

# OCHA

Office for the Coordination  
of Humanitarian Affairs

What it is...  
What it does...



United Nations

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### ***OCHA Mission Statement***

*To mobilize and coordinate the collective efforts of the international community, in particular those of the UN system, to meet in a coherent and timely manner the needs of those exposed to human suffering and material destruction in disasters and emergencies. This involves reducing vulnerability, promoting solutions to root causes and facilitating the smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation and development.*

## **OVERVIEW**

### ***What is OCHA?***

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is part of the United Nations Secretariat and has the mandate to coordinate UN assistance in humanitarian crises that go beyond the capacity and mandate of any single humanitarian agency. Today's humanitarian emergencies are both multidimensional and complex, and many actors—such as Governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), UN agencies and individuals—seek to respond simultaneously. OCHA works with them to ensure that there is a coherent framework within which each actor can contribute effectively and promptly to the overall effort.

The UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs was established in 1992 specifically to address this need. As part of the United Nations Secretary-General's reform programme, the Department was renamed the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in January 1998. More importantly, its effectiveness was enhanced by a sharper focus, more active inter-agency cooperation, and a streamlining of procedures for support of field coordination.

### ***What does OCHA do?***

There are three major ways in which OCHA fulfils its role:

(1) *It coordinates the international humanitarian response*, including contingency planning when appropriate. When a major complex crisis breaks, OCHA consults with the UN Country Team through the UN Resident and/or Humanitarian Coordinator in the country(ies) concerned and undertakes inter-agency consultation at headquarters to reach agreement on the main humanitarian priorities for action. OCHA then provides support for the coordination of activities in-country. It also assists in resource mobilization by launching inter-agency appeals and in monitoring progress of relief efforts.

(2) *It provides the humanitarian community with support in policy development.* OCHA also tries to ensure that major humanitarian issues are addressed, including those that fall between the existing mandates of humanitarian organizations.

(3) *It advocates on humanitarian issues, giving voice to the silent victims of crises and ensuring that the views and concerns of the broad humanitarian community are reflected in overall efforts towards recovery and peace-building.* OCHA also provides information and analysis to help raise awareness and enhance understanding of humanitarian issues, through its Web site and electronic mail.

### ***How does humanitarian coordination work?***

There are three major dimensions of humanitarian coordination, and these are reflected in the functions of the head of OCHA, currently Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, who has dual responsibilities as Under-Secretary-General in the UN Secretariat, and as Emergency Relief Coordinator.

As Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), he is responsible for coordination among humanitarian entities. The ERC achieves this mainly through his chairmanship of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), which brings together all major humanitarian actors, both within and outside the UN system. The IASC works to develop a shared analysis of a given crisis and to ensure inter-agency decision-making on the response to complex emergencies, as well as on the development of humanitarian policies.

As Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Humanitarian Affairs, the head of OCHA is the principal adviser to the Secretary-General on humanitarian issues. The USG provides a link between the humanitarian community and the intergovernmental

WFP/C. Hughes



*World Food Programme convoy in Uganda.*

organs of the UN (the General Assembly and the Security Council), as well as the political, security, developmental and human rights elements of the UN system. This is achieved partly through the USG's role as Convener of the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA), as well as through his chairmanship of the IASC. The ECHA provides a forum for the humanitarian community and the political and peacekeeping departments of the UN Secretariat to share perspectives on humanitarian crises and issues.

The head of OCHA ensures that appropriate field coordination mechanisms are established, and that specialized staff are promptly deployed to the field to support Resident and/or Humanitarian Coordinators or lead agencies in their work. The Coordinators, in turn, report directly to the ERC.

### ***Who benefits from UN humanitarian action?***

The UN's main goal in humanitarian action is to help civilian victims of conflicts and natural disasters. It does this by striving to provide humanitarian assistance and, if necessary, protection. In 1998, an estimated US\$ 2,160 million of humanitarian assistance was requested to support 12.8 million people suffering as a result of complex emergencies. The victims of 61 natural and environmental disasters were assisted in 1998, and the international community provided over US\$ 1 billion in aid (including bilateral aid).

### ***Priorities and challenges***

*Each year, OCHA identifies important issues to be addressed, based on its analysis of the evolving humanitarian environment. In determining these priorities, OCHA consults with its humanitarian partners through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. In 1998, OCHA's priorities included:*

- ◆ *Improving the provision of assistance and protection for internally displaced persons (IDPs);*
- ◆ *Promoting better understanding of the interrelationship between humanitarian action and human rights and cooperation between the two;*
- ◆ *Developing "principles of engagement, suspension and disengagement" for humanitarian agencies in the field;*
- ◆ *Improving the provision of security for humanitarian workers;*
- ◆ *Advocating that the humanitarian implications of sanctions be fully addressed;*
- ◆ *Working with others to develop a UN system-wide mine action strategy;*
- ◆ *Strengthening the linkage between humanitarian action and post-conflict reintegration, rehabilitation and peace-building activities;*
- ◆ *Coordinating the UN system's preventive, early warning and response activities with regard to El Niño;*
- ◆ *Promoting inter-agency preventive, preparedness and rehabilitation strategies for natural, technological and environmental disasters;*
- ◆ *Supporting African initiatives aimed at strengthening capacities for confronting humanitarian and human rights crises;*
- ◆ *Strengthening the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal Process (CAP) as an effective instrument for programming and prioritizing humanitarian assistance.*

