

Glossary

of Humanitarian Terms

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS

The terms and definitions in this glossary have been compiled from existing glossaries and other reference material available to the public, with a focus on their common usage and understanding within a humanitarian context, particularly as relating to natural disasters, complex emergencies and disaster risk reduction. ReliefWeb has not created or modified any of the definitions. As such, the definitions provided do not necessarily reflect the position of the United Nations or its Member States.

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Acceleration: A change in velocity with time; in seismology and in earthquake engineering, it is expressed as a fraction of gravity (g), with reference to vibrations of the ground or of a structure. (UN DHA)

Acceptable Risk: The level of loss a society or community considers acceptable given existing social, economic, political, cultural and technical conditions.

Comment: In engineering terms, acceptable risk is also used to assess and define the structural and non-structural measures that are needed in order to reduce possible harm to people and property to some minor level, according to codes or “accepted practice” which are based on known probabilities of hazard and other factors. (UN ISDR)

Accountability: Accountability is the means by which individuals and organisations report to a recognised authority, or authorities, and are held responsible for their actions (Edwards and Hume, 1995). (ALNAP)

Adaptation: The adjustment in natural or human systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli or their effects, which moderates harm or exploits beneficial opportunities.

Comment: This definition is sourced from the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Adaptation can occur in automatic fashion, for example through market changes, or as a result of formal adaptation policies and plans. Many disaster risk reduction measures can directly contribute to better adaptation. (UN ISDR)

Advocacy: Advocacy refers in a broad sense to efforts to promote, in the domain of humanitarian aid, respect for humanitarian principles and law with a view to influencing the relevant political authorities, whether recognised governments, insurgent groups or other non-state actors. One could add ‘international, national and local assistance agencies’. (ALNAP)

Aftershock: A smaller earthquake that follows the main shock and originates close to its focus. Aftershocks generally decrease in number and magnitude over time. (UN DHA)

Agenda for Protection: A programme of action comprising six specific goals to improve the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers around the world, agreed by UNHCR and States as part of the Global Consultations process, endorsed by the Executive Committee in October 2002, and welcomed by the General Assembly. (UNHCR)

Alert: Advisory that hazard is approaching but is less imminent than implied by warning message. See also “warning”. (UN DHA)

Amnesty: A legal guarantee that exempts a person or group of persons from liability for criminal or political offences. It is contrary to international law for perpetrators of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity to be granted amnesty from criminal prosecution. [See ‘Crimes against Humanity’, ‘Genocide’ and ‘War Crimes’] (OCHA)

Arbitration: Traditional method of dispute settlement whereby the conflicting parties voluntarily seek out a single arbiter or arbitration court to arrive at a final judgement. The arbiter is an authoritative and legitimate third party, superior in strength to the parties

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to the dispute. The recommendation reached by a (neutral) arbiter is considered binding (Hamzeh, n.d.:18-19; Kleiboer, 1997:9). (+)

"...Arbitration may be...'non-binding' (where [the parties] agree only to consider it, sometimes as an aid to negotiation)... The arbitrating role of the third party is different from third-party facilitation... The essential difference [with negotiation] is that in arbitration the parties' main or only communication is with the third-party arbitrator, on whose authority they rely." (International Alert, 1996, III:53-54). (+) (FEWER)

Armed Conflict: A dispute involving the use of armed force between two or more parties. International humanitarian law distinguishes between international or non-international armed conflicts.

- **International armed conflict:** A war involving two or more States, regardless of whether declaration of war has been made or whether the parties recognize that there is a state of war.
- **Non-international armed conflict:** A conflict in which government forces are fighting with armed insurgents, or armed groups are fighting amongst themselves. (OCHA)

Armed Group: An armed non-state actor engaged in conflict and distinct from a governmental force, whose structure may range from that of a militia to rebel bandits. (OCHA)

Arms Control: Any plan, arrangement, or process, resting upon explicit or implicit international agreement, governing the numbers, types, and characteristics of weapon systems or the numerical strength, organization, equipment, deployment, or employment of armed forces. (OCHA)

Arms Embargo: A bilateral or multilateral policy prohibiting the movement of weapons into or out of a country. (OCHA)

Assessment: Assessment (and Re-Assessment): The set of activities necessary to understand a given situation, entails the collection, up-dating and analysis of data pertaining to the population of concern (needs, capacities, resources, etc.), as well as the state of infrastructure and general socio-economic conditions in a given location/area. (UNHCR)

Assistance: Aid provided to address the physical, material and legal needs of persons of concern. This may include food items, medical supplies, clothing, shelter, seeds and tools, as well as the provision of infrastructure, such as schools and roads. "Humanitarian assistance" refers to assistance provided by humanitarian organization for humanitarian purposes (i.e., non-political, non-commercial, and non-military purposes). In UNHCR practice, assistance supports and complements the achievement of protection objectives. (UNHCR)

Asylum: The granting, by a State, of protection on its territory to persons from another State who are fleeing persecution or serious danger. A person who is granted asylum may be a refugee. A person who has left her country of origin and has applied for recognition as a refugee in another country and whose request or application for refugee-status has not been finally decided by a prospective country of refuge is formally known as an asylum-seeker.

