

socio-economic effects of disasters. This can be accomplished through a variety of measures in different areas, including vulnerability analysis, para-seismic and wind resistant engineering, early warning of threatening phenomena, public education and awareness-raising, training of disaster management officials, drawing up of natural disaster plans and related legislation, establishment and strengthening of national and international disaster management organizations. Since disaster mitigation as a concept is relatively new, the required skills, mechanisms and techniques are often inadequate and are thus especially appropriate for strengthening through institution-building types of projects. The involvement of national planning bodies is important in ensuring that national development plans take such disaster mitigation measures into consideration, weighing the costs of such measures against the losses which can be incurred if the measures are not taken.

44. In UNDR0's experience, ad hoc mitigation activities such as one-time consultancies and related funding requests made to UNDR0 had had only marginal impact over time. The conclusion of this experience had made it clear that only when disaster preparedness and prevention projects are built into a wider developmental programme or strategy, or when the mitigation effort goes beyond the individual desire of a single department, can there be any lasting effect. For this reason, the UNDP country programming process, with its explicit structure and governmental commitment, offers much more promising and far-reaching returns for mitigation initiatives.

45. The task force noted the increasing emphasis that UNDP is placing upon the overall identification of technical co-operation requirements in connection with the country programming process. The task force recommended that in such processes undertaken in disaster-prone countries, specific emphasis be given to technical co-operation in the field of disaster mitigation and management. The task force recommended that the UNDP position paper, which is the first step in the development of a new country programme, should specifically address needs and options for disaster mitigation and management in disaster-prone countries. In such countries, the issue of disaster mitigation and management should be addressed as part of the discussion related to the objectives of the UNDP country programme.

46. The task force recognized that the UNDP country programming process had not been used sufficiently to introduce or to promote disaster mitigation initiatives. To this end, it was agreed that there would be greater exchange of information between UNDR0 and UNDP/UNDR0 Resident Representatives in disaster-prone countries during the UNDP country programming process so that UNDR0 can make available the necessary technical expertise.

47. As appropriate, within the framework of the country programme in disaster-prone countries, projects whose activities and results might be adversely affected by disasters should be reviewed by UNDR0 with respect to the mitigation safeguards to be considered with regard to such projects. This could include, for example, the design of low-cost housing, as well as other physical infrastructure projects and training components in development administration projects. The task force also considered that the inclusion of the disaster mitigation dimension would prove particularly useful in feasibility studies and other pre-investment activities

supported by UNDP, as these often envisage the construction of physical infrastructure in the investment phase. UNDP will establish disaster mitigation factors as a "special condition" to be applied in its project formulation and appraisal process. In addition, UNDP staff in Headquarters and in the field must be made more aware of the importance of taking these issues into account during the project formulation process.

48. The task force recognized that the most propitious time to promote disaster mitigation initiatives with Governments of disaster-prone countries was after a disaster. The UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative and UNDRO should capitalize on this by bringing the attention of Governments to the capacity of the United Nations system to provide assistance in this field. The task force also recommended that UNDP consider making it possible for a percentage of the Special Programme Resources to be used for disaster mitigation activities. UNDRO would underscore the opportunities for supporting disaster mitigation efforts by identifying these in consultation with the Disaster Response Team and including them in a final SITREP.

49. The task force noted the writing by UNDP and UNDRO of a Disaster Management Manual for use by the two organizations. The Manual would cover procedures relating to UNDP/UNDRO disaster-related responsibilities (as summarized in the UNDP Programme and Project Manual), certain technical aspects of disaster management, and the disaster continuum and its implications for development.

(c) Rehabilitation/reconstruction

50. The task force recognized that the UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative, offering his good services to the Government, was in a privileged position, through the United Nations Disaster Response Team to help assess rehabilitation/reconstruction requirements, participate in related planning activities and inform on needs and programmes. The task force further recognized that while the UNDP/UNDRO mechanism exists for assisting Governments to mobilize and co-ordinate external resources in the relief phase, this mechanism does not exist for the reconstruction phase - by mandate, UNDRO ends its disaster response activities once the relief phase is over. The task force felt that while respecting UNDRO's mandate, the capacity of UNDRO to communicate rehabilitation/reconstruction needs in a situation report should be used to help ensure the necessary transition from the relief phase. The UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative, in his capacity as Resident Co-ordinator, will take the lead in harmonizing the activities of the different organizations of the United Nations system during the reconstruction phase.