## **ACTIVITIES**

### **COORDINATING THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE**

#### ***Responding to complex emergencies***

The past decade has witnessed an upsurge in the frequency and intensity of conflicts within State borders. These have caused massive displacements of people, extensive violence and loss of life, and widespread damage to societies and economies. These “complex emergencies” cause large-scale humanitarian crises in complicated political and military environments.

OCHA’s response is multifaceted, and includes the following:

***Monitoring/early warning.*** OCHA monitors humanitarian developments throughout the world, particularly in potentially vulnerable countries and regions, to identify crises with humanitarian implications.

***Contingency planning.*** When faced with the threat of a major humanitarian crisis which would go beyond what a single agency or existing programmes could cope with, OCHA, with its humanitarian partners, makes contingency plans for possible interventions. Such planning is based on a common analysis of the situation and its possible outcomes. It involves making joint decisions on a course of action for each scenario, determining a suitable humanitarian coordination mechanism, dividing roles and responsibilities among operational agencies, mobilizing resources, stocking and positioning relief items, and making logistical arrangements. In 1998, OCHA led contingency planning in five countries and regions.

***Inter-agency situation/needs assessment.*** As a humanitarian crisis emerges, OCHA, with its humanitarian partners, moves to determine humanitarian needs and put in place an appropriate coordination mechanism on the ground, through IASC consultations. The first step is to carry out a prompt, objective assessment of the rapidly changing situation. OCHA often organizes and leads inter-agency assessment missions with the participation both of

UN agencies, such as UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF, and of other humanitarian organizations and NGOs. This process helps develop a common strategy and humanitarian programme, which is the basis for the prioritization of needs.

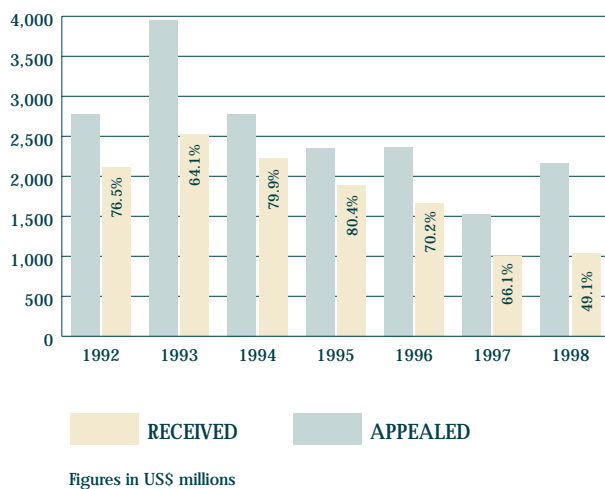
***Field coordination mechanism.*** Most emergencies requiring UN humanitarian involvement call for significant participation by a large number of actors. In these cases, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) may appoint, after consulting the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), a Humanitarian Coordinator (normally the in-country UN Resident Coordinator) to ensure effective field-level coordination of the overall humanitarian effort. Humanitarian Coordinators, reporting to the ERC, work closely with the UN humanitarian agencies, as well as with non-governmental and international organizations delivering assistance, to ensure coherent and timely response. On their behalf, Humanitarian Coordinators undertake negotiations with relevant authorities on such issues as access to the needy population, the security of victims and relief workers, and the principle that assistance should be allocated on the basis of need. OCHA always ensures that the Humanitarian Coordinator has the necessary staff support, including experienced humanitarian workers seconded from other organizations.

***Consolidated appeals.*** The success of the international community in addressing a humanitarian crisis depends not only on a well-coordinated response, but also on raising the resources needed to ensure timely assistance. Given finite donor support, the Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal Process (CAP) must be based on an overall strategy that enables the UN system to set clear goals and define priorities for the humanitarian programme in a given country. The CAP provides a framework for joint programming, common prioritization and joint resource mobilization. OCHA supports the participating organizations in preparing the appeal, following up with donor countries and monitoring the receipt and use of contributions. While most appeals are launched on a yearly basis, OCHA sometimes issues “flash” or interim appeals, prepared over the course of a few weeks and covering short-term emergency requirements.

## CONSOLIDATED APPEAL PROCESS

Between 1992 and 1998, OCHA launched, on behalf of the partner humanitarian organizations, 94 consolidated appeals, seeking US\$ 17.9 billion in 27 countries (Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Burundi, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Iraq, Kenya, Kosovo, Lebanon, Liberia, Mozambique, Republic of the Congo, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan and Yemen) and five regions (Southern Africa, Horn of Africa, former Yugoslavia, Caucasus and Great Lakes). Overall, US\$ 12.5 billion was raised. Organizations participating in this process include WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, FAO, WHO, OHCHR, HABITAT/UNCHS, UNFPA, UNRWA, UNESCO, ILO, IOM and UNDP, together with UNIFEM, UNOPS and UNV, as well as NGOs (with IFRC and ICRC as independent partners).