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Asylum-seekers are normally entitled to remain on the territory of the country of asylum until their claims have been decided upon and should be treated in accordance with basic human rights standards. (OCHA)

Asylum-Seeker: An asylum-seeker is an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum-seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum-seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum-seeker. (UNHCR)

Avalanche: A mass of snow sliding, tumbling, or flowing down an inclined surface. Technically, a mass of loosened snow, ice, and/or earth suddenly and swiftly sliding down a mountain. In practice, assumed to be a snow avalanche unless another term such as ice, rock, mud, etc. is used. (Avalanche-center.org) (ISDR)

Bilateral Aid/ Assistance: Aid that is controlled and spent by donor countries at their own discretion. It may include staff, supplies, equipment, funding to receipt governments and funding to NGOs. It also includes assistance channelled as earmarked funding through international and UN organisations. (DI)

Biological Disaster: Disaster caused by the exposure of living organisms to germs and toxic substances. (UN DHA)

Biological Hazard: Processes of organic origin or those conveyed by biological vectors, including exposure to pathogenic micro-organisms, toxins and bioactive substances, which may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.

Comment: Examples of biological hazards include outbreaks of epidemic diseases, plant or animal contagion, insect or other animal plagues and extensive infestations. (ISDR)

Biological Weapons: A weapon of mass destruction based on pathogenic biological agents. It may include ammunition loaded with biological agents (e.g. missile warheads, bombs, tube or rocket artillery ammunition) and their delivery systems.

Biological warfare is the intentional use of disease-causing micro-organisms or other entities that can replicate themselves (e.g. viruses, infectious nucleic acids and prions) against humans, animals or plants for hostile purposes. It may also involve the use of toxins: poisonous substances produced by living organisms, including micro-organisms (e.g. botulinum toxin), plants (e.g. ricin derived from castor beans) and animals (e.g. snake venom). If they are utilized for warfare purpose, the synthetically manufactured counterparts of these toxins are biological weapons. (OCHA)

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Capacity: A combination of all the strengths and resources available within a community, society or organization that can reduce the level of risk, or the effects of a disaster.

Comment: Capacity may include physical means, institutional abilities, societal infrastructure as well as human skills or collective attributes such as leadership and management. Capacity also may be described as capability. (ISDR)

Capacity Building: A process by which individuals, institutions and societies develop abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve their goals. (UNHCR)

Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF): The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is a trust fund with a grant element of up to US\$ 450 million and loan facility of US\$ 50 million. It was officially launched in New York on 9 March 2006 by the United Nations Secretary-General. In December 2005 the General Assembly decided to upgrade the Central Emergency Revolving Fund (a loan facility of US\$50 million established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1991 under resolution 46/182) by adding the grant element thereby establishing the current CERF.

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator manages up to US\$ 500 million, including a loan facility of US\$50 million and the newly created grant facility of up to US\$ 450 million.

The grant facility of CERF has two components:

- Rapid response grants to promote early action and response to reduce loss of life and to enhance response to time-critical requirements; and
- Underfunded emergency grants to strengthen core elements of humanitarian response in underfunded crises.

CERF is funded by voluntary contributions from around the world and intended to complement existing humanitarian funding mechanisms. CERF provides seed funds to jump-start critical operations and life-saving programmes not yet funded through other sources. (CERF)

Chemical Accident: Accidental release occurring during the production, transportation or handling of hazardous chemical substances. (UN DHA)

Chemical Weapons: As defined by Article II of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction:

“Chemical Weapons” means the following, together or separately:

- (a) Toxic chemicals and their precursors, except where intended for purposes not prohibited under this Convention, as long as the types and quantities are consistent with such purposes;

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(b) Munitions and devices, specifically designed to cause death or other harm through the toxic properties of those toxic chemicals specified in subparagraph (a), which would be released as a result of the employment of such munitions and devices;

(c) Any equipment specifically designed for use directly in connection with the employment of munitions and devices specified in subparagraph (b). (OCHA)

Child Soldier: For the purposes of prevention, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, a child soldier is any person under 18 years of age who is compulsorily, forcibly, or voluntarily recruited or used in hostilities by any kind of armed forces or groups in any capacity, including but not limited to soldiers, cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, refer exclusively to a child who is carrying or has carried arms. [See 'Recruitment' and 'DDR(R)'] (OCHA)

