F. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

F.1. Introduction

One of the primary responsibilities of the UNDAC team is to collect, collate, analyze, and disseminate information regarding the emergency. This information should convey general information on the humanitarian effects of the emergency, resource needs and availability, the response activities, the achievements, the constraints, the gaps, duplications, and the unmet needs.

At the onset of the mission the UNDAC team will need to determine with the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC), the extent of the team's information management responsibilities The UNDAC team's information management responsibilities may include all or some of the following types of activities.

- Serve as the focal point for all information on humanitarian activities; develop and maintain a relationship with other information sources such as Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), agency information officers and military information liaison officers; classify information on its credibility and reliability.

- Establish rapid and effective reporting networks, develop electronic communication systems, and facilitate internal communication systems.
- Compile and maintain an up-to-date picture of the humanitarian situation by cluster/ organization/geographic area - facilitate the flow of information from and to field offices, provide real-time monitoring and plotting of humanitarian incidents.
- Collect, collate, analyze and disseminate information regarding the plans, operations, stockpiles, information needs, and ongoing resource needs of assistance providers.
- Monitor donor contributions and resources provided.
- Establish and maintain an ongoing information system/data base on the emergency to serve as the institutional memory.
- Prepare and submit periodic humanitarian situation reports and other reports as decided in the Plan of Action.
- Provide information to the media and news agencies, monitor media reports, organize and convene press conferences, liaise with Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) spokespersons.
- Provide briefings for senior level staff, visiting dignitaries, and donor missions.
- Arrange to handover established information management systems to incoming OCHA information management officers, the Humanitarian Information Centre (HIC), or other responsible bodies.

F.2. UNDAC reporting and situation reports

F.2.1. Policy

Reporting is one of the most important functions of an UNDAC team. Reports should be clear, concise, accurate and professional. All reporting by an UNDAC team should be addressed to the RC/HC in the capital of the affected country with a copy to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) through OCHA-Geneva. All reporting should be cleared with the Team Leader.

For contacts outside the above channel of reporting, it must be made clear that all information should be verified with the relevant authority of the affected country, the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UN DMT) or OCHA. Reports should, as far as possible, be written in English.

F.2.2. Reporting system

UNDAC Situation Reports

The UNDAC situation reports (UNDAC sitrep) are to be sent to the RC/HC with a copy to the Field Coordination Support Section (FCSS).

There will be occasions when the need for updated information is so acute in a fast moving emergency that the ERC and OCHA (Geneva or New York) may directly request verbal or written reports from the UNDAC team.

OCHA Situation Reports

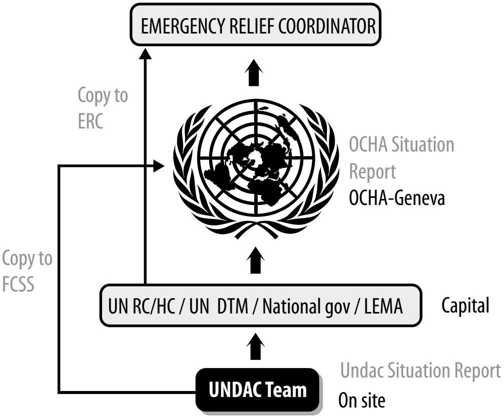
The RC/HC compiles a sitrep from the information that he/she has gathered from sources such as national authorities, UN agencies, the UNDAC sitrep, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and others. This sitrep is then sent to the ERC through OCHA-Geneva where it is used, together with other available information, to form OCHA Situation Reports which provide information required by the international community.

In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, frequent OCHA sitreps are issued from Geneva, providing the international community with the best possible information as it becomes available. OCHA cross-checks the information with the headquarters of the other UN agencies and donors to the extent feasible.

The OCHA Situation Report is based largely on information provided from the field by or through the RC/HC. The UNDAC team is also a very important source of information for the sitreps. The reports also include and take into account information received by OCHA from other sources, including the appeals and information bulletins issued by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the IFRC.

