1. The UN System

1.1. United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT). Within the framework of the UN Resident Co-ordinator System, a Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) should be established in all disaster-prone countries, and meet regularly to co-ordinate UN work and support to the government for emergency preparedness and response, and issue reports to the international community. Few countries have a UNDMT on a standing basis, and the UNDMT is often formed only after a disaster has occurred. If the disaster falls within the competence and mandate of a particular UN agency, then this organisation will take the lead: the UNDMT will then be the forum for discussing the support of the Lead agency.

The UNDMT is convened and chaired by the UN Resident Co-ordinator (who always represents OCHA) and should comprise a core group represented by the country level representatives of FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and, where present, UNHCR. The team may include other agencies when necessary. If a UNDAC team is in the country, its leader automatically becomes member of the UNDMT. The UNDP disaster focal point officer serves as secretary for the UNDMT. UNDP provides the venue, basic administrative support for meetings and other general support.

The purpose of the UNDMT is to ensure effective, and concerted UN emergency response, as well as assistance to the host government for rehabilitation, reconstruction, and disaster mitigation. The UNDMT should co-ordinate all disaster related activities, technical advice and material assistance provided by UN agencies, and help avoid wastes, duplications or competition for resources by UN agencies. The UNDMT also interfaces with the emergency management team of the host government, whose representative may be included in the UNDMT. In practice it is vital that the policies of the UNDMT relate to those of the host government.

1.2. United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). OCHA is part of the UN Secretariat and is headed by an Under-Secretary-General, thereby enabling a direct contact to the UN Secretary-General. OCHA is situated in both New York and Geneva. Policy co-ordination, policy planning, early warning and response to complex emergencies are performed in New York, while the Geneva office acts as the focal point for emergency operational support and relief co-ordination as well as for disaster mitigation.

OCHA works on a twenty-four-hour duty system. Response ranges from issuing Information Reports (when no appeal bas been received from the affected country), through issuing Situation Reports (when an international appeal bas been received from the affected country) to full-scale involvement (sending assessment and co-ordinating (UNDAC) teams to the affected area, co-ordinating relief efforts, launching joint UN appeals etc).

OCHA can respond to both natural disasters and complex emergencies. Human, technical and logistic resources are mostly supplied by the Danish and Norwegian Refugee Councils, the Danish Emergency Management Agency, the Swedish Rescue Services Agency, and the British Department for International Development through OCHA-Geneva. Some human resources are also managed by the Rapid Response Unit (RRU) in the Complex Emergency Division in New York.
OCHA has a Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) which can be used for providing urgent funds to the UN Resident Co-ordinator in an emergency. The fund will be reimbursed by the agency. In the case of natural disasters the Relief Co-ordination Branch has the possibility of providing an emergency cash grant of up to US$ 50,000 through the local UNDP office. This money can only be granted when the government of the affected country has launched an appeal for international help.

1.3. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). UNDP focuses primarily on the development-related aspects of disasters, and can provide technical assistance to institution-building in relation to all aspects of disaster management:

➢ Incorporating long-term risk reduction and preparedness in normal development planning and programmes.
➢ Assisting in planning and implementing post-disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction, including defining new development strategies that incorporate risk reduction measures relevant to the affected area.
➢ Reviewing the impact of large settlements of refugees or displaced persons on development, and seeking ways to incorporate the refugees and displaced persons in development strategies.
➢ Providing technical assistance to authorities managing major emergency operations of extended duration.

In the event of a disaster, UNDP may grant up to US$50,000 for immediate response. UNDP is not otherwise involved in the provision of relief. Where a major emergency affects the whole development process within a country, resources may be used in technical assistance to plan and manage the operation, with the agreement of the Government. For operations of extended duration taking place in a developing country, UNDP may accept and administer special extra-budgetary contributions to assist the responsible national authorities. This might include establishing and administering a DMT Emergency Information and Co-ordination (EIC) Support Unit. Such UNDP actions are closely co-ordinated with OCHA and all other UN agencies involved in providing assistance. Technical and material assistance in support of long-term risk reduction and preparedness measures is included in UNDP country programme, and may be funded from IPF resources or from other UNDP-administered funds.