(d) Skills and institutional capacity

(i) Training

51. The task force recognized that the training of UNDP field staff in disaster management is a priority. This should include UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representatives, Deputy Resident Representatives and Local National Officers. The training of UNDP staff should include disaster relief and mitigation concepts and procedures. For

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the purpose of these training activities, the existing programmes (e.g. UNICEF, UNHCR) should be fully utilized. (Also see reference in section III.)

52. For effective consultations with or advice of UNDRO in issues regarding mitigation projects, selected UNDRO staff should participate in training in matters related to the UNDP project cycle.

(ii) Evaluation

53. In addition to the evaluations currently being undertaken by UNDRO, the task force underlined the great importance of a system of independent evaluations being instituted so as to provide objective feedback for application in future disaster situations. As a result of preliminary consultations with the Central Evaluation Office of UNDP, it is recommended that the necessary minimum data be collected during an emergency in order to provide the necessary base for ex post-facto evaluation. The results of such ex post-facto evaluations should be shared with other partners in emergency programmes (see also section III).

III. INTER-ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

A. The United Nations disaster response team

54. It is recognized that there is a need for a standing United Nations disaster response team* in disaster-prone countries, with full representation of the different organizations of the United Nations system possessing the requisite sectoral and technical skills needed at the time of disasters. The team is the United Nations focal point body for the Government and the locally represented international community.

B. Functions and composition of the United Nations disaster response team

55. The functions of the team are to ensure a co-ordinated approach at the country level by the United Nations system in different aspects of the response, including assessment of the disaster, identification of relief needs of the affected population, and provision of information as a basis for international appeals. The composition of the team will depend on the type of disaster to which a given country is prone. However, it can be safely assumed that a United Nations disaster response team headed by the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator (who will represent UNDP/UNDRO) will usually need to include representation of UNICEF, WFP,

* The basis for the establishment, use and composition of United Nations teams for disaster response has been laid down in agreements between UNDP, UNDRO and the interested United Nations organizations (see UNDP/PROG/FIELD/110/Rev.1), in inter-agency memoranda of agreement with UNDRO, and explicitly in General Assembly resolution 36/225.

FAO and WHO. Government officials from the national focal point body and other ministries, as appropriate, should normally be associated with the team.

C. Designation of representatives to the United Nations disaster response team

56. It is anticipated that these and other appropriate organizations of the United Nations system will be represented in the team by their most senior officers, normally the country representative. It may also prove desirable for these organizations additionally to be represented by project personnel having particular relevant skills to offer.

D. Enlarged participation in the United Nations disaster response team

57. The nature of the disasters to which a country is prone may make it necessary for other organizations of the United Nations system (e.g. UNHCR, UNESCO and WMO) to be represented in the United Nations disaster response team with full regard to their respective mandates. As with the other organizations represented on a more regular basis in such teams, this representation could be effected either through personnel of country offices (where these exist) and/or through project personnel.

E. Chairmanship of the United Nations disaster response team

58. The United Nations disaster response team meetings will be chaired by the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator.

F. Meetings of the United Nations disaster response team

59. In those countries subject to seasonal phenomena (floods, hurricanes, tropical storms) the United Nations disaster response team should meet formally at the beginning of the threat season and at regular intervals through this period. Where the adverse phenomena cannot be predicted, the team should meet at regular intervals through the year. When early warning can be received of a potential disaster, the team should meet more frequently, on learning of the threat. Once a disaster has occurred, it can be expected that frequent meetings of the team would be necessary in most relief situations.

G. Concerted relief programmes and the United Nations disaster response team

60. The purpose of the United Nations disaster response team is to ensure that there is a concerted, systematic and co-ordinated relief programme by the United Nations system.