### CAP REQUIREMENTS



### OCHA AT WORK

#### Guinea-Bissau

When rising tensions in Guinea-Bissau led to conflict on 7 June 1998, UN agencies and other partners were evacuated from the country. While political mediation by international political bodies and neighbouring countries continued, OCHA led an inter-agency mission to the country (with the UN Department of Political Affairs, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP) on 24 June. The aim of the mission was to assess the humanitarian situation, analyse the political and military scenario and its potential impact on humanitarian efforts, and develop a strategy for humanitarian intervention. The mission assessed that there were 350,000 displaced people in Guinea-Bissau, and began setting up mechanisms to deliver assistance. On 10 July it launched a UN interim appeal, asking for donations of US\$ 29 million to meet urgent humanitarian needs until 31 December 1998. To continue its support to the Humanitarian Coordinator, OCHA deployed its staff to establish a Humanitarian Coordination Unit.

## ***Responding to natural and environmental disasters***

The humanitarian consequences of natural, environmental catastrophes and industrial accidents often exceed the coping mechanisms and aid resources of single countries. When natural disasters strike, their impact is particularly severe in developing countries. International interventions are often needed to help victims.

OCHA responds to such disasters in the following ways:

***Disaster Response System***—*providing round-the-clock readiness for disasters.* To help coordinate the actions of the international community in responding to disasters, OCHA has established a Disaster Response System, in Geneva, operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It monitors field situations to identify natural disasters, environmental emergencies, and industrial accidents, and is in close contact with UN Resident Coordinators throughout the world. The system also features pre-disaster preparedness and post-disaster follow-up activities, including training assessment teams, making evaluations and determining lessons learned.

***Situation Reports***—*alerting and updating the world on evolving disaster situations.* As soon as OCHA is alerted to a disaster, its response system is triggered. The Situation Report is the main coordinating tool, providing the international community with detailed information on the evolving disaster situation, including damage caused, actions taken, assistance needs and international aid being provided. On average, over 200 such reports are issued each year to emergency relief services of donor Governments, the UN system and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations—in all, about 600 addressees.

***Field coordination***—*providing on-site assessment and coordination support.* If required, OCHA can field a UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to assist on the ground in damage/needs assessment and the coordination of relief activities during the initial phase. It can help establish an On-site Operations Coordination Centre to

support the local emergency management authority in coordinating the operational activities of international relief agencies at the disaster site. OCHA can also help establish secure and reliable telecommunications during the emergency phase, and identify and meet the need for technical logistics resources (such as office support, transport, telecommunications and coordination centre infrastructure) to support field coordination.

***International appeals***—*mobilizing the international community to provide help.* When the Government of the affected country requests it, OCHA launches an appeal for international assistance, urging the international community to cover the identified relief needs. On the average, 27 such appeals are issued each year. As needed, OCHA provides cash grants and a “fast-tracking” service for donor contributions. The progress of relief activities is then closely monitored to ensure that the country recovers quickly from the emergency.

### ***Chernobyl and Semipalatinsk***

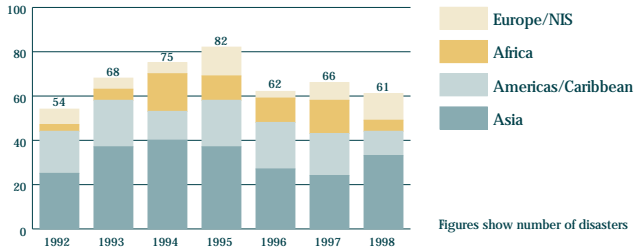
*The unprecedented nuclear disaster at Chernobyl in 1986 continues to haunt the victims in Ukraine, Belarus and the Russian Federation. OCHA has been designated to act as the focal point to coordinate all Chernobyl-related activities of the UN agencies and major international organizations. In particular, OCHA acts as the secretariat of the Ministerial-level Chernobyl Committee and of an inter-agency Task Force. In this capacity, OCHA identifies projects to help the Chernobyl victims, continuing to mobilize international resources.*

*Also of great concern to OCHA is the situation at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site in Kazakhstan, where the severe effects of these tests on human health and the environment will be felt for years to come. The situation is exacerbated by a general decline in the social and economic development of the area. OCHA is committed to raising the profile of the situation in Semipalatinsk in all appropriate forums and to advocating support for programmes that address the humanitarian, environmental, economic and health needs of the region.*



## WHERE OCHA HELPS

Between 1992 and 1998, OCHA responded to 468 disasters (an average of 67 natural disasters per year) and launched 190 appeals for international assistance.



UNHCR/R. LeMoyné

Convoy transporting internally displaced persons in Afghanistan.