The reports are sent directly to the capitals of donor countries and the headquarters of the UN agencies, inter-governmental organizations, e.g., the European Union, and major NGOs, as well as the New York and Geneva missions to the UN of the affected countries. They are typically distributed to over 300 recipients who are involved in making decisions on providing international disaster relief and related assistance. Sitreps are also posted on OCHA's public information website, Reliefweb; www.reliefweb.int

Flow of information



F.2.3. UNDAC Situation Report

General

Send the first UNDAC Sitrep as early as possible upon arrival at the disaster site and send subsequent UNDAC Sitreps at least daily with whatever information is available at the time. Do not delay a sitrep because certain information is lacking; send it next time. Remember, an UNDAC sitrep is processed information and carries considerable credibility. It should be informative, authoritative and timely - especially in the current age of instant media access to disaster sites.

Either provide a complete list of unmet needs in each report or specifically state which items remain unchanged from the previous report while providing new information for other items. Indicate if needs can be met locally or require international assistance.

When writing the report, imagine yourself at the receiving end and try to write what you would want to know, as well as how you would want it presented. Be explicit and precise and double check figures. Remember to quote the source of the information when presenting facts and figures. Try to anticipate a potential donor's likely question and answer them in the report. Do not repeat information that has already been sent and if there is no new information under a specific heading, state this clearly.

Avoid vague and ambiguous words and phrases. A statement such as "5,000 people are affected" does not give any indication on, e.g., how they are affected, to what degree, what is already being done, and how many people there are in the area altogether. "5,000 houses damaged" conveys little information. The "damage" may be minimal, partial or total. Use the guidelines given in the assessment checklist (see Chapter G - Disaster Assessment).

When reporting damage or assessed needs, specify the source of the information. Take care to check the final text before sending and ask another person to re-check it.

F.2.4. Format of UNDAC Situation Report

Format

The format of the UNDAC Situation Report given below should be followed by using the parts that are relevant for the specific mission. The UNDAC Sitrep should consist of all the items mentioned below; if there is no information on one or more of the items then state it explicitly, i.e., "Nothing to report".

Keep in mind that this standard format is a recommended guideline and that the format one uses could vary due to unique aspects of the emergency. Due to this, OCHA might distribute an adjusted format adapted to special reporting needs of the particular emergency.

- Summary.

- Brief summary of the situation report.
- Key issues should be highlighted.

- General situation overview.

- A general description of the situation and response.
- Include important incidents since last report.

- Coordination overview.

- Overall coordination mechanisms in place, both national and international.
- Summary of meeting times and frequency.
- Constraints in coordination.

- Operational considerations

- Relief entry point.
- Logistical constraints in relief delivery.
- Relief delivery issues, e.g., customs information, etc.
- Special administrative concerns.
- Security-issues.

- Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) activities (only applicable in USAR phase).

- Number of teams, name, and sending area/country.
- Differentiate between national and international response.
- Areas covered/not covered.

- Operational cluster overview.

- Which clusters are operational, which not yet established.
- Overview of coordination within clusters.
- Make new headings for each of the operational clusters with specific details underneath.
- Clearly identify national response in a cluster.
- Relief provided or in the pipeline for each cluster.

- National response

- Other national response not covered in the cluster section.

- Bi-lateral response.

- In-kind contributions.
- Cash contributions.

- Other.

- Other issues of interest not applicable in the above-mentioned headings.
- It is typical to attach spreadsheets that show relief providers and their assistance.

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Reporting tips

- Follow the format.
- Report regularly and often.
- Add photos and tables.
- Don't repeat.
- Present facts – not speculation.
- Quote source.
- Be concise.
- Be objective.
- Avoid jargon.
- K.I.S.S. – Keep It Short and Simple.

Remember that the situation report is read in many places where information inputs from numerous other sources are available. Unfortunately, this could lead to an information overload for some recipients. This possibility makes the first heading "Summary" extremely important as this might be the only information that is remembered or read.

F.3. Information processing

F.3.1. General

Information management by the UNDAC team includes the following steps:

- Information gathering (including assessment).
- Collation and structuring of the information.
- Evaluation/analysis of the information.
- Information dissemination.

