

INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE

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# OFFICIAL BULLETIN

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## **Memorandum of Understanding between the Director-General of the International Labour Office and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator**

Whereas the General Assembly of the United Nations, by Resolution 2816 (XXVI) endorsed the Secretary-General's proposals for the establishment of an adequate permanent office in the United Nations (hereinafter referred to as "UNDRO") to be the focal point in the United Nations system for disaster relief matters and which would be headed by a Disaster Relief Co-ordinator authorised, on the Secretary-General's behalf, inter alia, to mobilise, direct and co-ordinate the relief activities of the various organisations of the United Nations system in response to a request for disaster assistance from a stricken State, and also to co-ordinate such assistance from the United Nations with that made available by other sources of aid; and to promote the study, prevention, control and prediction of natural disasters, including the collection and dissemination of information concerning technological developments, and to assist in providing advice to governments on pre-disaster planning, and

Whereas the International Labour Organisation (hereinafter referred to as "ILO") is in a position to provide advice and technical assistance in the matter of prevention of, and preparedness for, natural disasters, as well as for reconstruction and rehabilitation activities which become necessary in stricken States in the aftermath of such disasters, and

Whereas UNDRO and the ILO, having discussed, and being convinced of, the possibility and scope for their effective collaboration in providing disaster-related assistance to disaster-prone countries;

Therefore the Director-General of the ILO and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator have agreed, within the framework of the Agreement between the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation, to the following arrangements for the purposes stated herein:

### *1. General responsibilities of UNDRO and the ILO*

The ILO recognises the responsibility of UNDRO to mobilise and co-ordinate disaster emergency assistance to a stricken State, and to mobilise funds for such assistance, as well as to promote disaster preparedness and disaster prevention. It is agreed that UNDRO's role within the terms of General Assembly Resolution 2816 (XXVI) is that of an over-all co-ordinator for all aspects of disaster-related assistance. UNDRO recognises the operational responsibilities of the ILO for promoting and providing technical advice and assistance with a view to coping with emergency situations caused by the sudden occurrence of natural disasters which call for urgent relief employment and training measures and quick rehabilitation of damaged infrastructures. UNDRO recognises the ILO's technical competence in the longer-term reconstruction phase of the stricken State and the role it can play in promoting the participation of national organisations of employers and workers. UNDRO further recognises the ILO's competence in promoting activities for the prevention of disasters caused by industrial and other work-related operations, in so far as they affect workers in the course of their work.

### *2. Disaster-related activities with respect to which ILO and UNDRO will co-operate :*

- (i) UNDRO activities concern three main areas, namely disaster prevention, disaster preparedness and disaster relief co-ordination;
- (ii) the ILO will co-operate with UNDRO in these three areas, in all those fields which fall within its technical competence, namely:

- in organising labour-intensive disaster-prevention works programmes, such as erosion control works, protection against floods, etc. and, with respect to disaster preparedness, by setting procedures for quick deployment of labour for site clearance and for identifying projects for relief employment;
  - in assessing employment, training and rehabilitation needs and in identifying project possibilities and organisational requirements for launching emergency labour-intensive works schemes when a disaster situation gives rise to the need for short-term recovery measures;
  - in placing, as necessary, its specialists in the field of safety in mines, transport and civil engineering and public works at the disposal of the affected area, in case of disasters in those industries;
  - in bringing to the attention of the Building, Civil Engineering and Public Works Committee, of the International Centre for Advanced Technical and Vocational Training and of competent technical departments of the ILO any information provided by UNDRO on disaster-prevention technologies and methodologies with a view to including these, where appropriate, in respective codes or international standards and accelerated training programmes, as well as in technical assistance projects;
  - in providing UNDRO, where required, with candidatures from the PASCAN (Personnel Candidate Selection System) roster;
- (iii) with regard to the longer-term reconstruction and rehabilitation phase, the ILO will co-operate with UNDRO in such activities as vocational training, particularly in the construction, transport, civil engineering and public works fields, vocational rehabilitation of the disabled, and in developing, as necessary, the managerial abilities of small-scale industrialists, of leaders of co-operatives, and of the other economic and social sectors affected. Finally, the ILO will co-operate in organising all other activities which fall within its area of competence;
- (iv) in all disaster-related fields, the ILO undertakes to circulate to national organisations of employers and workers, as appropriate, UNDRO publications and other information on measures to mitigate the impact of disasters.