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H. Damage and needs assessment

61. Paragraph 11 above emphasizes the importance of timely and accurate reporting on the disaster from the country level to UNDRO headquarters. UNDRO has to rely upon the technical skills of other organizations of the United Nations system to contribute damage and needs assessments. The participation of organizations of the United Nations system in such assessments can be envisaged in one or more of the following ways:

- (a) By representational staff of the organizations in the country;
- (b) By technical specialists in the disaster-stricken country;
- (c) By staff sent to the country on mission, from regional offices and/or headquarters.

I. Assessments and in-country staff

62. In view of the absolute necessity of ensuring a speedy, effective and co-ordinated assessment of damage and needs, especially in the wake of a sudden natural disaster, it is anticipated that the initial response for assessments will have to come from in-country staff. However, it is recognized that follow-up technical assessments of the United Nations specialized agencies and programmes may have to be organized from their regional offices or their headquarters.

J. Externally formed inter-agency assessment missions

63. In some cases it might be preferable, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 39/207, paragraph 3, to undertake a multisectoral assessment by means of an inter-agency mission. Such a mission will be undertaken following consultations with the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator and the Government and will normally be organized or co-ordinated by the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator. This does not exclude the possibility of other United Nations system entities organizing missions in specific situations where the major area of interest relates directly to their competence.

K. External assessment missions and the United Nations disaster response team

64. In order to ensure that the missions are effective, the in-country work of the missions must be carried out in the closest collaboration with the United Nations disaster response team, which, inter alia, should be able to provide external assessment missions with updated information on the disaster as well as logistical and administrative support.

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L. International appeals

65. The normal United Nations channel for Governments to request an appeal for international assistance following a disaster is through UNDRO, which in such matters is acting on behalf of the Secretary-General. In launching appeals, UNDRO might advise donors on the appropriate organization or agency through which their contributions might be channelled. While it is recognized that other organizations of the United Nations system may find it appropriate to launch independent appeals, this should be done in consultation with UNDRO, particularly as regards the timing of such appeals, the reporting on the responses (national and international) to the disaster, including information on the nature of pledges made and contributions received, their monetary value and estimated time of arrival to the disaster-stricken country. Such appeals and the response to them will be reflected, following consultation between UNDRO headquarters and other organizations concerned, in the UNDRO SITREPS so as to provide donors with an overall United Nations package that is as consolidated as possible. With respect to the recording of pledges and contributions, UNDRO has prepared a reporting format for this purpose that it will apply and disseminate.

M. Rehabilitation and reconstruction and the United Nations disaster response team

66. Normally, the assessment of needs for rehabilitation/reconstruction will be undertaken through the mechanism of the United Nations disaster response team, whose composition may need to be modified to reflect the different nature of the activities being planned. The participation of the World Bank and of the regional development bank concerned is desirable in this process.

N. UNDRO SITREPS and rehabilitation/reconstruction

67. UNDRO's last situation reports for a given disaster will include a description of the rehabilitation and reconstruction needs as arrived at through the various inter-institutional and field-level mechanisms described in the preceding paragraphs.

O. The nature of rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts

68. The rehabilitation and reconstruction phases of a disaster are characterized by a time frame of months or even years, being thus likely to form part of the regular development assistance of the United Nations organizations to the country concerned. However, it is also recognized that some organizations of the United Nations system have resources, either of their own or provided by third parties, which can be made available for specific rehabilitation and reconstruction purposes, over and above resources normally available in their regular programmes.

P. The role of the United Nations system in rehabilitation and reconstruction

69. The UNDP Resident Representative, in his capacity as Resident Co-ordinator of the Operational Activities of the United Nations system, will stand ready to assist Governments, other organizations of the United Nations system and donors in formulating a cohesive plan of action for rehabilitation and reconstruction.

70. To this effect, in his capacity as UNDRO representative, he will also, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 41/201, contribute to ensuring the necessary transition to the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase by passing on relevant data to competent organs and agencies of the United Nations system.