It is useful to distinguish between the terms "data" and "information." Data are simply numbers and other characters. Information is "useful data." Data become information when they are useful, meaningful, relevant and timely to particular people at particular times and places, for particular purposes. See also Chapter G – Disaster Assessment.

Information gathering

Information is gathered from various sources through interviews with key informants in the government, private voluntary organizations, NGOs, international organizations and from particular groups of affected people and their leaders. Useful sources of information may include:

At district/local level
District/local authorities *Local leaders/village elders* *Police* *Army* *Fire service*

Rescue services
NGOs
Civil defence
IFRC/ICRC
International relief teams/organizations
Religious leaders
UN national staff
Health facilities
Evacuation centres
Birth/death registration office

At capital level
National authorities
RC/HC and/or UN DMT
UN agencies
Geographical institutes
Department of meteorology/hydrology, etc.
Bilateral agencies
NGOs
Embassies
OCHA (if in-country)

Reliability and credibility of information sources

There is a need for appreciating the reliability of the source of information and the credibility of the information collected. The consistent application of the following tried-and-tested system might help you. It was developed by the military, is widely used by armed forces and law-enforcement agencies around the world, and other humanitarian responders, e.g., IFRC FACT. UNDAC members should use this system as a tool when processing information. The system identifies the reliability of the source providing the information and then, separately, the credibility of the information being provided. By consistently applying this approach, team members may evaluate the significance of reports received with some degree of confidence.

Reliability of source	**Credibility of information**
A. Completely reliable	1. Confirmed by other sources
B. Usually reliable	2. Probably true
C. Fairly reliable	3. Possibly true
D. Not usually reliable	4. Doubtful
E. Unreliable	5. Improbable
F. Reliability cannot be judged	6. Truth cannot be judged

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This can be further expanded

Reliability of source:

Rating	Description
A	Completely reliable refers to a tried and tested source which may be depended upon with confidence. These are extremely rare and should be kept for special occasions.
B	Usually reliable refers to a source which has been successful in the past but for which there is still some element of doubt in a particular case. This should be used for sources of known integrity such as UN agencies, military entities, some major NGOs, etc.
C	Fairly reliable refers to a source which has occasionally been used in the past and upon which some degree of confidence may be based. Some press sources and NGOs could fit in here.
D	Not usually reliable refers to a source which has been used in the past but has proved more often than not to be unreliable. Some press sources and NGOs could fit in here.
E	Unreliable refers to a source which has been used in the past and has been proven unworthy of any confidence.
F	Reliability cannot be judged refers to a source which has not been used in the past.

Credibility of information:

Rating	Description
1	Confirmed by other sources is applicable when a source different than the originally reporting one confirms the information independently of the first source.
2	Probably true indicates confirmation of essential parts of reported information by another source. Aerial imagery is included in this category.
3	Possibly true means that investigation of a reported fact or action has revealed no further information, however the information is compatible with previous actions or background information available.
4	Doubtful is applicable to an item of information if it tends to conflict with previously reported and validated information.
5	Improbable is applicable if an item of information contradicts previously reported and validated information.
6	Truth cannot be judged is applicable if any freshly reported item of information cannot be compared with information from any other source. It is used when 1-5 cannot be applied. It is preferred to use a rating of 6 rather than an inaccurate 1-5 rating.

The scales are not progressive degrees of accuracy; it only helps to formalize the credibility of information received. Therefore it is not foolproof. The letters and numerals are independent of each other and give an overall evaluation of the information. For example, a source known to be unreliable (E) might provide accurate information which is confirmed by other sources and therefore given the rating of E1. Additionally, a report evaluated as F6 maybe totally accurate and should not be routinely disregarded.

Collection

The collection strategy must be established from the beginning of the mission to ensure that information is not lost. Team members will be gathering information on wide range of topics, some for which a member of the team might be the focal point but many other areas where the focal point responsibility resides with others.