Civil Defence: The system of measures, usually run by a governmental agency, to protect the civilian population in wartime, to respond to disasters, and to prevent and mitigate the consequences of major emergencies in peacetime. The term "civil defence" is now used increasingly. (UN DHA)

Civil Military Coordination (CMCoord): The 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. Basic strategies range from coexistence to cooperation. Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training. (OCHA)

Civil Society: Refers to structures independent from governments such as non governmental organizations and human rights groups, independent activists and human rights defenders, religious congregations, charities, universities, trade unions, legal associations, families and clans. Domestic civil society represents one of the most critical sources of humanitarian assistance and civilian protection during humanitarian emergencies. (OCHA)

Civil War: Large-scale armed conflict within one country fought either between the regime in power and challengers or, in failing states with no recognised authority, between warlords or communal groups (Weiss & Collins, 1996:217; Licklider, 1993:9). There are two basic variants of civil wars: i) when the control of the state is the source of contest; ii) when one part of the population wants to form a new state or join a neighbouring state. Civil wars can be triggered by external factors (proxy wars). Most often they are the result of intra-elite conflicts. Most civil wars involve more than one element of the following: i) Secessionist civil war; ii) Revolutionary guerrilla war; iii) Conflicts between military and civilian authorities (including police vs. military); iv) Criminal gang wars, among themselves and against the state; v) Terrorist campaigns; vi) Religious sects and fundamentalist movements; vii) Genocidal campaigns against, and ethnic cleansing of, minorities; viii) Conflict between the state and (sectors of) society; xi) Conflicts between two peoples or nations for control of one territory; x) Conflicts between factions of parties or armed forces (warlordism); xi) Conflicts between religious groups, ethnic communal groups, linguistic groups, tribes or clans; xii) Wars between nomadic peoples and sedentary people; xiii) Clashes between immigrants and natives. (FEWER)

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Civilian Personnel: UN non-military staff members who form part of a peacekeeping operation and perform duties, among other things, relating to the human rights, humanitarian or political situation on the ground, and the financial and administrative management of a mission. (OCHA)

Civilian Populations: Groups of unarmed people, including women, children, the sick and elderly, refugees and internally displaced persons, who are not directly engaged in the armed conflict. (OCHA)

Climate Change: (a) The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines climate change as “a change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties, and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer. Climate change may be due to natural internal processes or external forcings, or to persistent anthropogenic changes in the composition of the atmosphere or in land use”.

(b) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as “a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods”.

Comment: For disaster reduction purposes, either of these definitions may be suitable, depending on the particular context. The UNFCCC definition is the more restricted one as it excludes climate changes attributable to natural causes. The IPCC definition can be paraphrased for popular communications as “A change in the climate that persists for decades, arising from either natural causes or human activity.” (ISDR)

Closed Camp: A camp, which is no longer receiving new refugees. (UNHCR)

Cluster: A “cluster” is essentially a “sectoral group” and there should be no differentiation between the two in terms of their objectives and activities; the aim of filling gaps and ensuring adequate preparedness and response should be the same. (IASC)

Cluster Approach: The Cluster Approach aims to strengthen humanitarian response capacity and effectiveness in five key ways: i) ensuring sufficient global capacity is built up and maintained in key gap sectors/areas of response; ii) identifying predictable leadership in the gap sectors/areas of response; iii) facilitating partnerships and improved inter-agency complementarity by maximizing resources; iv) strengthening accountability; and 5) improving strategic field-level coordination and prioritization in specific sectors/areas of response by placing responsibility for leadership and coordination of these issues with the competent operational agency. (IASC)

Cluster Bombs: Canisters containing numerous small explosive devices or submunitions (bomblets, grenades, anti-personnel or anti-vehicle mines) that open in mid-air, scattering tiny shards of steel over a wide area. The explosives may be delivered by aircraft, rocket, or by artillery projectiles. Depending on the type, the sub munitions are activated by an internal fuse, and can detonate above ground, at impact, or in a delayed mode. The failure rate for cluster munitions has been placed between 5%-30%. Failed munitions remain on the ground and may explode with the slightest touch, when picked up, stepped on or kicked. These

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munitions become less stable and therefore more dangerous with each passing year. (OCHA)

Cluster Leads: A “cluster lead” is an agency/organization that formally commits to take on a leadership role within the international humanitarian community in a particular sector/area of activity, to ensure adequate response and high standards of predictability, accountability & partnership. (IASC)

CNN Factor: Alleged emotional influence of massive and direct television coverage and consequent mass public pressure on governmental decision-making in humanitarian emergency situations (“CNN got us into Somalia, and CNN got us out”). Informed observers tend to challenge this view and hold that media follow government policy steps rather than the other way round (Leitenberg, 1997:16). (FEWER)

