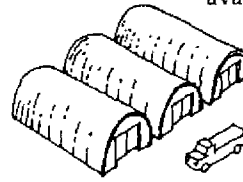


☐ Aircraft and air transport

- Government: number and types of aircraft and helicopters likely to be available to transport personnel and relief supplies; the approximate costs of operation of military and other government aircraft and helicopters.
- National airline and other companies: number and types of aircraft and helicopters likely to be available to transport personnel and relief supplies; approximate charter costs.

☐ Storage and handling

- Government warehouses: the location, size, and type of stores in different areas which might be available for relief supplies, the general condition of the stores, level of security, access to road and rail transport, the availability of pallets, hand trucks, and forklifts, and the adequacy of staff and record systems.
- Private warehouses: as above for stores which might be requisitioned or rented.



☐ Fuel supplies (diesel and petrol)

- The locations, capacities, and normal stock levels of government and commercial fuel storage depots; the arrangements by which fuel can be drawn or delivered from those depots.