## OCHA AT WORK

### Earthquakes in Afghanistan

In 1998, a series of strong earthquakes devastated Afghanistan, killing over 6,000 people. The first, measuring 6.1 on the Richter scale, hit northern Afghanistan on 4 February. It caused severe damage in the Rustaq district, near the border with Tajikistan. Again, on 30 May, another major earthquake (6.9 on the Richter scale) hit the same area. The stricken region is extremely poor, with almost no infrastructure such as surfaced roads, electricity or piped water, making international relief efforts extremely difficult. UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams were deployed for both disasters, to the disaster site in northern Afghanistan as well as to the neighbouring countries from where deliveries of relief supplies were arranged. OCHA issued 25 situation reports/international appeals on the two quakes. It helped mobilize over US\$ 12 million in assistance from the international community (of which nearly US\$ 3 million was channelled through and managed by OCHA to cover priority relief needs). Subsequently, OCHA undertook a lessons-learned exercise, in which a number of practical recommendations for improvement were made and are now being incorporated to strengthen the disaster response mechanism.

### Coordination tools and mechanisms

Responding to emergencies and disasters requires rapid deployment of resources—human, financial and logistical. OCHA has developed useful mechanisms so that quick, appropriate responses are made to the needs on the ground. These mechanisms include the following:

**UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination team.** Originally developed as a rapid-response tool for natural disasters, the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) module is now also used increasingly for complex emergencies. The UNDAC team consists of specially trained national emergency management experts, as well as OCHA staff, who are on permanent standby. A team can be deployed within hours (accompanied by a communications expert and/or with mobile satellite telecommunications equipment) to help in assessing situations and coordinating relief actions. Since 1993, an average of 10 UNDAC missions have been deployed each year.

**Military and civil defence assets.** When disasters and emergencies occur, OCHA coordinates the mobilization and deployment of military, civil protection and civil defence assets from a number of countries and multinational organizations. These assets

## ***HUMANITARIAN POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND ADVOCACY***

### ***Policy development***

OCHA works with its partners in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to identify specific humanitarian issues that arise from operational experience in the field and to build a consensus around policy positions. To this end, it prepares discussion and position papers, carries out and commissions policy research and “lessons learned” studies, and conducts analyses of emerging policy issues. Copies of these studies are available from OCHA.

### ***Building greater respect for humanitarian principles***

The most worrying trend in today’s humanitarian environment is the erosion of respect for international humanitarian law. In contemporary conflicts, over 90 per cent of the victims are innocent civilians, and humanitarian relief workers too are increasingly subjected to violence. The most urgent humanitarian challenge today is that of safeguarding the welfare of civilian victims and aid workers in an environment where they are made deliberate targets. There is a growing recognition that the actions of the international community can influence the extent to which combatants comply with humanitarian principles. Yet, there is not a clear understanding of how international aid strategies can be designed so that they also promote compliance with humanitarian principles.

The most urgent task—and one of the main focuses of OCHA’s policy function—is, together with partner agencies, and particularly the International Committee of the Red Cross, to stimulate greater respect for, and compliance with, humanitarian principles, and to formulate policy responses when these principles are disregarded. Through the IASC mechanism, OCHA is working to find ways to give concrete effect to the principles for UN action in countries in crisis, and to develop country-specific ground rules covering such issues as access, security and interaction with local/national authorities. These will assist the humanitarian community by providing guidelines that will help determine how and when to intervene,

include specialized personnel and equipment needed for disaster relief activities (such as aircraft, helicopters, ships, nuclear/biological/chemical decontamination facilities, field hospitals and water purification units). The number of emergencies in which these assets were used increased steadily since 1993, with 19 interventions in 1998. OCHA maintains a Central Register of Disaster Management Capacities, which may be available for international assistance.

***Standby arrangements for the mobilization of support resources.*** OCHA has established standby arrangements with Governments and humanitarian organizations for access to field coordination support resources (such as office support, transport, telecommunications and coordination centre infrastructure). When large-scale emergencies call for such resources, OCHA can mobilize, deploy and manage them so that coordination centres and other services can be established.

***Central Emergency Revolving Fund.*** The Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) is a cash-flow mechanism, under the authority of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, to allow for an immediate response to an emergency. The CERF may be used at the very outset of an emergency—and, in exceptional cases, during later phases—to help humanitarian agencies with cash-flow problems before donor contributions are available. The CERF requires that agencies borrowing from the fund reimburse the amount loaned within a specific target period, not to exceed one year. Since 1992, the CERF has been used 51 times, with a total of US\$ 127.7 million disbursed. Disbursements to UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP account for 80 per cent of this total.



WFP/Tom Haskell

*Infants showing signs of malnutrition at the Pyongyang orphanage in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.*

how to resolve “humanitarian dilemmas”, and when to draw the line and suspend activities or withdraw.

Work is also taking place on several related issues, including:

- ♦ Analysis of the relationship between human rights and humanitarian action;
- ♦ The situation of children engaged in armed conflict;
- ♦ The humanitarian impact of sanctions regimes.

