

**Tool**

**PREPAREDNESS**

**Common Framework**

October 2013

IASC Reference Group on Risk, Early  
Warning and Preparedness

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Endorsed by: IASC Principals

## INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE

**Common Framework for Preparedness**

18 October 2013

**I Summary**

*A range of actors assists member states and communities towards achieving resilience, including through enhancing preparedness<sup>1</sup>. In addition to national, bilateral and international development efforts, entities with significant operational humanitarian capabilities and experience are increasingly requested to assist in enhancing preparedness. This effort requires coherence and coordination and the optimal use of scarce resources.*

*The Common Framework for Preparedness (the Common Framework) supports the development of preparedness capacity in a more coherent manner using a systematic country level approach that collectively assesses capacity and need, uses this assessment to jointly develop programmes and plans, and coherently implements these programmes and plans to strengthen preparedness. Preparedness is situated within an overall, nationally led, disaster risk management (DRM) context, which includes prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery measures.*

**II Why a Common Framework?**

**States – The Primary Responsibility:** In the past two decades, the need and expectation that governments should protect the wellbeing of their citizens against natural, biological, technological and societal hazards have grown. States have considerably strengthened their capacity to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

**Assistance Still Needed:** UN Resolution 46/182<sup>2</sup> of 1991 emphasised the need for the international community to provide coordinated support to national preparedness measures and several ECOSOC and General Assembly resolutions related to the “Implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction” (ISDR)<sup>3</sup> since have called for greater support to states.

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<sup>1</sup> The Common Framework builds on the ISDR definition for preparedness, “the knowledge and capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to, and recover from, the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions,”<sup>1</sup> with the qualification that, for the IASC, preparedness should apply to all kinds of emergencies, including from natural, biological and technological hazards, and complex emergencies. The overall objective of preparedness is to reduce the humanitarian, social, economic and environmental impact of an emergency on affected populations and help them recover and continue with their lives as quickly and effectively as possible. Preparedness is an integral part of Disaster Risk Management, itself an essential strategy for strengthening the resilience of nations and communities.

<sup>2</sup> UN General Assembly resolution 46/182, ‘Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations,’ 19 December 1991

<sup>3</sup> Most recent is the resolution adopted by the General Assembly *Second Committee*, February 2011, GA res. 65/157 International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

**Resources Scarce:** Resources for international humanitarian assistance are, and will be, scarce. Resources that are available should be targeted to the most needy situations. Increased capacity on the part of states and communities to self-manage crises will assist in this targeting.

**Assistance Disjointed:**

It is widely acknowledged that effective preparedness saves lives, livelihoods and money. However, while the imperative for greater preparedness is clear, the international community has not fully adapted its policy and working methods to fit today's needs. Strong government leadership, supported by international inter-agency collaboration, has brought the relevant stakeholders together in support of preparedness in some countries, but in many situations the UN, NGOs, Red Cross Red Crescent, donors and multilateral development banks have not coordinated their strategies for supporting national and local<sup>4</sup> preparedness capacity. Rather, the tendency is to reach separate agreements with national counterparts, with organisations approaching donors separately and thus competing for funding, as opposed to coming together in a collective effort. Organisations differ in their opinion on which countries most need support, as do donors, and agency commitment of resources for supporting the preparedness of at-risk countries is unreliable.

**IASC Principals Request:** The IASC Principals have called for the development of a “Common Framework for Preparedness” as part of the IASC Transformative Agenda. The framework is common in the sense that it requires all actors, whether focused on humanitarian assistance or development, to develop national and local capacities for preparedness, and that it takes into consideration both international and national capacities for preparedness at the country level.

The Common Framework will contribute to the integration of preparedness for response and recovery in national and local disaster risk reduction strategies consistent with the Hyogo Framework for Action<sup>5</sup>. Experience in implementing the Common Framework, will also help international partners to more effectively contribute to consultations on preparedness for response and recovery leading up to the post-2015 international framework for disaster risk reduction (HFA2). Finally, efforts by the UN system to implement the Common Framework for Preparedness will contribute to and be reported on as part of the monitoring of progress by the UN system to implement the CEB/HLCP UN Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience<sup>6</sup>. The Chair of the IASC Principals, the Chair of the UN Development Group and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction will ensure coherence in the implementation of the Common Framework by the UN system and jointly promote it.