Collation

Collation of information is essential for the UNDAC team. All information should be filed in a structured order to simplify retrieval, comparison and analysis. One should try to file information in both electronic and paper form. If possible, one should use only one computer for filing of electronic copies (ensure a backup is made). This process should be initiated from day one, as it will very difficult to fill in missing information pieces further into the mission when inconsistencies and discrepancies may be difficult to detect.

Analysis

Thorough analysis of the information gathered is a critical step in the information management process. The UNDAC team should be careful to record and report the factual information as objectively as possible. In performing the analysis, the information has to be linked to the country-specific situation such as disaster history, traditional coping mechanisms, etc. and possible future developments. The UNDAC team should try to detect and recognize trends and indicators of problems and to link the information to recommendations for action to be taken.

Dissemination

In addition to the regular UNDAC Situation Report, the team should disseminate available information to the humanitarian community on-site in a timely, structured and appropriate manner. This could be done through email groups, in meetings, through the On-Site Coordination Operations Centre (OSOCC), and through the Virtual OSOCC. Efficient dissemination should have a positive effect on the team's coordination efforts as it shows transparency and dedication to the provision of services to the relief agencies and NGOs.

F.3.2. Presentation of information in the OSOCC

An OSOCC must be able to present available information in a clear and easily understandable manner to all visitors. An OSOCC with information organized and visually accessible and displayed will inspire confidence in the team and save the UNDAC team members' time in answering the same questions again and again. Confidence that useful information will be easily gained will make the OSOCC an attractive place for relief workers to visit regularly thus enhancing coordination.

To collate and present information it is suggested that the following tools be employed:

Log book

The OSOCC should maintain a log book into which all telephone and radio messages received or sent are logged with action taken. This should be a simple log with the columns "Serial Number", "Time Received/Sent", "From/To", "Message Contents", "Action Taken" and "Initials" on it. Anyone receiving or sending a message should log it into the book. Also it should contain all events of general interest. An accurate keeping of the log will enable OSOCC staff to derive the following benefits:

- A running record of all information/actions is kept, thus enabling staff coming to the OSOCC after an absence to update themselves.
- A basis for briefings and sitreps is available at all times.
- A basis for the Mission Report and the Lessons Learned meeting when one can go back and see what happened when, where, and with whom.

Remember to start the logbook immediately after arrival. If not, it will be diffucult at a later stage to fill in missing events and recapture what took place. That could often leave the OSOCC one step behind.

Information maps

Visualized information is an excellent tool for presenting information – and also for the team to keep an overview of the operation. On one wall of the OSOCC display information maps which cover the area of relief operations. On these maps (which you should cover with plastic) mark on the talc the following information:

- Location of various relief organizations. In USAR operations also mark sectors of operation of each team.
- Location of key LEMA organizations such as fire brigades, police stations, hospitals, communication centres, and military headquarters.
- Location of the OSOCC.
- Location of key logistics features such as airfields and/or railway stations.
- Any security incidents.
- Other information that can be visually displayed.

On the margins of the map one can list the telephone numbers of major partners in the relief operation. Encourage visitors to visit the OSOCC to update information on the information map concerning their organizations. If kept updated, you will soon find that there are very few places where all the above information is displayed and this information map will become a magnet for relief workers.

Maps may be sourced from UNOSAT or Reliefweb by special request to the map centre – FCSS will ensure that available maps are provided to the UNDAC team. FCSS will also check with the Field Information Section (FIS) in New York for additional data that may be made available through the Geographic Information Support Team (GIST), an inter-agency network that focuses on electronic data collection and analysis. The GIST can assist in providing estimated affected population data and satellite imagery.

Pigeon holes
Pigeon holes, or a central location for hardcopies of other organizations' sitreps, minutes of meetings, and other information from humanitarian partners, should be put up near the entrance of the OSOCC. The more information from a variety of sources you make available, the more worthwhile it will be for relief workers to visit the OSOCC.

A directory
An OSSOC should have an easily accessible directory with a data sheet on each humanitarian agency. The data sheet should include contact points, areas of operation, names of key personnel and assets.