Code of Conduct: A common set of principles or standards that a group of agencies or organizations have agreed to abide by while providing assistance in response to Complex Emergencies or Natural Disasters. For example, the Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations in Disaster Response Programmes, and the IASC Core Principles of a Code of Conduct for Protection from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. (OCHA)

Coercion: The use of force, or the threat of force, to persuade an opponent to adopt a certain pattern of behaviour that is against their wishes. (OCHA)

Co-Existence: A situation of general tolerance between communities after the cessation of hostilities and before reconciliation. Initiatives related to the co-existence approach include peace education, sustainable community development, the socio-economic empowerment of refugees, the reintegration of child soldiers and partnership development. (UNHCR)

Cold Wave: Marked cooling of the air, or the invasion of very warm air, over a large area; it usually lasts from a few days to a few weeks. This is a drop of atmospheric average temperature well above the averages of a region, with effects on human populations, crops, properties and services. (GLIDE)

Combatant: A person who takes an active part in hostilities, who can kill, and who, in turn, is a lawful military target. S/he can be a member of the armed forces, other than medical personnel and chaplains, or of an organized group. Under international humanitarian law, armed forces are subject to an internal disciplinary system, which, inter alia, must enforce compliance with the rules of international law applicable to armed conflict. (OCHA)

Common Country Assessment (CCA): The common instrument of the United Nations to analyze the development situation in a certain country and identify key national development issues in the context of both the Millennium Development Goals and other commitments, goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration, international conferences, summits, conventions and human rights instruments. (UNHCR)

Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP): The CHAP is a strategic plan for humanitarian response in a given country or region and includes the following elements:

- A common analysis of the context in which humanitarian action takes place;

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- An assessment of needs;
- Best, worst, and most likely scenarios;
- Stakeholder analysis, i.e. who does what and where;
- A clear statement of longer-term objectives and goals;
- Prioritised response plans; and
- A framework for monitoring the strategy and revising it if necessary. (FTS Glossary)

Community-Based Approach: Community-based approach motivates women, girls, boys and men in the community to participate in a process which allows them to express their needs and to decide their own future with a view to their empowerment. It requires recognition that they are active participants in decision-making. It also seeks to understand the community's concerns and priorities, mobilizing community members and engaging them in protection and programming. The focus is on helping refugees organize themselves to solve their own problems. The role of UNHCR is to support the building, rebuilding and strengthening of communities' capacities to respond to protection risks and to make decisions over access to and use of resources. Participatory assessment is carried out in the spirit of shared responsibility for enhancing protection of all members of the community and is an essential component of community-based work. (UNHCR Technical Glossary)

Complex Emergency: A multifaceted humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires a multi-sectoral, international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country programme. Such emergencies have, in particular, a devastating effect on children and women, and call for a complex range of responses. (OCHA)

Conciliation: A process or method of helping the parties to a conflict to reach agreement. (OCHA)

Conflict: "A social factual situation in which at least two parties (individuals, groups, states) are involved, and who: i) strive for goals which are incompatible to begin with or strive for the same goal, which, can only be reached by one party; and/or ii) want to employ incompatible means to achieve a certain goal." (Wasmuth, 1996:180- 181). (FEWER)

Conflict Analysis: Identification and comparison of positions, values, aims, issues, interests, and needs of conflict parties. (International Alert, 1996, III:16). (FEWER)

Conflict Prevention: Measures to avert violent conflict and put in place the means to resolve future disputes non-violently. Strategies for prevention fall into two categories: operational prevention, which refers to measures applicable in the face of immediate crisis, and structural prevention, which consists of longer term measures to ensure that crises do not arise in the first place or, if they do, that they do not recur. These activities are generally conducted under Chapter VI of the UN Charter, and include preventative deployments of forces, fact-finding missions, consultations, warnings, inspections and monitoring. (OCHA)

Conflict Resolution: The resolution of conflict usually by conciliation. Contingency Planning: A management tool used to ensure that adequate arrangements are made in anticipation of a crisis. This is achieved primarily through engagement in a planning process leading to a plan of action, together with follow-up actions. (OCHA)

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Conflict Transformation: Conflict transformation can take the following forms (Väyrynen, 1991:4-6; cit Spencer & Spencer, 1995: 163-164): i) Actor transformation: internal changes in major conflict parties, or the emergence and recognition of new actors; ii) Issue transformation: a change in the political agenda of the conflict, downplaying the importance of original conflict issues and emphasising shared concern for new issues; iii) Rule transformation: a redefinition of the norms actors are expected to observe when dealing with each other; iv) Structural transformation: profound changes relating to the entire structure of inter-actor relations. (FEWER)

Consolidated Appeal: A reference document on the humanitarian strategy, programme and funding requirements in response to a major or complex emergency. (FTS Glossary)

Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP): The Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) is a tool used by aid organisations to plan, coordinate, fund, implement and monitor their activities, in major sudden onset and/or complex emergencies that require a system wide humanitarian response. As a planning and programming tool, the CAP contributes significantly to developing a more thoughtful approach to humanitarian action.

