


ASEAN Regional Forum DIREx 2011  
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## Role of Humanitarian Community in International Disaster Relief Operation

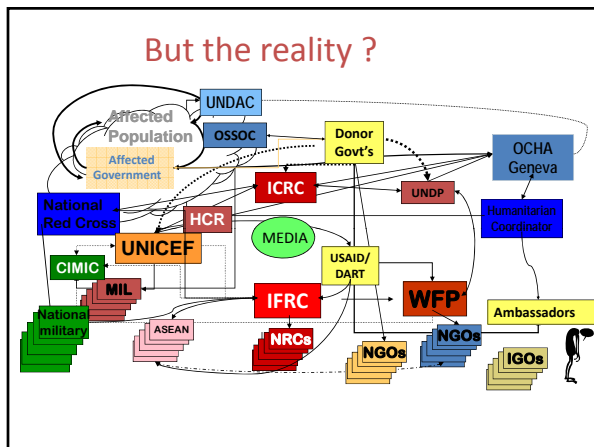


OCHA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
Bangkok

## Principal in-country coordination fora


- **Capital**
  - National Disaster Management Organization (NDMO)
  - UNDMT/IASC-CT/HCTS
  - Donor Councils
  - Regional organizations
- **On-Site**
  - Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA)
  - On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC)
  - FACT (IFRC)
  - NGO Coordinating Councils
  - Sectoral / Cluster Coordinating Groups
  - Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC)





**United Nations Secretariat**

- OSG Office for the Secretary-General
- OIOS Office of Internal Oversight Services
- OLA Office of Legal Affairs
- DPA Department of Political Affairs
- DDA Department for Disarmament Affairs
- DPKO Department of Peacekeeping Operations
- OCHA Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
- DESA Department of Economic and Social Affairs
- DGSAACS Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services
- DPI Department of Public Information
- DM Department of Management
- DSS Department for Safety and Security
- UNOG United Nations Office at Geneva
- UNOV United Nations Office at Vienna
- UNON United Nations Office at Nairobi




## Basic Humanitarian Architecture

The six standing coordination mechanisms in use are:

- the Emergency Relief Coordinator
- the Inter-Agency Standing Committee
- the Consolidated Appeal
- the Central Emergency Response Fund
- the UN Resident Coordinator/UNHC
- the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs


Together they constitute the basic architecture for coordinating emergency humanitarian assistance.



Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok

## OCHA's Role:

- Within this overall context, the role of OCHA is both complex and straightforward.
- Its role is complex because, unlike the mandates of some organizations, ours is not set forth in a single document produced or endorsed by a single executive board.
- While General Assembly Resolution 46/182 is often referred to as OCHA's mandate, it cannot be read in isolation from numerous subsequent resolutions regarding humanitarian assistance produced by the General Assembly, the Security Council, and ECOSOC, or decisions taken by the Secretary-General in his capacity as administrator of the Secretariat.
- These resolutions and decisions set forth an evolving list of fields in which we should work, issues that we should tackle, activities that we should undertake, functions we should perform, services we should provide and products we should offer.
- Reduced to their absolute essence, however, the role created by these resolutions and decisions is straightforward. OCHA's role is to help the ERC make the international humanitarian system work better. This is our core business, and it's a role we embrace because a better humanitarian system saves more lives.



## Fields of Work & Core Functions

- The various resolutions and decisions also consistently suggest two complementary fields of work and 5 core functions for OCHA.
- OCHA's catalytic efforts to improve the international system should help ensure that the humanitarian system is better prepared to respond to humanitarian needs and, when emergencies do occur, that the humanitarian system responds coherently and quickly.
- Around these two poles of preparedness and response, the functions that OCHA is expected to carry out in support of the international humanitarian system include:
  - Information Management
  - Policy Development
  - Coordination
  - Advocacy
  - Humanitarian Financing

Each of these functions will be further discussed later in this module.



## Prioritization

- OCHA, however, does not have the capacity to help the humanitarian system prepare to respond to all humanitarian needs everywhere, nor does it have the capacity to ensure that the humanitarian system responds effectively to all emergencies. It must prioritize where it works, concentrating on places where its mandate is most relevant and can add the greatest value.
- OCHA's policy is that we prioritize on the basis of vulnerability, the scale of international assistance that is or may be needed, and the capacity of the government to coordinate the assistance.
- In practical terms, this means OCHA focuses on helping the humanitarian system prepare for and respond to emergencies that are likely to, or have already resulted in, acute levels of vulnerability requiring a degree of international assistance beyond the capacity of government to coordinate.
- Helping the system prepare for emergencies means i.) identifying high risk areas, ii.) ensuring OCHA is prepared to respond, iii.) and preparing international and national response systems, humanitarian country teams and governments to work together effectively.
- Once OCHA has responded, it will help the system save lives and restore livelihoods by reducing acute vulnerability until the UN country team or government has the capacity to do so.
- For OCHA's purposes, the cause of the increasing acute vulnerability is largely irrelevant. Acute vulnerability may be increasing because of an armed conflict or a natural disaster, but it could also increase in the absence of these. Multiple global and local trends such as high commodity prices, local deforestation and poor governance for example can quickly produce increase levels of acute vulnerability without any conflict or specific disaster.