A notice board
Next to the information map in the OSOCC, make available a blank notice board on which relief organizations may leave notices regarding relief operations, coordination meetings, assessment missions, etc. This board allows needs and resources of relief organizations to be matched, besides acting as a facilitator of information flow.

Coordination/information meetings
Hold and chair general coordination meetings on a regular basis where all partners, e.g., LEMA, NGOs (local and international), military, and international relief organizations are invited. This is a fine venue for sharing of information. In addition one should hold meetings with Heads of UN agencies and cluster leads.

The cluster lead agencies should be expected to hold and chair coordination meetings within their specific cluster. You may need to provide significant support, e.g., convening, organizing, and reporting on clusters in the early days of the emergency. As cluster leads takeover, try to sit in on cluster meetings as often as possible and/or make sure the minutes are filed and made available through the OSOCC. The UNDAC team should also be present at coordination meetings held by the local authorities.

An updated meeting schedule should be available and displayed in the OSOCC. The result of all these meetings will provide you with an important information base for the UNDAC situation reports.

Who, what, where information
All UNDAC team computers are pre-loaded with a simple "who, what, where" database which can produce contact lists and geographic activity information.

Copies
Allow stakeholders to get copies of the information available in the OSOCC, e.g., minutes, situation reports, assessment reports, commodity tracking tables, contact-lists, etc. This is usually data that are filed as a basis for the displayed information, but could be useful for several relief organizations. Try to have a system that allows for both electronic and paper copies.

F.3.3. Contact with OCHA headquarters

FCSS and the Regional desk
Once the decision is taken to mobilize an UNDAC team, FCSS nominates a mission focal point for all issues relating to support to the UNDAC mission. In addition, OCHA's desk for the concerned country/region will be the focal point for all substantive information regarding the emergency and related follow-up actions required at OCHA headquarters level, as well as with the headquarters of external partners, e.g., donors and agencies.

Besides the report writing requirements mentioned above, daily teleconferences should also be organized between the Team Leader (and any additional member of the team as may be determined by the Team Leader) and these two focal points (both of whom should be present during the teleconferences). The mode or responsibility for recording these teleconferences should be determined from the beginning of the mission. There should always be a record of follow-up actions that are requested and/or agreed upon.

Other parts of OCHA
The Desk and FCSS are responsible for ensuring follow-up in case of actions or information requested by the UNDAC team. However, direct contact may occur with other parts of OCHA.

The team may be contacted by other parts of OCHA for information, in particular by the Civil Military Coordination Section (CMCS), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP)/OCHA Joint Environmental Unit, the ERC's office or OCHA spokespersons in Geneva and New York.

The team might be in direct contact with OCHA's information systems to expedite dissemination of information to donors, agencies and the public as a complement to the OCHA Situation Reports. These systems are:

- Reliefweb, OCHA's humanitarian information Internet web page, which posts information from all humanitarian partners in addition to OCHA's own information.
- The Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), which is based in three locations in Africa (Nairobi, Johannesburg and Abidjan)

and serves as a humanitarian news agency through free-of-charge email subscription. IRIN reports are also posted on Reliefweb.

- Virtual OSOCC, with modern internet-technology, disaster information may be exchanged continuously and simultaneously by relief actors from any place in the world. The information is stored in a database on the internet and facilitates the access of topics of particular interest. Users may provide comments on existing information in real-time and, thereby, discuss issues of concern with other stakeholders. The Virtual OSOCC provides an effective tool to facilitate the information exchange between responding governments and organizations throughout a relief operation.

The Field Information Support Section (FIS) in New York can provide assistance in the sourcing of data. Contact with FIS will be made by FCSS. There may be occasions, especially in major disasters, were FIS may dispatch dedicated information processing officers (2 -3 staff) to function in an OSOCC established by the UNDAC team.

F.4. Contact with media

F.4.1. General

Whenever there is a newsworthy situation, the media will be there. Thus, an UNDAC team member may be approached by the media at any time. UNDAC team members play a vital role in giving assistance to the media in a disaster situation, as good press can help raise awareness of the gravity of the situation and act as a catalyst for fund-raising. It is, therefore, important for UNDAC teams to help keep the media informed. Keeping good relations with the media has frequently resulted in sympathetic coverage as well as help being given by journalists when help was not readily accessible by other means. UNDAC team members must, however, be aware that discrepancies may exist between the media presentation of a disaster and the reality.