As a coordination mechanism, the CAP fosters closer cooperation between host governments, donors, and aid agencies such as NGOs, the Red Cross movement, IOM and UN agencies. Working together in the world's crisis regions, they produce a Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) and an appeal for funds. (CAP FAQ www.humanitarianappeal.net)

Contingency Planning: A management tool used to ensure that adequate arrangements are made in anticipation of a crisis. This is achieved primarily through engagement in a planning process leading to a plan of action, together with follow-up actions. (OCHA)

Conventions: Formal international agreements among nations (to which states become party), which create binding legal obligations. Such agreements may have different names: treaty, convention, covenant, or pact. Conventions are one of two main types of UN human rights instruments, the other being UN standards. (UNHCR)

Coping Capacity: The ability of people or organizations, using available resources and skills, to face and manage adverse conditions that potentially could lead to a disaster.

Comment: In general, this ability involves awareness, resources and good management both in normal times as well as during crises or adverse conditions. The strengthening of coping capacities is a means to build resilience to the effects of natural and human-induced hazards. (ISDR)

Crimes against Humanity: The Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court holds that acts including, murder, rape, torture, enslavement, enforced disappearances and other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health, when committed as part of a widespread or systemic attack directed against any civilian population. These crimes are reinforced by treaties and customary international law. (OCHA)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Critical Facilities: The major physical structures or facilities which are socially, economically or operationally essential to a society's functioning, both in general as well as in the extreme circumstances of an emergency.

Comment: Critical facilities include such things as roads, railways, bridges, air and sea ports, electricity and water supplies, communications systems, hospitals, public administration centres, and police stations. (ISDR)

Crop Failure: Abnormal reduction in crop yield such that it is insufficient to meet the nutritional or economic needs of the community. (UN DHA)

Customary International Law: International norms derived from a general and consistent practice of States followed by them out of a sense of legal obligation (*opinio juris*), rather than from formal expression in a treaty or legal text. Despite not being written, such norms are legally binding on all States with the exception of States who are 'persistent objectors'. (OCHA)

Cyclone: A large-scale closed circulation system in the atmosphere with low barometric pressure and strong winds that rotate counter clockwise in the northern hemisphere and clockwise in the southern hemisphere. The system is referred to as a cyclone in the Indian Ocean and South Pacific, hurricane in the western Atlantic and eastern Pacific and typhoon in the western Pacific. (UN DHA)

Damage Classification: Evaluation and recording of damage to structures, facilities, or objects according to three (or more) categories:

1. "severe damage" which precludes further use of the structure, facility, or object for its intended purpose.
2. "moderate damage" or the degree of damage to principal members, which precludes effective use of the structure, facility, or object for its intended purpose, unless major repairs are made short of complete reconstruction.
3. "light damage" such as broken windows, slight damage to roofing and siding, interior partitions blown down, and cracked walls; the damage is not severe enough to preclude use of the installation for the purpose for which was intended. (UN DHA)

Days of Immunization: A specified period of ceasefire agreed upon by parties to an armed conflict during which humanitarian agencies are granted access to immunize civilian populations. (OCHA)

Days of Tranquillity: A specified period of ceasefire agreed upon by parties to an armed conflict during which humanitarian agencies are granted access to assess the needs of and provide life-saving assistance to civilian populations. (OCHA)

DDR(R): Programmes to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants in a peacekeeping context as part of a peace process, which usually include the following components:

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

- **Disarmament:** The collection, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. It includes the development of responsible arms management programmes.
- **Demobilization:** The process by which armed forces (government and/or opposition or factional forces) either downsize or completely disband, as part of a broader transformation from war to peace. Typically, demobilization involves the assembly, quartering, disarmament, administration and discharge of former combatants, who may receive some form of compensation and other assistance to encourage their transition to civilian life.
- **Reintegration:** Assistance measures provided to former combatants that would increase the potential for their and their families', economic and social reintegration into civil society. Reintegration programmes could include cash assistance or compensation in kind, as well as vocational training and income-generating activities.
- **Resettlement:** The settlement of ex-combatants in locations within their country of origin or to a third country.
- **Repatriation:** The return of ex-combatants to their country of origin.
- **Rehabilitation:** The treatment through psychosocial counselling and other programs of ex-combatants, most typically ex-child soldiers, who have been traumatized by war to assist them in resuming a more normal life. (OCHA)