71. The mobilization and co-ordination of the technical and financial assistance of the specialized organizations of the United Nations system was recognized by the task force as being just as important for the rehabilitation and reconstruction phases as for the relief phase.

Q. Opportunity for disaster mitigation initiatives

72. As already indicated, the post-disaster period is especially propitious for the introduction of disaster mitigation initiatives in national planning structures. Organizations of the United Nations system, preferably through the disaster response team, should therefore consider taking such initiatives.

R. Training

73. The task force recognized that disaster relief and mitigation activities could benefit from further strengthening of training opportunities. In this connection, the task force took note of several ongoing training programmes (UNICEF, UNHCR, WHO), and recommends that full advantage be taken of these. Other joint training programmes could then be developed as needed.

S. Evaluation

74. The task force noted that many of the organizations dealing with disaster-related issues conduct internal evaluations of their respective activities. It reiterated the importance and value of such evaluations. The task force therefore recommended that the results and conclusions of the evaluations be shared to the maximum extent with other partners in relief operations. This should allow the lessons drawn to be applied and thus ensure the strengthening of the capacity of the international community to respond to disaster situations. The experience gained should also be incorporated in training programmes. Consideration should be given to organizing joint evaluation exercises.

IV. SUMMARY OF THE AGREEMENTS REACHED AND RECOMMENDATIONS
ARRIVED AT BY THE UNDP/UNDRO MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE
REGARDING OPERATIONAL MODALITIES BETWEEN UNDP AND UNDRO

75. UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representatives have key responsibilities in major disasters, implying recognition of the disaster-proneness of certain countries, and understanding on how to deal with disaster-related issues. UNDRO will advise UNDP on the disaster-proneness of countries and UNDP will take this aspect into consideration in the related appointments of Resident Representatives.

76. The UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative will receive a letter of appointment from UNDRO.

77. There will be a more systematic briefing procedure for UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representatives when on agency visits in Geneva, especially those newly assigned to disaster-prone countries. The UNDRO Liaison Office in New York will meet with UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representatives visiting UNDP headquarters on disaster-related matters concerning his or her country of assignment. Whenever possible, these procedures will be extended to Deputy UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representatives.

78. In disaster situations, the normal procedure will be for UNDRO to consult with the UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative before the dispatch of an UNDRO delegate. However, if this does not prove possible in a given situation, his concurrence will be assumed unless he or she informs UNDRO to the contrary.

79. Within the UNDP Office, the UNDRO delegate will normally report directly to the UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative. The delegate's interaction with the Government, local governmental and non-governmental donor representatives and United Nations system offices would always occur in the name of the UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative.

80. UNDP and UNDRO will exploit further the on-line electronic information system between the two organizations with a view to linking UNDP field offices with UNDRO headquarters, as field offices become equipped for electronic mail transfer. Similar links with data bases and networks of other organizations should be made, exploited and developed.

81. Systematic secondment of staff between UNDP and UNDRO is desirable.

82. UNDRO will liaise directly with UNDP regional bureaux for its participation in regional meetings of UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representatives. In connection with these meetings, UNDRO should bring the Resident Representatives of disaster-prone countries for consultation. UNDRO participation in global meetings of UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representatives will continue to be arranged directly between the two organizations.

83. New guidelines for UNDP staff with respect to disaster management will be issued and included within the UNDP Programme and Projects Manual and in a UNDP/UNDRO disaster management manual to be prepared.

84. The chief responsibility for both national and international relief co-ordination rests with the Government. The United Nations Resident Co-ordinator provides co-ordination support to complement the Government's efforts.

85. UNDR0 appeals or requests for international assistance should be based on sound and regularly adjusted assessment of needs, more accurate reporting of them, systematic and up-to-date recording of contributions, duly balanced off against relief requirements.

86. It is necessary to have sound, consolidated assessments of relief needs, based on inputs from United Nations system organizations in areas of their specific concern, that will give the international community a clear, rapid and consistent picture of priority needs; the focal point for the co-ordination of such assessments is the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator.