F.4.2. Policy

The Team Leader sets the guidelines for relations with the media. Normally, one team member (usually the Team Leader) should be appointed as focal point for contact with the media, after which media relations concerning the UNDAC mission as a whole should go through this person. It should be borne in mind, though, that information given to the media should match that being provided by the RC/HC and that a media policy should be agreed upon between the UNDAC Team Leader and the RC/HC. If an individual team member is approached by the media, he/she should be allowed to give information concerning the specific work that he/she is currently carrying out.

F.4.3. Rules regarding media

Preparation

- Make an UNDAC Press Pack to provide media representatives with background information on OCHA, UNDAC and the current situation.
- Try to be the first to supply information, thereby establishing the team as a useful source for the media.
- Try to have an up-to-date description of UN emergency-related activities, which you can give to the media.
- Know the main points of what you want to say - and what you do not want to say - before you start talking.
- Do not favour one media - all are entitled to similar treatment.
- Know with whom you are talking. Make a media log (journalist's name or the newspaper, magazine, or radio/TV station he/she represents; local address and telephone number).
- If there is an OSOCC, it may be the central media centre where journalists know where and from whom to obtain information.
- Provide full and accurate information on a regular basis.

Rules for dealing with reporters

- Never pick a fight with the news media - they air or print every day and you don't.
- There are no secrets. Assume what you say and do will get on the air or the printed page.
- While you can say things "off the record", that doesn't mean the media won't print it and give you attribution.
- Don't assume anything. Reporters may not be well informed or technically proficient about your profession so explain terms to ensure they are understood.
- Keep it simple. Clarify and summarize your major points and write facts and data down to hand out.
- Use English and talk in a relaxed style that is aimed at laypersons, not subject experts. Avoid jargon and acronyms; remember that the audience is the general public.
- Give reporters a good story to write. They may find one you don't like - and write it if you don't give them one.
- Listen for trends in the questions. Is the reporter asking leading questions? Are there obvious misconceptions? Offer to clarify or redirect.
- Treat reporters professionally, with respect, and initiate background conversations.
- Always answer their calls in a timely fashion.
- Leave word in your office where you will be so you are accessible.
- Don't lie, and make sure your information is accurate. It doesn't

have to be all-encompassing as you don't have to tell a reporter your views on everything.

- Before you do an interview, decide what you can discuss and what you can't - and stick to it.
- Use humour to defuse confrontational situations.
- Choose your words carefully and well because they will likely be reported as you say them.
- If a critical or controversial story is going to be written anyway, your point of view should be in the story. Remember; silence is not always golden.
- Repetition is the essence of retention; the public will remember what they see, hear, and read repeatedly in the media.
- Once a story is out that you don't like, it is usually too late and fruitless to try to correct it.
- Use objective and authoritative sources of information to back up your statements to reporters, if you can. Don't make assertions you can't back up or make stick.
- Try to anticipate questions. If you can't or you don't know the answer, get back to the reporter after you are asked such questions so you can give a considered response.
- Avoid criticizing the government or UN response.

Follow-up

Inform the RC/HC (if you are the Team Leader) or the Team Leader (if you are the team's media focal point or a team member) when an interview has taken place.

If a team member has been misquoted, the RC/HC should be contacted immediately, so that representations can be made to the media. Once a story is out, though, it is usually too late to correct it for the public, but the media should nevertheless be informed of the mistake.

F.5. Preparation of Appeals

F.5.1. Mobilizing the international community

When the government of the affected country requests the international community to provide assistance in an emergency situation, OCHA may launch a Flash Appeal for international assistance and the UNDAC team may, exceptionally, be tasked to assist in preparing it. The Flash Appeal normally covers the needs of the UN system and its humanitarian partners for emergency assistance. In case of severe or widespread natural disasters, it may also cover the needs of several countries in a region. The UNDAC team will normally be involved in preparing appeals related to natural disasters and not complex emergencies. OCHA-Geneva will normally send an experienced appeal preparation officer to the emergency to prepare the appeal.