***Coordinated programming and peace-building for countries in crisis***

Humanitarian action is closely related to political, human rights, socio-economic and environmental aspects of crises. A major challenge, therefore, is to develop more integrated UN-wide responses to complex crises and to peace-building. In inter-agency forums, OCHA is helping to develop and promote the concepts of Strategic Frameworks and Common Programming, covering the entire range of UN activities in particular countries. OCHA’s policy concerns in this area focus on:

- ♦ The links between relief and development;
- ♦ The development of appropriate assistance strategies during the transitional recovery phase;
- ♦ The protection and security of civilian populations, as well as humanitarian workers;
- ♦ Ensuring that gender concerns are addressed in humanitarian response;
- ♦ Considering the criteria required to designate “safe” or “protected” areas;

- ♦ Studying the humanitarian implications of the proliferation of small arms.

***Assistance to internally displaced persons***

*Part of OCHA’s policy role is to ensure that those humanitarian issues that fall between gaps in existing mandates of agencies are addressed. The Emergency Relief Coordinator is designated as focal point at the headquarters level for the inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance and protection to internally displaced persons (IDPs), for which no single agency has a comprehensive mandate. OCHA’s role is to facilitate a coordinated strategy to address IDP issues and to define a framework for collaboration and a division of labour in an effort to reinforce agencies’ mandates and avoid duplication. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement have been developed by the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs, and OCHA’s present focus is to promote their operational application. Another important role played by OCHA is the promotion of inter-agency information-sharing and debate on IDPs. Accordingly, the issue of IDPs is currently a standing item on the agenda of the IASC Working Group.*



United Nations

*Villagers help unload food to be distributed in relief operation in Bangladesh.*

## ***Advocacy***

The advocacy of humanitarian concerns has become increasingly recognized as a key activity of the humanitarian community. Its main aim is to give voice to victims and ensure that humanitarian issues and concerns are taken fully into account in all relevant forums (political, peacekeeping, developmental, human rights and humanitarian). Recent years have witnessed increasing disregard for fundamental humanitarian principles, serious violation of international humanitarian law, and threats to the safety and protection of civilians and relief personnel. They have underscored the need to enhance awareness among all involved in complex emergencies of humanitarian concerns and objectives.

OCHA acts as a humanitarian advocate, promoting greater respect for humanitarian norms and principles, as well as drawing attention to specific

humanitarian issues. These include access to affected populations, the humanitarian impact of sanctions, the plight of internally displaced persons, anti-personnel landmines and the humanitarian impact of the unchecked proliferation of small arms. In its efforts to ensure the security of humanitarian personnel, OCHA promotes appropriate measures to protect humanitarian mandates and achieve humanitarian goals in conflict situations. On natural disasters, OCHA seeks to raise awareness of and mobilize support for disaster preparedness. These efforts, made in conjunction with partner humanitarian organizations, are targeted not only at United Nations Member States and the UN political organs (such as the Security Council), but also at the media and civil society at large, including non-governmental organizations and academia.

UNICEF/Noorani



*Girl at water pump in Bangladesh.*

### ***International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), 1990-2000***

*Rapid urbanization, environmental degradation and increased industrial activities (especially when concentrated in hazard-prone areas) have increased both the impact of natural disasters and the costs of responding to them. It is estimated that the number of major natural disasters in the past 10 years was four times higher than in the 1960s. Total economic losses from natural disasters for the two years, 1995 and 1996, are estimated at US\$ 240 billion.*

*In a growing number of countries, Governments and local communities find themselves unable to cope. The only long-term, affordable solution lies in strengthening prevention and mitigation measures. The UN General Assembly proclaimed 1990-2000 as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) in order to build the world's awareness and capacity to reduce the loss of life, property damage and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters. The secretariat for the IDNDR is located in OCHA Geneva. In July 1999, 10 years of disaster reduction achievements during the IDNDR will be discussed at the substantive session of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and within an open IDNDR Programme Forum, joining partners from all sectors and disciplines who participated in the Decade.*

*These deliberations will result in a comprehensive disaster reduction strategy for the twenty-first century.*

***Building awareness.*** *An essential element of the IDNDR is advocacy for disaster prevention. The World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction (Yokohama, Japan, 23-27 May 1994) adopted the Yokohama Strategy and Plan of Action for a Safer World, which form the basis of the IDNDR's global activities (including particularly awareness-building). Information activities of the IDNDR secretariat include an annual World Disaster Reduction Campaign, culminating on the International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction (the second Wednesday of each October).*

***Worldwide Network, working together with a shared concern.*** *The IDNDR works through National Committees and Focal Points which exist in 138 countries. The IDNDR Scientific and Technical Committee is the Decade's advisory body, with 25 experts from various fields, and addresses one of the IDNDR's key concerns—the effective application of science and technology for the purpose of preventing disasters. NGOs are also active participants in the IDNDR, through the Global Forum of NGOs for Disaster Reduction. By the year 2000, the IDNDR aims for a world where national risk assessments, mitigation plans and access to warning systems are in place in all countries.*





*Returning refugees, Rwandan/Tanzanian border, December 1996.*

## **INFORMATION PLATFORMS**

OCHA provides the world with updates and analyses of humanitarian situations to ensure better understanding of humanitarian issues and concerns.

*Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRINs)*, based in the field, provide information and analyses from a regional perspective to a variety of audiences. Since 1995, IRIN/Central and East Africa, based in Nairobi, has analysed and synthesized information on developments in the Great Lakes region. IRIN expanded its geographical coverage to include West Africa and Southern Africa by establishing offices in Abidjan and Johannesburg. Together, IRIN offices issue daily and weekly reports, as well as thematic studies, for over 4,000 primary subscribers. Overall, it is estimated that these reach at least 10,000 readers around the world. It is envisaged that IRIN will expand its coverage to include Central Asia and the Caucasus region, as well as the Balkans.

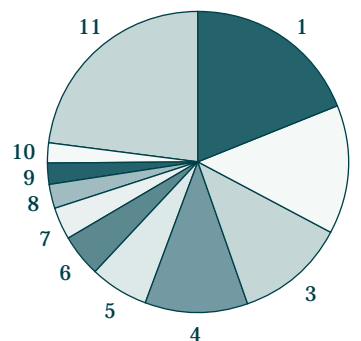
*ReliefWeb* ([www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)) is an Internet Web site, managed by OCHA. It provides up-to-date information on complex emergencies and natural disasters collected from over 170 sources. Users from over 150 countries access an average of 200,000 documents each month. ReliefWeb expanded several features to serve the information needs of the international humanitarian community. These include a map centre, a humanitarian employment bulletin board, an on-line discussion forum, an advanced search engine and a humanitarian donation database.

*OCHA On-Line* is OCHA's home Web site, providing information specific to OCHA and its work. This includes the description of OCHA (mandate, structure, contact information etc.), news from headquarters and field offices (newsletters, press releases and official statements), and policy and advocacy position papers (publications, speeches and IASC materials). OCHA On-Line is linked to ReliefWeb.

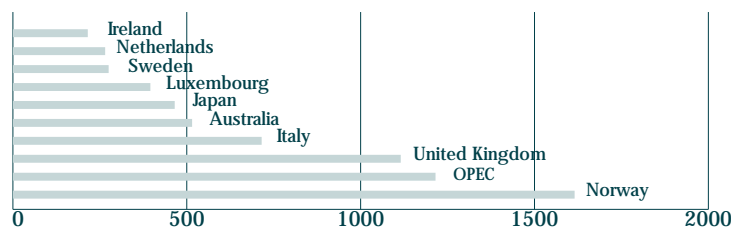
## MAJOR DONORS FOR OCHA FIELD COORDINATION ACTIVITIES IN COMPLEX EMERGENCIES IN 1997\*

1. Sweden (18.92%)	7. Canada (3.47%)
2. United States (13.84%)	8. EU/ECHO (2.59%)
3. United Kingdom (11.87%)	9. Japan (2.28%)
4. Netherlands (11.05%)	10. Australia (2.16%)
5. Norway (6.29%)	11. Others
6. Germany (4.56%)	

\*Based on the contributions to OCHA parts of 1997 CAPs



## MAJOR DONORS FOR OCHA NATURAL DISASTER ACTIVITIES IN 1997\*



\*Based on the contributions channelled through OCHA for natural disasters.

Figures in \$ thousands

## FUNDING

OCHA relies heavily on voluntary contributions from States and other donor organizations (such as the European Union). For the two years 1998 and 1999, the total amount required to fund OCHA's core activities and projects at the headquarters level is estimated at US\$ 51.3 million. This consists of US\$ 18.4 million allocated from the UN regular budget and US\$ 32.9 million in extra-budgetary requirements (US\$ 25 million for the core activities and US\$ 7.9 million for the projects for ReliefWeb, field coordination support, emergency telecommunications, military and civil defence assets, Chernobyl-related relief and environmental emergencies). For 1998 an additional US\$ 24 million was required to fund OCHA field units.

OCHA solicits voluntary contributions to support its coordination activities for specific emergency and disaster situations. For requirements in

complex emergency situations, OCHA launches a consolidated appeal, covering the financial needs of its partner humanitarian organizations as well as OCHA's own coordinating function. For the consolidated appeals for 1998, the total amount requested was US\$ 2,160 million, of which US\$ 43.9 million was for OCHA's coordination activities. As of December 1998, the overall response to the appeals was US\$ 1,061 million, of which US\$ 33 million were for OCHA's coordination activities in the field.

For natural and environmental disasters, OCHA issues an appeal for international assistance to cover immediate relief needs of a specific disaster. While most contributions are channelled bilaterally to the Government of the affected country, US\$ 11.7 million of voluntary contributions for natural disasters were channelled through OCHA in 1998.

## **STRUCTURE**

OCHA's presence in both New York and Geneva reflects the dual facets of humanitarian action.

