



Using the Central Register in the response to natural disasters

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Newsletter

Dec 2004 / Jan 2005

In the last two decades, over three million people have died in natural disasters. The immediate **consequences of natural disasters** include not only the deaths and injuries of thousands of affected people, but also internal and/or external population displacement, water contamination, food scarcity, permanent damage to ecosystems, water supplies and air quality. Thus, when **countries are hit by natural disasters**, an increasing demand is made for national and international humanitarian assistance.

In all phases of **response to natural disasters**, close co-operation is sought with the national authorities of the country concerned as well as with NGOs, international humanitarian and development organizations.

The main aims of all the actors of the humanitarian community are:

- To facilitate the **effective delivery of assistance** to all victims of emergencies and disasters,
- To **mobilize** and **co-ordinate** effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors in order to alleviate human suffering in natural disasters and emergencies.

In this context, the **Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities** was established as an operational tool to support the international humanitarian community in their efforts to deliver assistance to all victims of emergencies and disasters.

The Disaster Response Phases are:

1. The pre-emergency phase

The measures taken during the pre-emergency phase are grouped under risk reduction, comprising prevention, mitigation and preparedness. During this phase, the **Register of Rosters of Disaster Management Expertise** (rosters of expertise) may assist in responding to requests for rapid identification of sources of expertise in specific areas.

2. The emergency phase

When a natural disaster occurs, it is of great importance to contact the national emergency response service designated by the authority to get an initial briefing on the situation on the ground and determine an appropriate response.

To assist in this task, the **directory of disaster response contacts** should enable the international humanitarian community to quickly identify and contact the appropriate emergency response service.

The first hours after the onset of a sudden disaster are crucial for the success of a relief operation. This first period usually requires joint efforts to mobilize immediate international assistance.

As part of a first wave response to the outbreak of a natural disaster, specialists and **experts have to be deployed** to the field.

In this context, the **directory of Rosters of Expertise** was established to spot and mobilize the appropriate type and quality of expertise and services required for emergency humanitarian assistance. It can assist for rapid **identification of sources of expertise**, be it of a general nature or in a specialized field.

In addition to deployment of experts in the immediate aftermath of a sudden-onset disaster, **Search and Rescue teams** may be deployed to collect first-hand information, conduct needs assessment, support on-site co-ordination and advocate among donors. A direct link to a complete list of search and rescue teams is also available.

During the emergency phase, donors may choose to provide their assistance through various channels. The **directory of major donors** of emergency humanitarian assistance provides data on national and international organizations regularly responding, by **contributions in-kind or in cash**, to the appeals for international assistance launched by the affected countries.

Within the framework of an appeal for international assistance, emergency consignments are dispatched. The cargo composition is usually based on local needs assessments. The **Register of Stockpiles** provides data on organizations in charge of running emergency stockpiles oriented primarily towards **disaster relief items**.

To facilitate customs clearance of consignments of international humanitarian emergency assistance, the **customs directory** contains the name of the national official and a brief account of the national legislation. It should assist in identifying and contacting the national customs authorities when encountering the problems with **export, transit or import of relief consignments** of international emergency humanitarian assistance.

When all sources have proved to be insufficient, exhausted or unavailable, military and civil defence assets can be requested through the Military and Civil Defence Unit (MCDU). The Register of **military, civil defence and civil protection assets (MCDA directory)** contains data on these military and/or civil defence and/or civil protection expertise, capacities and range of services which may be offered by Member States in case of emergency.

3. The post-emergency phase

The rosters of expertise, as described above, also enable to identify various expertise to facilitate early transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

These directories of disaster management **contacts** and disaster management **assets** are available on the Internet at

<http://ocha.unog.ch/cr>

The Central Register has established itself as an internationally acclaimed information tool. We must ensure it remains so. Therefore, should you need to update or contribute any specific data to one or more of the directories, then please contact us.

For additional information, please contact the **Emergency Services Branch** of OCHA

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