

INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
WORKING GROUP XVITH MEETING
30 November 1994

INFORMATION NOTE ON
INTER-AGENCY GUIDELINES ON COORDINATION IN
EMERGENCIES

Objective

To prepare a set of resource materials and practical guidelines to facilitate mutual understanding, co-operation and co-ordination among agencies in emergencies.

Audience/intended use

The guidelines should be designed as resource material, including checklists, where appropriate, for:

Humanitarian Co-ordinators
Resident Co-ordinators (when also acting as the Humanitarian Co-ordinator)
Representatives/Heads of Agencies at country level

The guidelines would be intended for all agencies represented, directly or indirectly, on the IASC - i.e., UN humanitarian agencies, other international/intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. The guidelines should:

serve as a useful common reference for the personnel of each agency as well as Co-ordinators and their staff;

provide a framework for practical co-ordination arrangements between agencies at country level;

be used as a basis for training on roles and co-ordination in training within individual agencies and in inter-agency workshops.

The guidelines would be shared with governments of emergency-affected countries and with donors.

Contents: a preliminary listing for discussion and further development

1. Roles, responsibilities and resources of individual agencies (in relation to disasters and emergencies)
2. Role of DHA, the IASC and related entities (including resources available through DHA and relations between the Humanitarian Co-ordinator and the Special Representative of the Secretary General as well as relations with DPKO)
3. Field co-ordination in major and complex emergencies (all phases of response including assessment, appeals, implementation and transition to development; also including early-warning of population movements, principles of humanitarian action, and relations with peace-keeping forces)
4. Operational guidelines for Humanitarian Co-ordinators
5. Field co-ordination of disaster management activities (including preparedness and response to disasters)
6. Useful common reference material: glossary; summary of the needs likely to arise in different types of situation; copies of inter-agency agreements/MOUs; list of other guidelines/publications

Guidelines on practical security measures and procedures (complementing the UN Security Manual) might eventually be added, in collaboration with the UN Security Co-ordinator and concerned agencies ... ?

Materials to be drawn on: CAP Field Guidelines (including prioritization); Field Reporting Guidelines; IDP task force papers: Early-warning task force papers; Terms of Reference for Humanitarian Co-ordinators; Relevant parts of the 1991 draft UNDP/UNDRO Disaster Management Manual; GA resolutions ...

Format/specifications

The guidelines should be concise, but self-standing (i.e. not assume that the user will have ready access to other documents).

Three basic possibilities for printed/hard copy presentation (decision does not necessarily have to be made at the outset):

- loose-leaf in a ring binder
- series of booklets, possibly assembled in a small ring binder
- single bound book.

The text should also be available on diskette and/or CD-ROM, and be accessible through UNIENET/IERRIS/INTERNET.

Way Forward

Taking into account agencies' comments and suggestions, terms of reference for a consultant will be developed and a work plan be established. The consultant would work with IASU and designated agency focal points. The coordinators' offices and country teams would be contacted in selected complex emergency countries. It is hoped that much of the work could be completed in the first half of 1995."