Proximity to the political and peacekeeping components of the UN Secretariat and intergovernmental bodies, such as the Security Council and the General Assembly in New York, is vital. In New York, OCHA develops policy, carries out advocacy, collects and disseminates information and liaises with policy makers. The secretariat of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and of the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs is also based in New York.

A strong presence in Geneva to enable regular consultation and negotiation with operational agencies, and with the field, is also crucial. Geneva is the main focal point for coordination of response to natural disasters and environmental emergencies, for contingency planning and day-to-day support of the field in complex emergencies, and for the preparation of consolidated inter-agency appeals. Most of the UN humanitarian agencies, as well as major NGOs and the Red Cross movement, have their headquarters in Geneva or elsewhere in Europe.

OCHA is present in the field in 23 locations, where international and national staff serve the humanitarian effort. OCHA also benefits from expertise provided by personnel seconded from partner humanitarian agencies.

As part of the UN Secretariat, OCHA reports annually to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council (Humanitarian Segment).

### ***Inter-Agency Standing Committee***

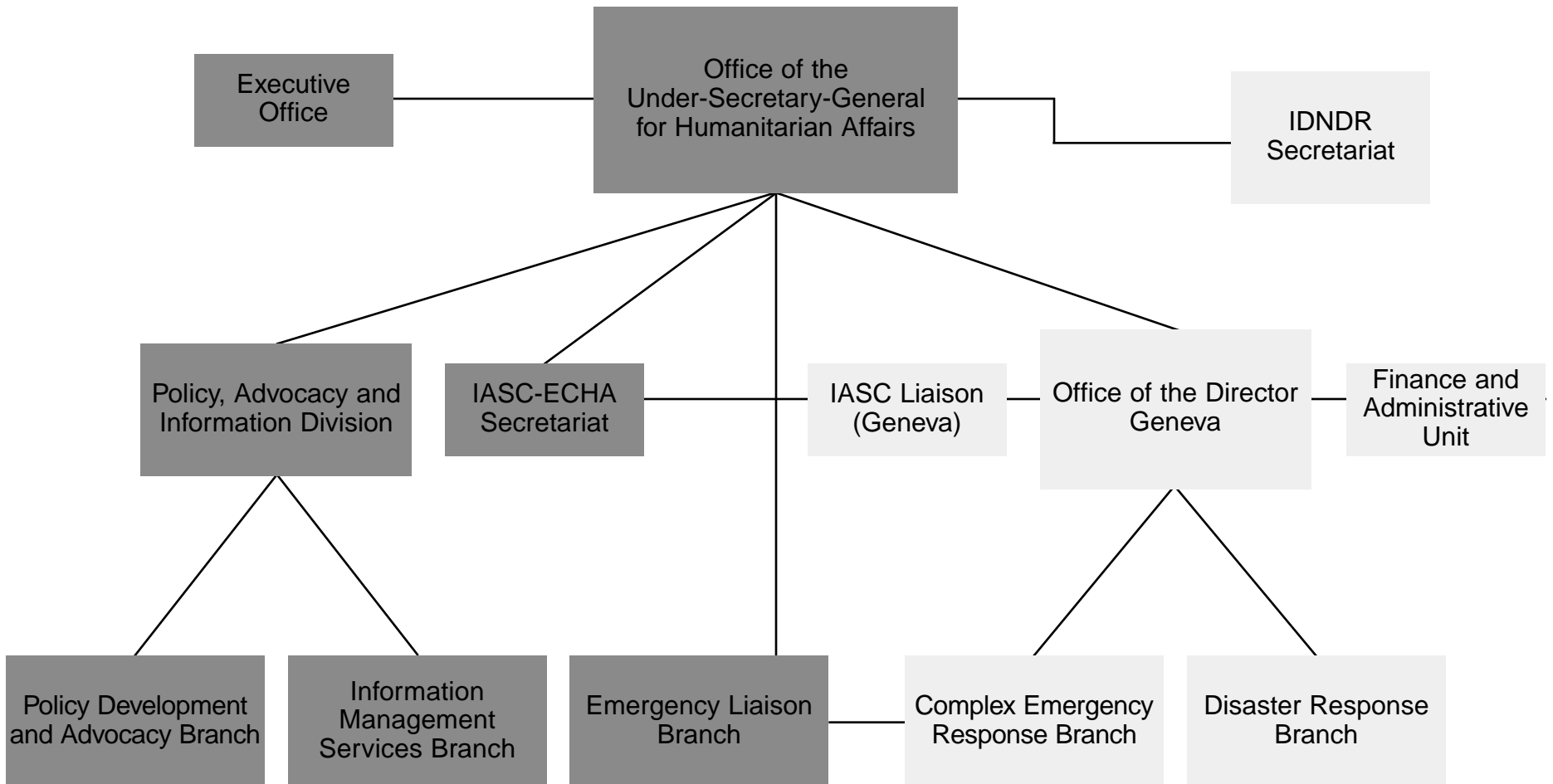
*The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the main forum for consultation and decision-making between humanitarian agencies. Its participants include:*