## Summary:

We are an office in the UN Secretariat responsible to Member States and we are a humanitarian organization responsible to people in need of humanitarian assistance.	Who
We help the ERC make the international humanitarian system work better. We help it become better prepared to respond to emergencies, and when they occur we help it respond more quickly and coherently.	What
We help the system become more prepared to respond by i.) identifying high risk areas, ii.) ensuring OCHA is prepared to respond, iii.) and preparing international, regional and national response systems, humanitarian country teams and governments to work together effectively.	
We help the system save lives by coordinating efforts to reduce acute vulnerability and restore livelihoods.	
We do this because a better system saves more lives.	Why
We perform this role in countries where trends have, or may, lead to rapidly increasing acute vulnerability requiring levels of humanitarian assistance beyond the capacity of the government to coordinate.	When & Where
We fulfill this role by performing 5 Core Functions – IM, Policy Development, Coordination, Advocacy and Humanitarian Finance	How

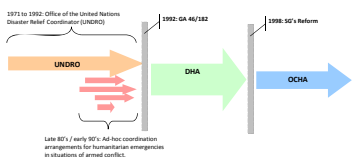


## OCHA Response Tools & Mechanisms

- 24 hours duty system
- Reliefweb, IRIN, HIC
- Emergency Cash Grants, FA, CAP
- Environmental Emergencies Section
- Register of DM Capacities
- Surge Roster & Associate Surge Roster
- Regional CMC, IM staff
- RDRAs and Field Offices
- UNDAC Teams
- UNDAC Support Modules (IHP, APHP, stand-by partners)
- OSOCC, VOCC
- International USAR Teams
- Humanitarian Reform
- Brindisi Warehouse
- Capacity to Expand/Shrink as required

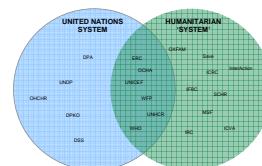
## OCHA: Evolution

- Resolution 46/182 indicates that the ERC should be supported by a dedicated "secretariat."
- To this end, UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali created a Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) in 1992.
- Six years later, Secretary-General Kofi Annan reorganized DHA following publication of his report "Renewing the United Nations: A Reform Program" (A/51/950). DHA's operational responsibilities, such as mine action and logistics, were shifted to other part of the UN to create a more streamlined and focused "Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs."



## A Foot in Two Systems:

- The ERC and OCHA stand together at the juncture of two major international systems: the formal, United Nations System and the loosely organized, and largely informal humanitarian system.
- Each system has its own concerns, makes its own assumptions, follows its own logic and works according to its own customs and habits.
- Each also makes its own, sometimes competing demands on the ERC and OCHA.



## Main Partners

Within the Secretariat, OCHA's main partners include:

- the Department of Peacekeeping Operations
- the Department of Political Affairs
- the Department of Field Support
- the Department of Security and Safety
- the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

Within the wider UN System, OCHA's main partners include:

- the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)
- the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- the World Food Program (WFP)
- the World Health Organization (WHO)

Unlike OCHA these agencies, funds and programs are not part of the Secretariat. They have their own executive boards of members states, and report directly to the General Assembly or ECOSOC.



## The Humanitarian System:

- The ERC and OCHA are also part of a wider realm of international humanitarian organizations.
- Some of these organizations have specific mandates given to them by international treaties, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross. Others have specific mandates given to them by UN Member States through UN resolutions, such as the UN Children's Fund or the World Food Program. The vast majority however, are non-governmental organizations that determine their own mandate, purpose and focus.
- Generally, all claim to abide by humanitarian principles, in particular: humanity, neutrality and impartiality.
- Within this largely informal realm, some humanitarian organizations have formed coalitions and consortia to aid their humanitarian missions. The following are three of the most well-known: the American Council for Voluntary International Action (InterAction), the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)



## Main Partners:

Within the informal, humanitarian system, OCHA's main partners include:

### A number of UN agencies:

- UNICEF
- UNHCR
- WFP
- WHO

### International Organizations (est. by treaties):

- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)

### Non-governmental organizations:

- Care International
- Danish Refugee Council
- Médecins Sans Frontières,
- Norwegian Refugee Council
- Oxfam
- Save the Children
- World Vision International

### And NGO consortia:

- InterAction
- ICVA
- SCHR



## Role of Humanitarian Community in International Disaster Relief

- All international assistance is in support of affected government, provided on request
- Multiple responder environment
- Need for strengthening existing coordination mechanisms
- All actors work for the same goal