F.5.2. Flash Appeals related to natural disasters

The Flash Appeals for natural disaster response are for a short time frame, normally covering 3 months, and may also cover transitional needs to bridge the gap in flow of funds between emergency needs and rehabilitation and reconstruction.

A Flash Appeal provides a concise (ten-page) overview of urgent life-saving needs within one week of the onset of an emergency. It addresses acute needs for up to six months based on the best available information at the time of writing. The Flash Appeal may be developed into a Consolidated Appeal if the emergency continues beyond six months.

Involved parties

- The RC/HC, with support from OCHA, is responsible for the production, content and quality of the document.
- The Flash Appeal is prepared in consultation with key humanitarian actors, which may include government officials, donors, UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement, NGOs, and other relevant actors.
- The Flash Appeal may include projects from UN agencies, international organizations, the Red Cross Movement, and NGOs. (Note: government ministries cannot appeal but may be partners in UN or NGO projects.)

Keep it brief

The Flash Appeal should be kept brief so that people read it and donors can respond swiftly. Be concise and keep the language simple. Readers (government officials, donors, UN agencies, the Red Cross Movement, NGOs, the media, and so forth) need to know what happened, the humanitarian consequences, what the humanitarian plan is, and the cost. Ten pages are usually sufficient. Use charts and tables to explain issues whenever possible.

Procedure

1. Day 1 - Flash Appeal triggered by the UN RC/HC, in consultation with the IASC Country Team. The government of the affected country is consulted.

2. By day 3 of the emergency - the UN Country Team prepares the Flash Appeal within 48 hours of the emergency, based on the best available information at the time.

The office of the RC/HC submits the final field draft of the appeal to the OCHA Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) Section.

4. Day 4 of the emergency - The CAP Section shares the draft with IASC agency headquarters for 24 hour review. The desk incorporates any comments.

5. Day 5 of the emergency - The CAP Section style checks, formats, and registers appeal projects on the Financial Tracking System, and prints by 1300 hrs. After 1300 hrs, the appeal is officially launched either through a donor meeting in the field or in Geneva, or through a press release, and is posted on Reliefweb and distributed electronically to donors.

Content of the 10-page Flash Appeal

1.Executive summary (1 page)

Brief summary of:

- The crisis.
- Priority needs and humanitarian response plan.
- Amount of money needed in US$.
- Time span covered by this appeal (cannot be longer than 6 months).

2.Context and humanitarian consequences (1- 5 pages)

Context.

- What happened?
- Where?
- What has happened since the crisis, e.g., information gathered, government ok for international assistance, immediate response by agencies, assessments done, etc.

Humanitarian consequences.

- Who is most affected?
- What are the needs as a direct and immediate result of this crisis?
- What are the priority sectors for response? The choices may be any of the following according to emergency need: shelter and non-food items, health (including nutrition and psychosocial programmes), water and sanitation, food, agriculture, protection, human rights and rule of law, education, coordination and support services.

3.Response plans (1 page)

For each sector which the Country Team decides to include:

- Objectives, i.e., no more than two, each of which is specific and measurable.
- Humanitarian activities which might have started or are proposed, and that may be implemented within time span of this flash appeal (maximum 6 months).
- Expected impact.
- Project tables as per model below (please do one table for each project and leave a space between each complete table).

SECTOR (e.g. FOOD)		US$
FULL NAME OF AGENCY/IES (e.g. World Food Programme WFP)	Project Title: Objective: Beneficiaries: Total Number: Women: Children: Partners: (List as governmental, UN, Red Cross, NGO)	US$ Required

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4. Roles and responsibilities (1- 5 pages)

- Maximum five lines on how the response is being coordinated and who is responsible within the government and the UN.
- Table indicating the major humanitarian stakeholders (government, UN, Red Cross, NGOs) that are responding to the crisis in affected regions, by sector.