Declaration of Disaster: Official issuance of a state of emergency upon the occurrence of a large-scale calamity, in order to activate measures aimed at the reduction of the disaster's impact. (UN DHA)

Development Assistance for Refugees (DAR): A programming approach which aims to promote the inclusion of refugees and host communities in development agendas through additional development assistance to improve burden-sharing with countries hosting a large number of refugees and to promote a better quality of life and self-reliance for refugees pending durable solutions and an improved standard of living for refugee-hosting communities. (UNHCR)

Development through Local Integration (DLI): a programming approach applied in protracted refugee situations where the state opts to provide opportunities for the gradual integration of refugees. It is based on the understanding that those refugees who are unable to repatriate and are willing to integrate locally will find a solution to their plight in their country of asylum. DLI is achieved through the inclusion of refugees in development plans. (UNHCR)

Diplomacy: "The conduct of international relations by negotiation rather than by force, propaganda, or recourse to law, and by other peaceful means (such as gathering information or engendering goodwill) which are either directly or indirectly designed to promote negotiation... Diplomacy is an activity which is regulated by custom and by law, though flexibility remains one of its vital features" (Berridge, 1995:1). (FEWER)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Disaster: A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.

Comment: Disasters are often described as a result of the combination of a natural hazard, the conditions of vulnerability, and insufficient capacity or measures to reduce or cope with the potential negative consequences. A disaster also may be seen as an outcome of the “risk process”, the interactions of the above three factors over time that lead to the development of disaster risks and the expression of that risk through disaster events. (ISDR)

Disaster Legislation: The body of laws and regulations that govern and designate responsibility for disaster management concerning the various phases of disaster. (UN DHA)

Disaster Management: Comprehensive approach and activities to reduce the adverse impacts of disasters. (UN DHA)

Disaster Mitigation: A set of measures to reduce or neutralize the impact of natural hazards by reducing social, functional, or physical vulnerability. (CRID)

Disaster Preparedness: The organization, education, and training of the population and all relevant institutions to facilitate effective control, early warning, evacuation, rescue, relief and assistance operations in the event of a disaster or emergency. (CRID)

Disaster Prevention: The elimination or reduction of the likelihood that natural events may endanger human beings, their goods, their social assets, or their environment. (CRID)

Disaster Response: A sum of decisions and actions taken during and after disaster, including immediate relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. (UN DHA)

Disaster Risk: The magnitude of potential disaster losses, in lives, livelihoods and assets, which could occur to a particular community or group, arising from their exposure to possible future hazard events and their vulnerability to these hazards.

Comment: The concept of disaster risk shifts the viewpoint from disasters as events randomly affecting places, to that of negative potential conditions continuously affecting all areas. Disaster risk encompasses several different types of potential losses – in lives, livelihoods and financial and other assets – and is often difficult to quantify. Nevertheless, with knowledge of the prevailing hazards and the patterns of population and socio-economic development, it can be assessed and mapped, in broad terms at least, and the factors contributing to the risks can be made subject to public and private risk-reducing actions. (ISDR)

Disaster Risk Management: The systematic process of using administrative decisions, organization, operational skills and capacities to implement policies, strategies and coping capacities of the society and communities to lessen the impacts of natural hazards and related environmental and technological disasters. This comprises all forms of activities, including structural and non-structural measures to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) adverse effects of hazards.

Comment: This comprises all forms of activities, including structural and non-structural

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

measures to avoid (prevention) or to limit (mitigation and preparedness) adverse effects of hazards. (ISDR)

Disaster Risk Reduction: Action taken to reduce the risk of disasters and the adverse impacts of natural hazards, through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causes of disasters, including through avoidance of hazards, reduced social and economic vulnerability to hazards, and improved preparedness for adverse events.

Comment: A comprehensive approach to reduce the risks of disasters is set out in the United Nations-endorsed Hyogo Framework for Action. Its five priorities for action cover the following elements: (i) the necessary institutional basis for implementing disaster risk reduction, (ii) risk assessment and early warning, (iii) knowledge, innovation and education, (iv) reduction of the underlying risk factors, (v) preparedness for response. The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction system provides a vehicle for cooperation by Governments, organisations and civil society actors toward achieving the Hyogo Framework for Action's expected outcome, namely "The substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries." Note that while the term "disaster reduction" is often used, the term "disaster risk reduction" provides a better recognition of the ongoing risk of adverse events and the ongoing potential to reduce these risks. (ISDR)

Disaster Risk Reduction Plans: Formal documents that set out authorities' goals for disaster risk reduction together with related sequences of actions to accomplish stated objectives towards these goals.

