

UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN
AFFAIRS

OCHA

Coordinating International Response to
Humanitarian Crises



Global Environment in 2008

- **25+ million in need of assistance due to conflicts**
 - Darfur, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, DRC, etc.;
- **Millions more due to current and future natural disasters,**
- **Increased severity of disasters due to environment and population pressures**
- **Risk of pandemics & environmental emergencies;**
- **Expectations for:**
 - Principled and effective UN leadership;
 - Crisis management expertise;
 - Immediate, predictable, & accountable response;
- **Broad spectrum of emergency response actors.**



- Every 3.6 seconds one person dies of starvation, usually a child under age 5.
- 270 million children have no access to health care services.
- 300 million children go to bed hungry every day - 90% suffer from long-term malnourishment and micronutrient deficiency. Only 8% are victims of famine or other emergency situations.
- 400 million children have no access to safe water or sanitation facilities, resulting in 4,000 child deaths per day.

OCHA's Mission:

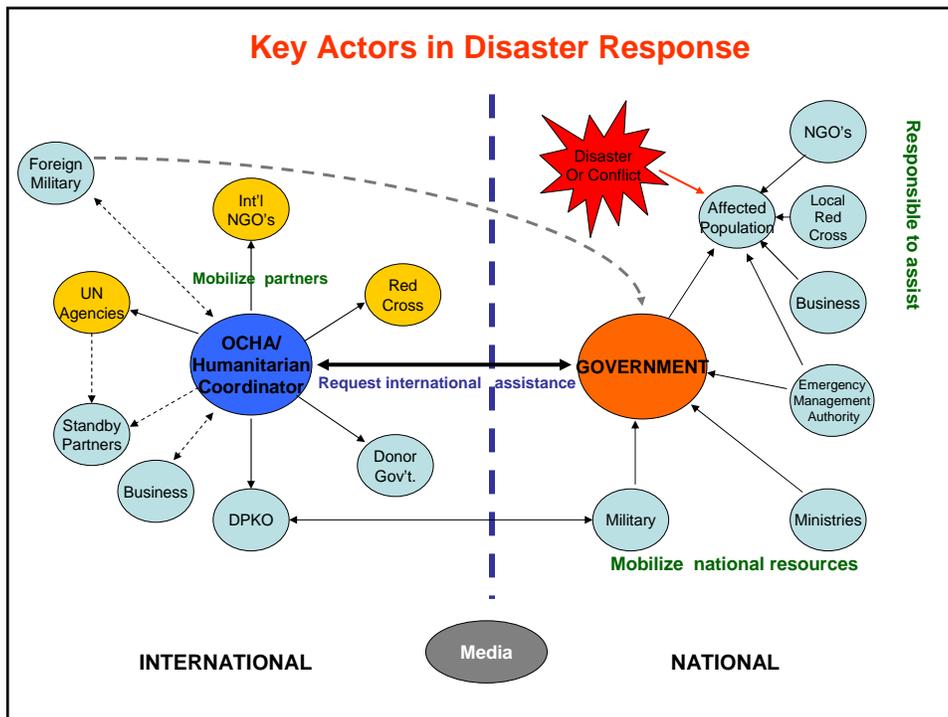
- Mobilise and coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international humanitarian actors in order to:
 - Alleviate human suffering caused by natural disasters and conflicts;
 - Advocate for the rights of people in need;
 - Promote preparedness and prevention;
- Information Management is critical to success or failure.
- OCHA is the UN-system focal point for civil-military coordination in humanitarian operations.



Humanitarian Principles



- **Humanity:** Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable in the population, such as children, women and the elderly. The dignity and rights of all victims must be respected and protected.
- **Neutrality:** Humanitarian assistance must be provided without engaging in hostilities or taking sides in controversies of a political, religious or ideological nature.
- **Impartiality:** Humanitarian assistance must be provided without discriminating as to ethnic origin, gender, nationality, political opinions, race or religion. Relief of the suffering must be guided solely by needs and priority must be given to the most urgent cases of distress.



UN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination

- **UN Definition:** The essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency, *and when appropriate, pursue common goals.*
- Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training.
 - Information sharing, Task division, Planning



Transforming Civ-Mil Environment

- Increased role of military in relief operations
 - Humanitarian missions specifically assigned to armed forces
- Multi-dimensional UN Peacekeeping Operations
 - Integrated Missions and the Integrated Mission Planning Process
- Increased emphasis on the full range of national and multilateral power
 - Diplomacy, Development, Defense, Private Corporations
- Increasing humanitarian acceptance of an appropriate military role in assistance operations



Effectiveness of Military Assistance in Disaster Relief

- Military assets can provide unique capabilities not found in the civilian humanitarian response system
- Neighboring countries first to deploy military assets
 - ✓ Proximity
 - ✓ Understanding of political, social and geographic characteristics
- Unique capability in its regional and global reach
- R & D for secondary/tertiary use technologies
- Perceived effectiveness of military assistance is largely based on speed of the deployment



US Military Capabilities

- The only single military that can fundamentally change the nature of response operation;
- Global positioning allows for rapid response;
- Primarily deploys bilaterally;
- Political/Security motivation;
- Positioned to take a leadership role in military assistance to natural disasters.



Key Challenges in Civil-Military Coordination

- Principles vs. Pragmatism
- Lack of military doctrine and training on humanitarian assistance operations;
- Timeliness and decision making;
- Appropriateness to the need;
- Efficiency of how the asset is used;
- Ability of affected nation to absorb the assets;
- Coordination between civilian humanitarian actors and the military;
- Costs





Thank You



United Nations
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

