



**Secretariat**

ST/SGB/Organization  
Section N/Rev.2  
29 February 1984

---

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETIN

To: Members of the staff

Subject: OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR

1. The following bulletin describes the current organizational structure and functions of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO).
2. Document ST/SGB/Organization, Section N/Rev.1 of December 1977 is hereby superseded.

Javier PEREZ DE CUELLAR  
Secretary-General



UNITED NATIONS

SECRETARIAT

ORGANIZATION MANUAL

SECTION N

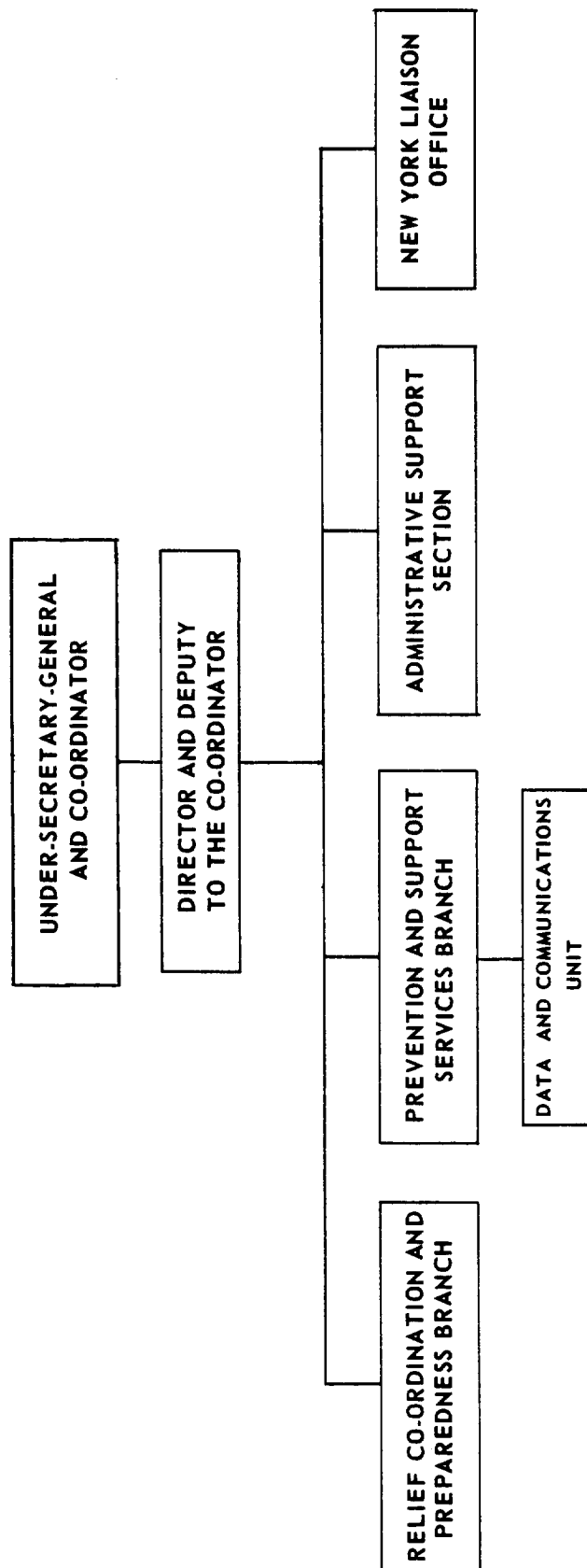
A description of the  
functions and organization of

THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S BULLETIN

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR

Organizational Structure



ST/SGB/Organization  
Section N/Rev.2  
Organizational Structure  
29 February 1984

# OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR

## I. Summary of Functions

Serves as the focal point in the United Nations system for disaster relief, preparedness and prevention matters, taking into consideration the competence of other United Nations bodies and programmes.

## II. Organizational Elements and their Functions

### UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL AND CO-ORDINATOR

Decides on the type and scale of assistance UNDRO should provide and/or request potential donors to provide on receipt of a request for assistance from the Government of a stricken country or on receipt of information that a disaster has occurred;

Issues appeals, on behalf of the Secretary-General, to potential donors to provide emergency assistance in disaster situations;

Authorizes, on behalf of the Secretary-General, emergency cash assistance to disaster-stricken countries out of the Working Capital Fund and Trust Fund established for the purpose;

Maintains contact with Governments and appropriate international and national organizations to enhance their readiness to provide relief and rehabilitation assistance to disaster-stricken countries;

Decides, on receipt of requests for assistance in certain disaster preparedness and prevention activities of Governments, whether UNDRO should provide assistance in such activities or request another organization of the United Nations system to do so, keeping in view the need for external assistance in such activities and the role of other organizations in providing assistance in them;

Apprises the Economic and Social Council and other appropriate legislative bodies of the effectiveness of the response of the international community and Governments of stricken countries to natural disasters during the period being reported on, and suggests possible ways of improving the response in future;

Oversees the planning and execution of activities undertaken by UNDRO;

Exercises, whenever called for, final authority in all financial and personnel administration matters required to be carried out by UNDRO, and finalizes, in that connection, the medium-term plan and programme budget proposals of UNDRO;

Undertakes co-ordination of external relief assistance in the stricken country, whenever possible.