In the event of a disaster the Resident Representative mobilises UNDP staff and technical assistance personnel and other resources that meet the needs of the situation, particularly for the initial assessment and immediate response. The UNDP resident representative also:

➢ Collaborates with the UNHCR in cases of protracted refugee operations to help integrate the refugees into local development programme activities, and include a development perspective in the assistance to the refugees;
➢ Helps other organisations, including NGO, involved in planning and providing emergency assistance to include development perspectives in their programmes and activities.

In all disaster-prone country field offices; a senior national officer is designated a "disaster focal point" for all disaster related matters including mitigation, response and in-country UN/UNDP preparedness.

1.4. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Most UNHCR programmes begin as a result of an emergency: a sudden influx of refugees. The aim of UNHCR response is to provide protection to persons of concern to the organisation and ensure that the necessary assistance reaches them in time.

With regard to material assistance, UNHCR goal is the survival of refugees through adequate food, supplies, health care, shelter, water and sanitary facilities, clothing and
essential community services. Much of UNHCR material assistance is channelled through its implementing partners, i.e. the government of the asylum country and NGOs. UNHCR has an Emergency Fund in order to provide financial assistance to refugees and displaced persons in emergency situations. The High Commissioner may allocate up to $25 million annually from this fund, provided that the amount made available for anyone single emergency shall not exceed $8 million in anyone year.

In the UNHCR Emergency Preparedness and Response Section (EPRS) there are five Emergency Preparedness and Response Officers (EPRS on standby to lead emergency response teams. They may be supported or complemented by a variety of other human resources:

- Emergency Administrative Officers for setting up offices in emergency situations;
- 30 members of an Emergency Roster, who are staff with various skills and experience who are occupying posts throughout the world but can be immediately released for emergency deployment. The roster is changed "periodically to ensure staff preparedness and availability;
- 500 persons are on another roster, by arrangements with the Danish" Refugee Council, the Norwegian Refugee Council and the United Nations Volunteers;
- A third roster can provide external consultant technicians in various sectors such as health, water, sanitation, logistics and refugee shelter;
- An arrangement with selected NGO for rapid deployment to implement assistance activities in different sectors such as health, sanitation, logistics and social services.

All these staff can be supported under an arrangement with the Swedish Rescue Services Agency which can set up a base camp and office, in extreme conditions, with 48 hours notice. UNHCR field staff are anyway responsible for emergency assessments, with or without the assistance of EPRS staff and technical experts from HQ.

UNHCR controls a stockpile of tents, prefabricated warehouses, blankets, kitchen sets, water storage and purification equipment and plastic sheeting. These items are stored in regional warehouses or are on call with established suppliers who guarantee rapid delivery.

1.4. United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF). UNICEF ‘s role in emergency relief is ensuring that the immediate and particular needs of children and mothers are met, with due regard for to the urgency of the needs and the resources available. This applies in all emergency situations, regardless of their cause, and assistance is provided without discrimination. UNICEF mobilises and provides direct relief assistance in situations where immediate needs of children and mothers are not being adequately met. Where relief needs can be met by the Government or other organisations, UNICEF concentrates on rehabilitation and long-term child survival and development objectives. UNICEF pays special attention to the needs of children caught in conflict situations. Assistance may include:

(a) Specific, sectoral inputs in respect of health, social services, water and sanitation, with special attention to: the feeding and immunisation of infants and young children: the restoration of safe water supplies and household food production.
(b) Initiatives to help vulnerable communities and households to care adequately for their children, including increasing their earning opportunities (especially for women).
(c) Assistance to strengthen the management and organisation of emergency operations, and to tackle logistics constraints which might inhibit the delivery of needs assistance and services for children. This includes mobilising additional temporary staff support and/or expertise.
The UNICEF Representative in agreement with the government can divert up to US$25,000 worth of emergency supplies and/or cash resources from the ongoing regular country budget. Additional resources may be released from the global emergency reserve (US$ 4 Million annually), subject to the approval of the Executive Director. Existing commitments for development programmes may be reprogrammed in agreement with the government and with the approval of UNICEF headquarters.