### III Operating Principles

The Common Framework uses the following operating principles:

1. **National Leadership.** National and local governments, complemented by civil society, have the lead role for preparedness for all scales of emergencies, and should be supported by the international community in that role, wherever this is consistent with humanitarian principles and

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<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of the Common Framework, “local” denotes sub-national authorities and communities.

<sup>5</sup> International instrument for Disaster Risk Reduction in which Priority 5 is to ‘Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels’ and Priority 2 “Risk Assessment and Early Warning Systems”

<sup>6</sup> Adopted in April 2013 by the CEB, it calls on the UN to ‘promote the integration of disaster preparedness for relief and recovery with development programmes that reduce disaster risk and build resilience’

human rights norms. To be effective and sustainable, preparedness and broader DRM will need to be integrated into relevant national legal frameworks and institutions.

2. **Joint Planning and Coordination.** Under the leadership of national governments and in countries that have identified preparedness for response as a development priority, the full range of actors, including the UN<sup>7</sup>, Red Cross Red Crescent Movement, NGOs and bilateral cooperation will need to strengthen joint planning and coordination of programmes and resources to provide predictable, reliable support to national capacity development for preparedness. This support should recognise the comparative advantage of each organisation to support preparedness at various levels and in different sectors. The RC/HC can play a key role in supporting government leadership and providing coordination, in particular for UN entities, by facilitating the integration of disaster preparedness for response in UN development partnerships and frameworks in countries where it emerges as a development priority, but also in seeking coherence with a wide range of relevant actors. To assist planning and coordination, an indicative list of Components of Emergency Preparedness is attached as Annex A.
3. **International humanitarian and human rights law.** Preparedness aims to reduce vulnerability and enhance resilience and protection by applying a human rights based approach, including through consultation with the affected population and through laws and policies that mitigate the human rights consequences of crises, and which are themselves based on international humanitarian and human rights law.
4. **Combined Humanitarian and Development Expertise.** Enhancing national preparedness requires a development approach to building capacity, informed by an understanding of humanitarian principles, standards and strategies for successful response. The key value-add of most humanitarian entities is operational capacity and expertise. The Common Framework can only succeed when humanitarian and development actors coordinate their resources, skills and initiatives in support of preparedness capacity.
5. **Comprehensive Approach.** The Framework uses a comprehensive approach that includes integration with wider national DRM frameworks, to build sustainable capacity, encompassing:
  - ❖ Multi-hazard risk assessment, irrespective of scale, including conflict risks
  - ❖ Multi-stakeholder engagement
  - ❖ Multi-level approach, i.e. national, sub-national, and local
  - ❖ Multiple sectors
  - ❖ Multi-year preparedness capacity development programming

Open dissemination of information is a key issue within this approach so that it easily accessible to all relevant local, national and international stakeholders.
6. **Context Specific.** Developing national and local capacities for preparedness should be context specific and should recognise and build on current country and regional initiatives. Improving preparedness in complex emergencies is as important as for natural hazards. However, in situations where government is party to the conflict, different approaches will be required and while the government must still be prepared to meet humanitarian needs, increased focus may be required in relation to inter-agency and community preparedness.

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<sup>7</sup> Including non-resident organizations as required

## IV Elements of the Common Framework

The Common Framework consists of a systematic approach whereby humanitarian and development actors in the international system combine their efforts at country level to support the development of national and local capacity for preparedness to anticipate, respond to, and recover from emergencies. This effort takes place under government leadership as relevant, and as part of an overall DRM strategy.