Comment: The development of such plans should be guided by the Hyogo Framework and should be considered and coordinated within respective development plans, resource allocations and activities. Disaster risk reduction plans need to be specific to each level of government responsibility, and to the different geographical circumstances. (ISDR)

Disaster Team: Multidisciplinary, multisectoral group of persons qualified to evaluate a disaster and to bring the necessary relief. (UN DHA)

Disease Control: All policies, precautions and measures taken to prevent the outbreak or spread of communicable diseases. (UN DHA)

Displacement: Forcible or voluntary uprooting of persons from their homes by violent conflicts, gross violations of human rights and other traumatic events, or threats thereof. Persons who remain within the borders of their own country are known as internally displaced persons. Persons who are forced to flee outside the borders of their state of nationality or residence for reasons based on a well-founded fear of persecution on the grounds identified in the 1951 Refugee Convention or to flee conflict in the case of States Parties to the 1969 OAU Convention or 1984 Cartagena Declaration on Refugees are known as refugees. (OCHA)

Drought: Pronounced absence or marked deficiency of precipitation. (GLIDE)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Dry Spell: Period of abnormally dry weather. Use of the term should be confined to conditions less severe than those of a drought. (UN DHA)

Dust Storm (Sand Storm): Dust (sand) energetically lifted to great heights by strong and turbulent winds. (UN DHA)

Early Action: Often used in conjunction with 'early warning', the term refers to either 'preventive action' or 'early response action'. "Processes of consultation, policy making, planning, and action to reduce or avoid armed conflict. These processes include: i) diplomatic/political; ii) military/security; iii) humanitarian; and iv) development/ economic activity." (Diller, 1997:7). (FEWER)

Early Warning: The provision of timely and effective information, through identified institutions, that allows individuals exposed to a hazard to take action to avoid or reduce their risk and prepare for effective response. (ISDR)

Early Warning System: The set of capacities needed to provide timely and meaningful information to enable individuals and communities threatened by hazards to act in sufficient time and in an appropriate manner to reduce the possibility of personal injury, loss of life and livelihoods, damage to property and the environment, and to prepare for effective response.

Comment: This definition encompasses the factors that lead to effective response. A people-centred early warning system necessarily comprises four key elements - knowledge of the risks, monitoring and analysis of the hazards, communication or dissemination of alerts and warnings, and local capabilities to respond to the warnings received. (ISDR)

Earth Flow: A mass movement characterized by down slope translation of loose material. (UN DHA)

Earthquake: A shaking or trembling of the earth that is volcanic or tectonic in origin causing any type of damage or negative effect on communities or properties. (GLIDE)

Earthquake Swarm: A series of minor earth tremors (none of which may be identified as the main shock) that occurs within a limited area and time. (UN DHA)

El Niño: An anomalous warming of ocean water resulting from the oscillation of a current in the South Pacific, usually accompanied by heavy rainfall in the coastal region of Peru and Chile, and reduction of rainfall in equatorial Africa and Australia. (UN DHA)

Emergency: A sudden and usually unforeseen event that calls for immediate measures to minimize its adverse consequences. (UN DHA)

Emergency Management: The organization and management of resources and responsibilities for addressing all aspects of emergencies, in particular preparedness, response and rehabilitation.

Comment: Emergency management involves plans and institutional arrangements to engage and guide the efforts of government, voluntary and private agencies in a comprehensive and coordinated way to respond to the whole spectrum of emergency needs. This is also known as disaster management. (ISDR)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Emergency Relief: The immediate survival assistance to the victims of crisis and violent conflict. Most relief operations are initiated on short notice and have a short implementation period (project objectives are generally completed within a year). The main purpose of emergency relief is to save lives. (UNHCR)

Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC): The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs also carries the title of Emergency Relief Coordinator. In this role, the ERC coordinates the international response to humanitarian emergencies and disasters. (OCHA)

Emergency Response Fund (ERF): An ERF is an OCHA-managed fund usually set up with contributions from more than one government donor. ERFs aim to provide rapid and flexible funding to in-country actors to address urgent and unforeseen humanitarian needs, i.e., they tend to fund projects that are not in the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) or its equivalent because they respond to needs that could not have been predicted in advance. However, projects are expected to be in line with the objectives of the Common Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) or its equivalent. They mainly fund NGOs though some ERFs have financed UN agencies as well. The mechanism has been in use since 1997, when one was first established in Angola. (OCHA/ DI)

Emergency Services: Emergency services are the set of specialized agencies that have specific responsibilities and objectives in serving and protecting people and property in emergency situations.

