

# DHA

## UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

**T**he increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, the explosion of ethnic and civil conflicts, demographic pressure, environmental degradation and the vicious circle of poverty require an increasing involvement by the United Nations in the humanitarian field. General Assembly resolution 46/182 established the basic principles for humanitarian assistance to be provided by the Organization and recommended specific measures to ensure a prompt and coordinated response to complex emergencies and natural disasters.

Accordingly, in April 1992, the Secretary-General established the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), whose purpose it is to promote and to expedite the reduction of human suffering and its causes. This new department incorporates the former UNDRO, the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator.

DHA is responsible for ensuring:

- ▶ Necessary disaster prevention and mitigation measures,
- ▶ A rapid and comprehensive response to disasters involving humanitarian needs;
- ▶ Assistance to the rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes destined to reinforce the ability for sustainable development.

DHA has three main functions:

- ▶ Disaster response - coordinating emergency

assistance activities within the framework of the IDNDR;

- ▶ Disaster mitigation - strengthening the capability of Nations to respond national disaster response to disasters in developing countries; and
- ▶ Information and publications.

### **DHA Support to disaster-prone countries in Latin America**

DHA is currently coordinating the implementation of disaster prevention and mitigation projects in Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru and providing technical advice on projects in Chile and the Dominican Republic.

Countries wishing to receive support from DHA should submit a request backed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or by an official of ministerial rank to the DHA Geneva office; detailing the most important aspects of the proposed project. DHA offers its support in the following areas:

- ▶ Identification of hazards;
- ▶ Project formulation,
- ▶ Mobilization of financial resources; and
- ▶ Technical advice and coordination of implementation.

Coordination of DHA-supported projects has made it possible to benefit from the major lessons learned, and to develop a team of experts whose knowledge can now be disseminated to other countries facing similar risks.

## DHA

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DHA Geneva, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10,  
Tel: +4122 917 1234/788 3482 -Fax: +4122 917 0023

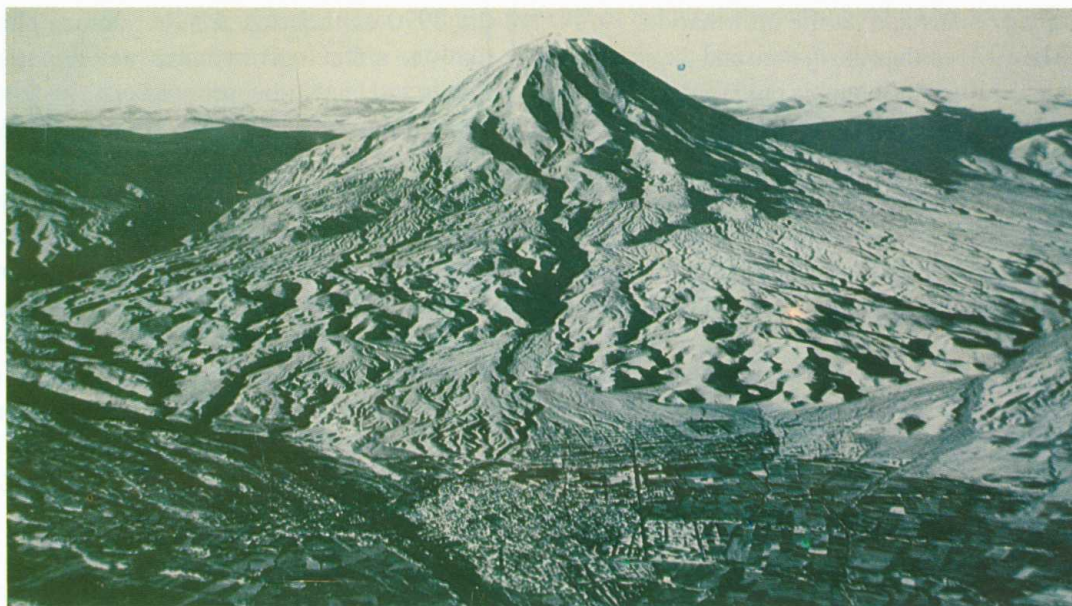
DHA Regional Office, Shyris 1240 and Portugal. Of. 504, Quito, Ecuador  
Tel: +593 2 469810-Fax: +593 2 469310

Regional Office, IDNDR Secretariat Apartado 3745, San José 1000,  
Costa Rica, Tel: +506 257 2141-Fax: +506 257 2139

# DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAMME

## IN PERU

### 1992 - 1995



AERIAL VIEW OF THE EL MISTI VOLCANO, WHICH ERUPTED VIOLENTLY IN THE EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY. AT ITS BASE LIES, AREQUIPA, PERU'S SECOND MOST POPULOUS CITY WHICH IS STEADILY EXPANDING TOWARDS THE VOLCANO, EVEN RECKLESSLY OCCUPYING THE BOTTOMS OF RAVINES WHICH DESCEND FROM THE PEAK. THE CHILI RIVER, A SOURCE OF WATER AND ENERGY FOR THE CITY, FORMS A LARGE SEMI-CIRCLE AROUND THE VOLCANO. THESE VITAL SERVICES ARE AT HIGH RISK. (PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. ALBERTO PARODI.)

#### SUMMARY

This report on the findings of studies under the Disaster Mitigation Programme in Perú (PMDP) begins by providing relevant examples to explain the reason for the inclusion of basic general concepts concerning the various aspects of natural hazards and the simple measures which can contribute to their prevention and mitigation. The introduction also describes the main working methods of the PMDP and its national and international framework.

This is followed by a detailed description of the organization, participating entities and the functioning of the PMDP. The studies cover three fields of action:

- ▶ Mitigation of seismic, volcanic and flood risks in the city of Arequipa.
- ▶ Seismic and tsunami risks on the south-western coast of Perú.
- ▶ National data bank for disaster prevention and mitigation (BNDPMD).

The report goes on to outline the work done and the experience gained in each field of action. Specific recommendations are made for the prevention and mitigation of disasters in south-western Perú, as well as for the preparation of emergency plans and evacuation drills.

Emphasis is placed on public information activities, given their special importance.

The report ends with conclusions and lessons learned.