Based on a government request for assistance, the Common Framework enables international and regional actors to work with governments and national institutions to take the following key steps:

1. **Regularly convene all partners concerned.** The UN Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators can contribute to the efforts by the host Government through the coordination of development and humanitarian organizations in the international system to improve the preparedness of national and local actors<sup>8</sup>. This role must be carried out in full respect of the mandates and authority of relevant organisations. RCs and HCs will also advocate for inclusive nationally-led coordination for preparedness involving other relevant actors<sup>9</sup>.
2. **Assess Gaps** in emergency preparedness, response and recovery through capacity assessments against a **multi-hazard risk profile**, ideally linked with wider country assessments<sup>10</sup> linked to development processes. This examines existing national and local emergency response capacities and legal frameworks, including the capacity of international/regional organisations currently available through their country presence. It also considers current capacity development initiatives and their likely outcomes.
3. **Clarify Roles and Responsibilities for Preparedness** of relevant actors. This includes the national and subnational level as well as that of relevant regional and international system partners. International partners will ensure that, taking into account humanitarian principles, their actions are coherent with national priorities and existing coordination mechanisms.
4. **Plan.** As part of a national DRM strategy, national institutions will be encouraged to develop national plans, including resource requirements, to support national and local preparedness. The national plans would reflect national priorities for short-term preparedness capacity gains and longer-term institutional development. To fill gaps while national capacity is developed, plans will also take into account operational capability that can realistically be made available at the country level by regional and international actors.
5. **Integrate and Adapt.** Integrate the national plan for preparedness into wider established national and international planning and funding instruments.<sup>11</sup> **Adapt** individual organization programmes, including **donor engagement for funding**, to cover action agreed under the joint plan.
6. **Coordinate Implementation.** Use existing country level mechanisms to coordinate implementation of the joint plan, including in prioritisation, phasing and task reallocation.

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<sup>8</sup> The RC “leads and coordinates the response preparedness efforts of UNCT members and relevant humanitarian actors in support of national efforts” see <http://www.undg.org/index.cfm?P=133>. The HC “Leads efforts to improve the response preparedness capacity of national and local authorities and their ability and willingness to work with international organisations” see <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/downloaddoc.aspx?docID=5089&type=pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Such as national NGOs and civil society organisations, regional inter-governmental organisations, bilateral and multilateral donors including multilateral development banks, private sector, and local research and training institutions

<sup>10</sup> Such as the Common Country Assessment related to United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF)

<sup>11</sup> Such as National Development Plans, UNDAF, Common Humanitarian Action Plans (CHAP), World Bank Country Assistance Strategies etc.

7. **Monitor Results.** Put in place or strengthen systems to track improvements in lives saved and more rapid restoration of assets over time on an event-by-event basis.

## V Creating the Conditions for Success

For the Common Framework to be applied successfully, the following will be required:

1. **Continuing Leadership Engagement and Support.** Continuing commitment by IASC, UNDG and UNISDR leadership to the Common Framework and its implementation at country level, as part of humanitarian and development planning and implementation, is a key element to success. The Common Framework will be included as an integral part of the Transformative Agenda roll out. This will need to be accompanied by significant communication efforts, both at the inter-agency level and within individual organizations, on the Common Framework and on the importance of increased preparedness programming and funding.
2. **Capacity to Support RCs/HCs and Country Teams.**
  - RCs and HCs hold the accountability and leadership role for supporting governments with preparedness. This includes building consensus among relevant humanitarian and development organisations, and actively facilitating cooperation among them to support national and local capacities for preparedness. The catalytic role of the RC requires a high level of skill and experience has shown that dedicated DRM expertise, including in preparedness, in the RC's Office is often required.
  - If clusters exist in the country, they have an important role in supporting the establishment and function of national level coordination mechanisms directed at improving preparedness in their corresponding sectors of activity. In the absence of clusters at country level, cluster lead agencies have a support role in their sectoral area, which includes promoting the preparedness process at country level with national and international actors.
  - While considerable expertise is often present within Country Teams, an additional level of support is available through regional humanitarian and DRR networks. At the global level, following an IASC recommendation<sup>12</sup>, the Chair of the UNDG and the Chair of the IASC have jointly communicated with all RC and HC, providing contact points for preparedness capacity development support<sup>13</sup>. Finally, in coordination with regional networks, IASC member organisations established arrangements at the global level to provide additional support, especially for high risk countries<sup>14</sup>.
  - A number of partnerships can be called upon to provide support on capacity building for disaster risk reduction, including preparedness. These include:
    - Regional support through the ISDR regional partnerships with regional inter-governmental bodies, UN regional economic commissions and regional UNDGs on disaster risk reduction, including preparedness for response.