A focal point is designated in each UNICEF country office in a disaster-prone country to ensure internal preparedness and the monitoring of famine early warning indicators in collaboration with other agencies. At HQ, the Director of Emergency Programmes advises the Executive Director on policy and operational aspects of UNICEF involvement in emergencies, and supervises three functional units:

- The Emergency Operations Unit in New York which has overall responsibility for co-ordinating UNICEF emergency-related activities, managing the global emergency reserve, and ensuring co-ordination with the UN other international organisations, bilateral and NGO assistance from outside the region;
- The Emergency Unit in UNICEF-Geneva, which assists in inter-agency co-ordination, fund-raising and backstopping country offices, as well as in staff training.
- The Rapid Response Unit based in Nairobi (UNICEF office for East and Southern Africa) which helps manage major emergency operations in the region (including Sudan), and is available to help with assessments elsewhere.

An emergency stockpile is maintained at UNIPAC (UNICEF supply division and warehouse in Copenhagen). Items in stock can be dispatched within hours. The reimbursable procurement facilities of UNIPAC are available to other organisations and agencies through the UNICEF country office.

1.5. World Food Programme (WFP). On average, WFP multilateral assistance accounts for approximately 25% of world emergency food aid. In the event of an emergency, WFP may:

- Assist the government, other concerned agencies and local authorities in assessing requirements for emergency food aid, and in planning and managing food aid interventions.
- Provide food aid to meet emergency food needs, subject to the availability of resources and the assessed need for international food aid.
- Help to mobilise and ensure co-ordination in the planning and delivery of food assistance from all sources, and any necessary logistics support and other complementary inputs.

Through INTERFAIS (the computerised International Food Aid Information System), WFP monitors food aid flows, including emergency food aid, and makes data available to the international community on requirements, donors' allocations, delivery schedules etc. As an aid to planning and co-ordination, information is also included on port conditions and overland transport possibilities.

WFP is responsible for mobilising basic commodities (cereals, beans or other protein-rich food, edible oil or fat, salt) plus sugar and blended foods, together with cash resources for 100% external transport and in-country transport, storage and handling (ITSH) and associated costs. UNHCR is responsible for mobilising any other required commodities and related cash resources. In addition to supplying certain quantities from the resources available to it, WFP may help to mobilise and ensure co-ordination of the delivery of ‘non-food’ inputs (e.g. grinders, utensils, cooking fuel etc.).
WFP may, where needed, help intervene with the governments of transit countries to facilitate and expedite the passage of relief goods to emergency-affected landlocked countries. WFP administers the International Emergency Food Reserve (IEFR), which, in principle, comprises the equivalent of at least 500,000 tonnes of cereals annually but is often exceeded, and manages a separate set of resources pledged by donors for assistance to 'protracted' refugee and displaced persons operations. In addition, annual allocations are set aside from WFP general resources: US$15 million for 'emergency' assistance plus US$30 million for 'protracted' assistance.

A cash account, the Immediate Response Account (IRA), was established in 1992 as an integral part of the IEFR for purchase and delivery of food to enable the fastest possible response to new emergencies prior to the arrival of foodstuffs through customary channels. A cash fund of US$30 million, unencumbered by restrictions, is contributed voluntarily by the donors over and above commodity pledges to IEFR and related transport and other costs.