F.5.3. Example of natural disaster Flash Appeal

In order for UNDAC members to be able to refer to actual natural disaster appeals that have been prepared with the assistance of the UNDAC team, see the webpage given below where one will find an example of the Flash Appeal prepared after the earthquake in South East Asia 2005. http://reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/EVOD-6H3FY4?OpenDocument&rc=3&emid=EQ-2005-000174-PAK

Annex

UN Instructions regarding communications with the Press

Interoffice memorandum

To: All Heads of Departments Date: 28 April 1999

From: The Secretary-General

Subject: UN Secretariat Relations with the Media

1. Please find attached guidelines on United Nations Secretariat relations with the media. They have been revised in light of the discussion in the Senior Management Group on 31 March.

2. I would be grateful if you bear these guidelines in mind in your dealings with the media. Please note bullet point three of paragraph 6, which lists the number of officials authorized to speak on sensitive issues. If you have not already done

so, you may wish to designate staff in your Departments as appropriate.

Thank you.

Cc: Members of the Senior Management Group.

UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT RELATIONS WITH MEDIA

The Policy

1. The United Nations is committed to being open and transparent in its dealings with the press. It is in our interest to work with the media quickly and honestly, and to develop a coherent communications strategy based on those same principles. We should not only react to events but, where appropriate, project the Organization's point of view on important international developments. However, we must sometimes keep confidences – not to mislead or conceal, but to protect a diplomatic process. Our media policy must therefore balance the need to be open and the need to respect confidentiality.

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Speaking to the press

2. The principal voice of the Organization is the Secretary-General. He speaks to the media frequently, at Headquarters and when travelling.

3. Media policy is an integral component of the broader communications and public information work of the Organization, headed by the Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information. The Director of Communications in the Office of the Secretary-General is responsible for coordinating the development of a communications strategy that would help project to the world's media a coherent and consistent message for the Organization.

4. The Secretary-General's Spokesman and his staff speak to journalists on the Secretary-General's behalf throughout the day. The Spokesman gets his guidance directly from the Secretary-General and senior members of his staff. As the Spokesman's staff cannot be expert in all subjects, they seek the assistance of UN specialists – either to provide them with information that they can pass on to the press or to speak directly to the journalists themselves.

5. As matter of principle, every member of the Secretariat may speak to the press, within limits:

- speak only within your area of competence and responsibility;
- provide facts, not opinions or comments;
- leave sensitive issues to officials who are specifically authorized to speak on them (see paragraph 6 below).

Sensitive issues

6. The number of officials speaking on sensitive issues is necessarily limited to:

- the Spokesman, on the basis of guidance;

- designated members of the Secretary-General's staff and Heads of Department, within their area of competence;
- staff authorized by their Heads of Department, on the basis of guidance; and
- Directors of UNICs, on the basis of guidance from Headquarters.

7. For those speaking on sensitive issues, knowing the particular journalist's interest in a story can be useful. Such information can usually be provided by the Director of Communications or the Spokesman.

8. No staff member should presume or pretend to speak for the Secretary-General or characterize his views without his explicit consent.

Sharing Information

9. For the United Nations to communicate effectively with the outside world, it needs to do the same internally. Senior officials should share information with those under their supervision and should keep each other informed of their media activities.

Ground Rules

10. All UN officials should normally speak to journalists on the record – that is, for attributive. Sometimes, though, officials specifically authorized to address sensitive issues can give a journalist a deeper understanding of an issue by speaking on background. However, it is very important that the journalist know on which of the following bases the conversation is being conducted:

On the record: "everything I say can be attributed to me by name"
Not for attribution (on background): "don't attribute this to me by name, but rather to a UN official"
On deep background: "use my ideas but not my words; don't attribute to anyone"

11. Keeping the Secretary-General's Spokesman informed of important background briefings will help provide an indication of the issues that the media is interested in.

12. It is unwise, and may sometimes be unethical, to tell one journalist what another is working on, or to suggest that one journalist discuss a pending story with another.

13. Officials should not feel that they have to answer every question, in particular any hypothetical ones.

26 April 1999