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<sup>12</sup>IASC 77<sup>th</sup> Working Group Meeting 7-9 July 2010, Final Summary Record and Action Points, recommendation 1, p8

<sup>13</sup> Joint letter from the Chairs of IASC and UNDG dated 7 July 2011 designating UNDP as the contact for capacity development of national and local actors in preparedness and OCHA for HCT/UNCT preparedness.

<sup>14</sup> Within the IASC system this operational support is underpinned by conceptual and normative work as well as development of tools (including for risk analysis and early warning) undertaken by the Sub Working Group on Preparedness and by Global Cluster Support Cells.

- Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI), a partnership established by a number of UN organizations<sup>15</sup>, designed to provide coordinated and coherent technical support in capacity development for DRM.
  - The International Recovery Programme (IRP) which work with partners and Governments on preparedness for recovery
  - UNDAC support to Governments on preparedness.
3. **Strong demand and support from government and UNCT actors for preparedness.** Experience has shown that strong demand and support by government, the RC/HC and a core group of country team members are fundamental factors to success. These, and the fact that achieving system-wide coherence at country level requires focused attention, suggest that international system efforts should focus on achieving substantial results in countries which demonstrate high levels of demand and support, while continuing to engage those countries where such demand and leadership is wanted. These experiences will also generate valuable lessons, methods and mechanisms that can subsequently be applied in additional countries.
4. **Continuing Advocacy for the Common Framework and for Resources.** The IASC, UNDG and UNISDR need to continue to advocate for improved and prioritized financing for preparedness from humanitarian, development and climate change funding streams. Advocacy will also be required to overcome the humanitarian/development silo effect in some donor funding mechanisms and to garner public support for preparedness as well as the approach taken in the Common Framework. Sustainable national and local preparedness will also require increased commitment of national and sub national resources from disaster prone countries.

## **Annex: Components of Emergency Preparedness**

Prepared by: UNICEF and WFP as co-chairs of the IASC Sub-Working Group on Preparedness  
Final with IASC, UNDG and UNISDR comments October 2013.

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<sup>15</sup> Current CADRI membership includes UNDP, OCHA, UNICEF, WFP, FAO and WHO with the World Bank Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR) and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC) as Observers. CADRI is also engaging with international NGOs to involve them in country-based activities.

### Components of Emergency Preparedness

<b>Hazard / risk analysis and early warning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk assessments: Hazard / Vulnerability/ Capacity</li> <li>• Early warning and alert systems (local, national, regional and international)</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional and legislative frameworks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multisectoral and sectoral Institutional and Legislative Frameworks,</li> <li>• Resource Allocation and Funding Mechanisms</li> <li>• National Plan of Action, National Platform, National Disaster Management Authority</li> <li>• Regional agreements</li> <li>• International agreements</li> </ul>
➤ <b>Resource allocation and funding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core country emergency program budgets (internal)</li> <li>• National and regional risk pooling mechanisms</li> <li>• International agency emergency funding arrangements – including risk pooling mechanisms (external)</li> </ul>
➤ <b>Coordination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government Coordination mechanisms</li> <li>• National / sub-national/ local leadership structures</li> <li>• Multisectoral and sectoral inter-agency coordination – national, sub-national and local</li> <li>• Sector/cluster standards</li> <li>• Arrangements for coordinating and undertaking needs assessments (multi-sectoral, sectoral, recovery)</li> </ul>
➤ <b>Information management and communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Management systems – national, regional and international</li> <li>• Communication systems</li> <li>• Sector/cluster information management systems – GIS, 3/4 W's</li> </ul>
➤ <b>Preparedness and contingency / response planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community preparedness</li> <li>• Preparedness programmes for all sectors</li> <li>• Contingency/Response Planning</li> </ul>
➤ <b>Training and exercises</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simulations, drills – with the presence of local, national and / or international actors</li> <li>• Accredited training packages and opportunities</li> <li>• Specific country context training opportunities</li> </ul>
➤ <b>Emergency services / standby arrangements and prepositioning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stockpiling – national, regional and international</li> <li>• Civil Protection, Emergency Services, Search and Rescue, Mass Casualty Management</li> <li>• Contingency partnership resource and supply agreements – national, regional and international</li> <li>• Standards, guidelines and standard operating procedures for sectoral emergency response</li> </ul>