At country level, the WFP Director of Operations can agree with the Government on the acceleration/adaptation of ongoing WFP assisted development projects to meet emergency needs, subject to certain criteria (notably that there is no increase in the WFP commitment). He/she may also purchase up to US$50,000 worth of commodities locally to meet immediate urgent needs that cannot be met in any other way.

2. The Red Cross Movement

The Red Cross Movement is composed of three elements:
- The National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies;
- The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCRCS);
- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

2.1. The National Society. The organisation and the work of the Red Cross/Crescent Societies around the world -and their relations with the governments - vary from country to country, but all those that have been officially recognised (by the ICRC) are bound by the basic principles of the Red Cross, in particular that of neutrality.

Societies act as auxiliaries to the public (governmental) authorities and services, and concentrate on activities concerned with public health -including first aid and primary health care -and relief. They are required to act without discrimination on racial, religious or political grounds. In some countries the national society is assigned a pivotal role in the organisation of relief operations. Many national societies maintain stocks of relief supplies.

2.2. The International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRCRCS). The IFRC is a federation of the national Societies world-wide. It is based in Geneva and aims to inspire, encourage, facilitate, and promote all forms of humanitarian activities by its member Societies with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering. When disasters occur, the IFRC can assist the national Society in assessing needs, mobilising resources and organising relief activities. IFRC delegates are often assigned to assist the national Society directly, and personnel from other national societies may be requested and assigned under the Federations auspices.

The IFRC frequently issues international appeals for specific emergency programmes agreed with the national Society concerned. Funds received are administered through the Federation, which undertakes purchases and also co-ordinates the delivery of food, drugs, blankets, tents, and other supplies. Aid donated through the Federation is always
transferred to the national Society of the affected country. The IFRC may advance funds at the start of an operation pending the receipt of donations.

2.3. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC is the founder body of the Red Cross Movement. It is an independent and private institution, and is neutral and politically, ideologically, and religiously impartial.

The ICRC has its headquarters in Geneva, and acts in cases of conflict - internal or international - to:
- Ensure that the Geneva Conventions are observed by parties to the conflict;
- Assure/provide protection, medical care and material relief assistance to victims of the conflict;
- Organise tracing services to identify and re-establish communications between family members who have become separated, as well as tracing and visiting prisoners (e.g. prisoners of war or "detainees for security reasons").

The ICRC co-operates with the national Societies but exercises its particular functions and usually mounts its own operations separately. It establishes its own offices (delegations and sub-delegations) and assigns its own personnel. Medical teams from other national Societies may be assigned in the field under the auspices and directions of the ICRC. The ICRC raises funds by issuing international appeals.

3. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO)

The Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) working in emergency relief can be divided into two main categories, international NGO (those working in the international field, even though they may not be an international organisation in the true sense of the name) and local NGO (working within their own country).

NGO are in principle autonomous and independent of governments (hence the name), and are financed by private individuals or groups. Financing, however, has changed in recent years. The modern tendency for NGO funding goes towards receiving more and more funding from governments (usually their own governments) or Inter-Governmental Organisations (IGO), e.g. the European Union. Whether or not this affects the autonomy greatly depends on the individual NGO and the possible strings attached to the funding.

NGO work in all areas of the humanitarian field and provide the greatest international capacity to implement relief on the ground. Therefore it is important to inter-relate with them as there is valuable information and help to be found (and given). It is usually the case that one or more NGO are actually physically in the area of an emergency before, during and after the emergency, and will therefore have hands-on information and experience of the issues. NGO also tend to specialise in one or two fields, or to direct their efforts towards one needy population group. They usually offer skilled staff, rapid deployment capacity (if they are not already in the area), operational flexibility, and resources that might not otherwise be available in an emergency.

The number of local NGO has also grown in the past years. They can be helpful in a variety of ways, especially because they are known locally and they themselves know the area, the culture, the population etc. In many cases they work together with international NGO, the UN and others. They are assets that can be helpful not just with giving information, but also as implementing partners.