87. A standard methodology for simple initial assessment of impact and definition of needs is lacking; UNDR0 should develop these in consultation with the concerned United Nations organizations, taking existing methodologies into consideration.

88. Sound information management at both the national and international levels is essential to ensure effective and international relief response to disasters. UNDP and UNDR0 should exploit opportunities and capabilities for rational and rapid information exchange with international and national entities to a maximum; the process as a whole should be subject to regular review, evaluation, and development.

89. UNDR0 situation reports could be the major vehicle allowing the UNDP/UNDR0 mechanism to disseminate information systematically to all international respondents to a disaster, and on a continuing basis underscore the evolution of a disaster situation and outstanding needs.

90. Of the various sources of information to UNDR0, the UNDP/UNDR0 Resident Representative is the most significant contributor to UNDR0 situation reports and the one on whom the prime responsibility for independent and comprehensive reporting rests. The UNDP/UNDR0 Resident Representative should make immediate initial reports on the occurrence of a disaster of potential international interest and follow this by regular and systematic reporting; information should be given on whether or not the national Government has requested international assistance.

91. UNDP/UNDR0 Resident Representatives will inform UNDR0 systematically on the evolution of disasters with information based on multi-sectoral input from the United Nations disaster response team as well as other locally acquired information. UNDR0 may add information received from additional sources. UNDR0 will clearly identify in its situation reports the source of damage and estimates of relief needs. This implies that the necessary distinction should be made by the UNDP/UNDR0 Resident Representative in reporting to UNDR0. To the extent feasible,

the headquarters of the specialized United Nations agencies will be consulted on the assessment reports or parts thereof in their areas of competence.*

92. UNDRO should consult with the UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative and on the text of situation reports. All interested parties at the international level should be consulted on them to the extent feasible. The UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative should ensure distribution of situation reports to the local international community and to the Government. A format for the drafting of situation reports will be provided to the UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative for reporting to UNDRO headquarters. Guidelines will be included in the UNDP Programme and Projects Manual and disaster manual.

93. UNDRO grants from the United Nations regular budget will be made only following a request for international assistance and after endorsement by the UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative. UNDP will at least match the UNDRO grant from UNDP's own resources and will consult with UNDRO on making its own relief-related grants. UNDP will consult with UNDRO on the disaster mitigation component of reconstruction projects. The modalities for the execution of third-party grants will depend on the terms agreed to with donors.

94. A variety of disaster mitigation measures can bring about significant reductions in adverse socio-economic effects of disasters. It is important that national planning bodies be conscious of these measures in the formulation of development plans.

95. UNDRO's experience shows that ad hoc mitigation activities tend to have only marginal impact; these should be built into a wider programme or strategy. The UNDP country programming process offers greater returns for mitigation activities.

96. UNDP should give specific emphasis to technical co-operation in disaster mitigation and management reflecting this in UNDP position papers and country programming discussions.

97. The UNDP country programming process has not been used sufficiently for disaster mitigation initiatives. There should be greater exchange of information between UNDRO and UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representatives in disaster-prone countries during the UNDP country programming process to do this, and to make UNDRO's technical expertise available.

98. As appropriate, in the framework of the country programmes of disaster-prone countries, UNDRO will review projects whose activities and results might be adversely affected by disasters. UNDP will establish disaster mitigation consideration factors as part of the "special conditions" to be applied in the project formulation and appraisal process. UNDP headquarters and field staff will be made more aware of the importance of these issues in the project formulation process.

* One agency asked that agency field assessments be cleared by respective headquarters.

99. The UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative and UNDRO should capitalize on the favourable condition for promoting disaster mitigation initiatives after a disaster has occurred. UNDP should consider allowing a portion of the special programming resources to be used for disaster mitigation activities. UNDRO will underscore the opportunity for supporting disaster mitigation efforts by identifying these in the final SITREP.

100. UNDP and UNDRO would prepare a disaster management manual addressing their disaster-related procedures, technical aspects of disaster management and implications for development.