- ◆ *The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR);*
- ◆ *The World Food Programme (WFP);*
- ◆ *The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF);*
- ◆ *The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);*
- ◆ *The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO);*
- ◆ *The World Health Organization (WHO);*
- ◆ *The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR);*
- ◆ *The International Organization for Migration (IOM);*
- ◆ *The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC);*
- ◆ *The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC);*
- ◆ *The Secretary-General's Representative on Internally Displaced Persons;*
- ◆ *Three international NGO consortia: InterAction, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response.*



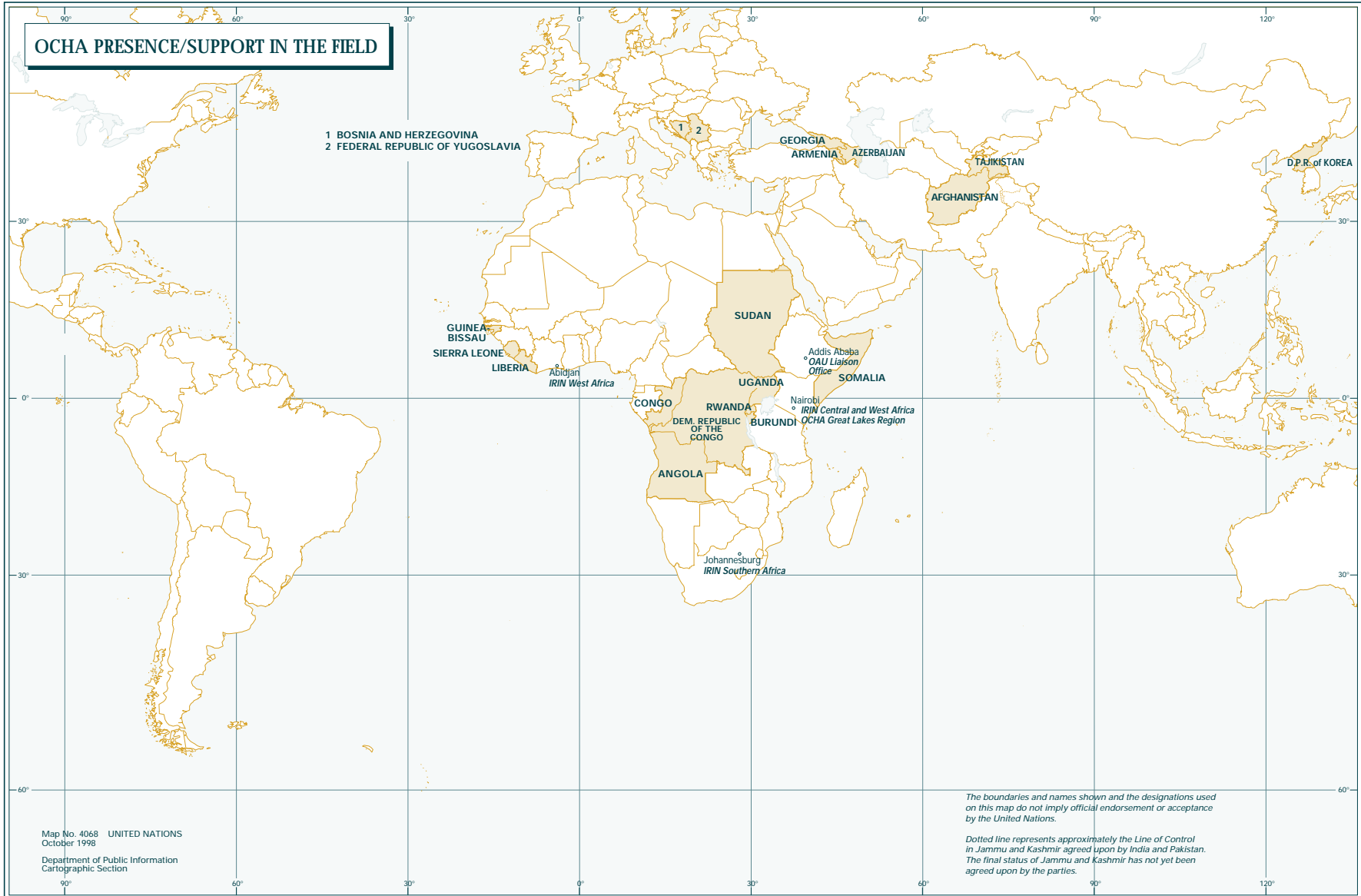
**OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS**  
*Structure at headquarters in New York and Geneva*

■ = New York  
■ = Geneva



# OCHA PRESENCE/SUPPORT IN THE FIELD

- 1 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
- 2 FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA



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### **World Wide Web**

ReliefWeb  
**[www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int)**  
for information on humanitarian activities  
as a whole

OCHA On-Line  
**[www.reliefweb.int/dha\\_ol](http://www.reliefweb.int/dha_ol)**  
for information on OCHA