### *3. Requests for disaster relief or prevention assistance*

- (i) when the government of a disaster-stricken State makes a request to UNDRO for disaster relief or prevention assistance, this request will be regarded as having been addressed to the United Nations system in general;
- (ii) when requests for disaster relief or prevention assistance are made direct to UNDRO and include potential assistance in the fields enumerated in paragraph 2 above, UNDRO will inform the ILO of the request and of the action it proposes to take or of which it is aware;
- (iii) when requests for disaster relief or prevention assistance in the above-mentioned fields are made directly to the ILO, the ILO will inform UNDRO of the request and of the action it proposes to take or of which it is aware;
- (iv) when disaster relief or prevention assistance is being considered or provided by the ILO, UNDRO will inform the ILO of any contributions made to it, or known to have been made bilaterally to the disaster-stricken State by donors, which are liable to satisfy or modify the request made by the disaster-stricken State;
- (v) when the ILO supports, through technical advice and assistance, any disaster-prevention project in any State, UNDRO will be kept informed of the location and nature of such projects.

### *4. Disaster relief assistance involving the supply of food*

Where, either by way of disaster prevention or relief assistance, the ILO helps governments to organise labour-intensive activities through advice and technical assistance, UNDRO and the ILO will explore the possibility of obtaining World Food Programme aid, as may be needed.

## *5. ILO action with respect to requests for disaster relief assistance addressed to UNDR0*

- (i) whenever possible, action taken by the ILO in response to a request for disaster relief assistance made to UNDR0 will be based on an assessment of the disaster relief assistance requirements of the stricken State made by a United Nations Disaster Assessment Team, arranged by UNDR0, under the auspices of UNDP Resident Representatives, in which the ILO has participated;
- (ii) the action to be taken by the ILO will be determined by the ILO after consultation with UNDR0 and will be subject to the resources available to it, and as may be made available by UNDR0 and other donors.

## *6. Missions to disaster-stricken areas*

At its discretion, UNDR0 will send one or more representatives from its Headquarters to disaster areas to make an on-the-spot assessment of the situation, to effect local co-ordination of relief efforts, and to advise the government of the disaster-stricken State. Whenever warranted and practicable, one or more ILO officials, either from its Headquarters or serving in the field, will join these missions at short notice. The need for such joint missions will be determined by UNDR0 and the ILO on a case-by-case basis. If expertise not readily available on the staff of UNDR0 or of the ILO is necessary, UNDR0 and the ILO will consult each other with a view to making arrangements for the provision of this expertise to the disaster-stricken State.

## *7. Collaboration in the field*

The ILO will instruct the Directors of its Regional and Area Offices and its Country Representatives, as appropriate, to participate in the standing United Nations Disaster Teams referred to above, and to collaborate, in so far as may be practicable, in respect of other contingency measures with the UNDP Resident Representative or a responsible officer designated by him, or the UNDR0 special representative(s).

## *8. Communications*

The ILO and UNDR0 recognise that the rapid exchange of information on matters of mutual interest is of paramount importance. To this end, the ILO and UNDR0 will in such cases keep each other fully informed of any action it is taking and, in particular, will send each other copies of relevant cables and other communications as rapidly as possible.

## *9. Financial arrangements*

- (i) the direct costs and clearly identifiable administrative costs incurred by the ILO, in providing disaster relief assistance at the request of UNDR0, will be covered from funds provided by UNDR0 and made available to the ILO. Such assistance may take the form of the services of ILO staff or experts, including their travel and subsistence: the supply of goods and equipment including their shipment and insurance; and such other forms of assistance as circumstances may require;
- (ii) when funds made available to UNDR0 or to the ILO are transferred to the other party to carry out disaster relief assistance, no "overhead cost levy" will be charged by the other party. Interest on funds held by either party pending actual disbursement will be credited to the Trust Fund set up for the particular operation for which the funds are destined, in accordance with the Financial Regulations, Rules or practices of the party concerned;
- (iii) at the conclusion of each disaster relief assistance operation the ILO and UNDR0 will submit to the other party final accounts showing how the total funds made available to one party by the other have been spent. Any unspent balances will be returned to the donating party;

(iv) in addition to the accounts referred to in (iii) above, the ILO and UNDRO will, whenever practicable, submit to each other a report, to be submitted to donors, describing the action taken and results achieved by using funds originally contributed to the other party.

10. *Review of collaboration*

The Director-General of the ILO and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator or their representatives will meet from time to time in order to review and evaluate the effectiveness of their collaboration in the provision of disaster-related assistance and to evolve any improvements as may prove desirable in the light of the experience gained.

11. *Entry into force, amendment and duration*

This Memorandum of Understanding will enter into force upon its signature by the Director-General of the ILO and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator and may be amended, should need arise, by mutual agreement. It will remain in force until such time as it is terminated by mutual agreement or by one party giving the other three months' written notice of termination.

Geneva, 14 July 1977.

*(Signed):* Francis Blanchard  
*Director-General of the*  
*International Labour Office.*

*(Signed):* Faruk N. Berkol  
*Under-Secretary-General,*  
*Disaster Relief Co-ordinator,*  
*United Nations.*

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