101. The UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative, through his good offices, is in a privileged position to help the Government assess rehabilitation/reconstruction requirements, participate in related planning and inform on needs and programmes. While UNDRO's mandate to phase out once the relief phase is over should be respected, UNDRO's capacity to communicate rehabilitation/reconstruction needs in the final situation report should be used to help ensure the necessary transition from the relief phase. The UNDP/UNDRO Resident Representative, in his capacity as Resident Co-ordinator, will take the lead in harmonizing the activities of the different organizations of the United Nations system during the reconstruction phase.

102. The training of UNDP field staff in disaster management is a priority. Existing United Nations system programmes should also be utilized to do this. Selected UNDRO staff should be trained in matters related to the UNDP project cycle.

103. A system of independent evaluation of the response to disasters should be instituted in consultation with the Central Evaluation Office of UNDP and the necessary data base developed for such evaluations. The results of such evaluations should be made available to other organizations involved in emergency programmes.

104. There is a need for a standing, comprehensive, United Nations disaster response team in disaster-prone countries that can be a United Nations focal point body for the Government and the locally represented international community.

105. The team ensures a co-ordinated United Nations system approach to disaster response at the country level. Chaired by the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator (representing UNDP/UNDRO), its composition will normally include UNICEF, WFP, FAO, WHO; appropriate government officials should normally be associated.

106. Representation of the United Nations system would be by the most senior officers, normally the Country Representative; "project" personnel might be included.

107. The nature of certain disasters may make it necessary for enlarged United Nations system representation in the team with full regard to their respective mandates.

108. The teams are chaired by the United Nations Resident Co-ordinator.

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109. United Nations disaster response teams should meet regularly in function of the disaster threat or warning. Frequent meetings would be necessary in most relief situations.

110. The team ensures a concerted, systematic and co-ordinated United Nations relief programme.

111. Country-level reporting of damage and needs assessment to UNDRO should be timely and accurate. It necessarily depends on the technical skills of organizations of the United Nations system (in-country representational, technical staff, and regional or headquarters staff).

112. Initial assessments should come from in-country staff; follow-up technical assessment exercise may have to be organized from regional offices and headquarters.

113. In some cases it might be preferable to assess needs by means of an externally-formed inter-agency mission; this would normally be organized and co-ordinated by UNDRO, though other United Nations system entities might organize missions in specific situations where the major area of interest relates directly to their competence.

114. External assessment missions should collaborate closely with and be supported by the teams.

115. The normal United Nations channel for Governments to request an appeal for international assistance is through UNDRO acting on behalf of the Secretary-General. In launching appeals, UNDRO might advise donors on the appropriate organization or agency through which contributions might be made. It is also recognized that other organizations of the United Nations system may launch their own appeals, in consultation with UNDRO. UNDRO situation reports will reflect any such appeals so as to provide donors with an overall United Nations package. UNDRO has prepared and will disseminate a reporting format for pledges and contributions.

116. The team will normally undertake assessments of rehabilitation/reconstruction needs. The team's composition may need modification reflecting planned activities; World Bank or regional development bank participation is desirable.

117. UNDRO's last SITREP will describe rehabilitation and reconstruction needs.

118. Rehabilitation and reconstruction can be of such duration as to form part of regular developmental assistance of United Nations agencies; some agencies have resources over and above such assistance which can be made available.

119. The United Nations Resident Co-ordinator will stand ready to assist in formulating rehabilitation and reconstruction plans. UNDRO will help ensure the necessary transition to the rehabilitation and reconstruction phase. Mobilization and co-ordination of technical assistance is as important for the rehabilitation and reconstruction phases as for the relief phase.

120. The post-disaster period is propitious for disaster mitigation initiatives. The United Nations system, preferably through the United Nations disaster response teams, should take advantage of such periods to introduce them.

121. Existing United Nations system training programmes for disaster relief should be taken full advantage of, and others developed as needed.

122. Results and conclusions and lessons learned from internal United Nations system evaluations now being conducted should be shared to a maximum extent with other partners in relief operations. Experience gained should be incorporated in training programmes. Joint evaluations should be considered.