#### DIRECTOR AND DEPUTY TO THE CO-ORDINATOR

Carries out the functions of the Co-ordinator in his absence;

Assists the Co-ordinator in maintaining contact with Governments and organizations;

Undertakes co-ordination of external relief assistance in stricken countries, whenever possible;

Approves the assignment of staff to relief co-ordination and other missions when such missions have been authorized by the Co-ordinator;

Arranges to obtain staff, on a voluntary basis, from other organizations of the United Nations system and interested non-governmental organizations for relief co-ordination work when the UNDRO staff cannot cope with the work-load and, in this connection, takes steps to develop a roster of volunteers;

Ensures maintenance of Headquarters support services to relief co-ordination missions, particularly when the Chief of the Relief Co-ordination and Preparedness Branch is away from Headquarters;

Conducts post-completion evaluation of disaster relief co-ordination operations with a view to improving future operations;

Co-ordinates the preparation of the programme budget and medium-term plan of UNDRO; and ensures in the process, the selection of proper assistance projects in the preparedness and prevention fields, keeping in view the role and competence of other organizations of the United Nations system in providing such assistance and the need for external assistance in such projects;

Ensures the preparation of UNDRO reports to the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and other bodies;

Oversees the performance of the personnel, general and financial administration of UNDRO and exercises the authority that may be delegated by the Co-ordinator;

Promotes economy and efficiency in the work of UNDRO and keeps under review, in that connection, the workload of and staff allocation to various activities;

Co-ordinates, as necessary, the activities of the organizational units of UNDRO and oversees their direction and supervision.

## 1. RELIEF CO-ORDINATION AND PREPAREDNESS BRANCH

Assists the Government of the disaster-stricken country, upon request, to assess its external relief needs and to evaluate the priority of those needs; communicates that information to prospective donors and others concerned; obtains and disseminates information on assistance extended or planned by all donors and issues reports on the progress of relief operations;

Mobilizes, directs and co-ordinates the provision of relief assistance agreed upon to be provided by various organization of the United Nations system and co-ordinates United Nations assistance with that given by Government and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross;

Assists donors in the shipment of supplies and materials to stricken country, as necessary;

Assists, upon request, the national authorities in the administration of relief operations and the UNDP resident representatives in the local co-ordination of United Nations assistance;

Recommends the initiation of rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance by appropriate organizations of the United Nations system towards the end of relief operations;

Undertakes post-completion evaluation of UNDRO actions in individual disaster situations and prepares case reports;

Reviews the policies, procedures and facilities of donor countries and organizations with a view to suggesting measures that would augment their readiness to provide relief assistance to stricken countries;

Provides to Governments of disaster-prone countries a check-list of actions required to improve their preparedness to cope with natural disasters, identifying the actions which they should be able to undertake on their own, those for which external assistance may be available and the organization(s) that should be approached for such assistance, along with a request for information on the progress of those actions and on the types of external assistance they might have sought or may like to seek;

Requests the competent organizations to provide such assistance and follows up on such requests;

Provides technical assistance to Governments in those preparedness activities or matters in which external assistance is needed but cannot be provided by other organizations of the United Nations system;

Organizes or promotes the organization of training seminars to augment the knowledge and skill of the personnel of disaster-prone countries in disaster relief and preparedness activities;

Collects or formulates ideas, plans, check-lists, techniques, models, information on technological developments etc. that would help disaster-prone countries to improve their rescue and relief operations as well as their preparedness actions and facilities, and publishes them in the UNDRO News;

Prepares an annual report on the contributions made by the United Nations system organizations towards disaster relief and improvement of preparedness of disaster-prone countries for submission to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

## 2. PREVENTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES BRANCH

Promotes the study, prevention, control and prediction of natural disasters, including the collection and dissemination of information concerning technological developments and, for the purpose, takes the following actions;

Analyses the types of actions required to improve the forecasting, control and warning of various kinds of disaster-causing natural phenomena and for the reduction of their impact with a view to recommending actions to Governments and identifying the United Nations agencies which would be most competent to provide assistance to Governments in activities that may require external assistance;

Provides technical assistance to Governments in those aspects of disaster prevention which do not fall within the competence of other United Nations agencies and co-operates with such agencies, when required, by leading or taking part in technical assistance missions;

Organizes or sponsors the organization of workshops, training seminars and conferences to promote the discussion, dissemination and application of new methods, skills and technologies in disaster prevention, prediction and warning;

Prepares and promotes studies on physical, social and economic effects of natural disasters;

Writes and promotes the writing of articles on disaster prevention in the UNDRO News and publishes or organizes the publication of manuals and monographs on the subject;

Manages the publication programme of UNDRO, including the publication of the UNDRO News;

Prepares an annual report on its activities as part of the annual report on UNDRO for submission to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

## DATA AND COMMUNICATIONS UNIT

Operates the UNDRO communication facilities to receive information on the occurrence of disasters and requirements for relief assistance, to convey such requirements to potential donors and to follow progress in the provision of assistance;

Maintains a partly computerized data bank containing information that would be helpful in planning and carrying out the functions and activities of UNDRO.

### 3. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SECTION

Performs, in close co-ordination with the Administrative and Financial Services, United Nations Office at Geneva, the financial, personnel and general administrative functions of UNDRO;

Maintains the accounts on voluntary contributions;

Provides mail and registry services.

### 4. NEW YORK LIAISON OFFICE

Assists in co-ordinating the activities of UNDRO with those of the Secretariat units at Headquarters and international organizations based in North and South America;

Maintains liaison with permanent missions of Member States, observer missions and non-governmental organizations at Headquarters;

Attends meetings at Headquarters and elsewhere, as necessary, on disaster-related matters and keeps the Co-ordinator informed of developments;

Provides information on the activities of UNDRO.

-----