Comment: Emergency services include agencies such as the Police, Fire Service, medical and ambulance units, Red Cross and Red Crescent, and relevant voluntary organizations. (ISDR)

Empowerment: A process/phenomenon that allows people to take greater control over the decisions, assets, policies, processes and institutions that affect their lives. (UNHCR)

Enclosed Camp: A refugee camp which is physically surrounded by a fence. (UNHCR)

Entry into Force: When the treaty or convention becomes a functioning and enforceable legal document. A convention only “enters into force” after the required number of ratifications (by states) has been received. (UNHCR)

Environmental Degradation: The reduction of the capacity of the environment to meet social and ecological objectives and needs.

Comment: Degradation of the environment can alter the frequency and intensity of natural hazards and increase vulnerability of communities. The sources of degradation are varied, and include land misuse, soil loss, desertification, wildland fires, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, mangrove destruction, land, water and air pollution, climate change, sea level rise and ozone depletion. (ISDR)

Environmental Impact Assessment: Process by which the environmental consequences of a proposed project or programme are evaluated and alternatives are analyzed, undertaken as an integral part of planning and decision-making processes.

Comment: Environmental impact assessment (EIA) is a policy tool that provides evidence

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

and analysis of environmental impacts of activities from conception to decision-making. It is utilized extensively in national programming and for international development assistance projects. An EIA must include a detailed risk assessment and provide alternatives, solutions or options to deal with identified problems. (ISDR)

Epicentre: That point on the earth's surface directly above the place of origin (i.e., focus or hypocenter) of an earthquake. (UN DHA)

Epidemic(s): Affecting or tending to affect a disproportionately large number of individuals within a population, community, or region at the same time. Non-pandemic disease attacking many individuals in a same community during short terms (days, weeks, months maximum), such as cholera, typhoid, bubonic plague, etc. (GLIDE)

Ethnic Cleansing: Refers to the practice of an ethnic group in military control of a territory seeking to remove members of other ethnic groups through tactics intended to instill a sense of fear, including random or selective killings, sexual assaults, confiscation or destruction of property in order to create ethnically pure enclaves for members of their group. (OCHA)

Evaluation: A systematic and objective analysis and assessment of the organization's policies, programmes, practices, partnerships and procedures, focused on planning, design, implementation and impacts. (UNHCR)

Executive Committee on Humanitarian Assistance (ECHA): One of the four Committees created by the Secretary-General in 1997 in the framework of the UN reform with the aim of enhancing the coordination between UN agencies in various fields. Chaired by the Under-Secretary-General for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs / Emergency Relief Coordinator and composed of executives at the highest level, ECHA meets on a monthly basis in New York. (OCHA)

Extra-Tropical Cyclone: Low-pressure system which develops in latitudes outside the tropics. (GLIDE)

Explosive Remnants of War (ERW): A collective term for explosive devices left after a period of conflict. ERW have been divided into four major threat areas: (OCHA)

- mines and unexploded ordnance contamination on the ground
- abandoned armoured fighting vehicles
- small arms and light weapons, including limited ammunition and explosives in the possession of civilians and non-State actors, and/or
- abandoned and/or damaged/disrupted stockpiles of ammunition and explosives

Family Reunification: The process of bringing together families, particularly children and elderly dependents with previous care-providers for the purpose of establishing or re-establishing long-term care. Separation of families occurs most often during armed conflicts or massive displacements of people. (OCHA)

Famine: A catastrophic food shortage affecting large numbers of people due to climatic, environmental and socio-economic reasons. (UN DHA)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Financial Tracking Service (FTS): A web-based, searchable contributions tracking system which reflects all humanitarian funding reported to OCHA. Includes contributions to Consolidated Appeals, natural disasters, and all other humanitarian aid as reported to OCHA. In-kind contributions, with a dollar value reported by the donor or recipient entity, are also recorded. (FTS Glossary)

Fire: A destructive burning (as of a building). Include in this category urban, industrial or rural fires, but not including wild (forest) fires. Limited to those induced or highly connected to natural phenomena, such as electrical storms, earthquakes, droughts, etc. (GLIDE)

First Aid: The immediate but temporary care given on site to the victims of an accident or sudden illness in order to avert complications, lessen suffering, and sustain life until competent services or a physician can be obtained. (UN DHA)

Flash Appeal: The Flash Appeal is a tool for structuring a coordinated humanitarian response for the first three to six months of an emergency. The UN Humanitarian Coordinator triggers it in consultation with all stakeholders. The Flash Appeal is issued within one week of an emergency. It provides a concise overview of urgent life saving needs, and may include recovery projects that can be implemented within the timeframe of the Appeal. (CAP FAQ www.humanitarianappeal.net)

Flash Flood: Flooding that develops very quickly on streams and river tributaries with a relatively high peak discharge; usually as a result of thunderstorms. Sometimes the onset of flash flooding comes before the end of heavy rains. There is little time between the detection of flood conditions and the arrival of the flood crest. Swift action is essential to the protection of life and property. (GLIDE)

Flood: The overflowing of water of the normal confines of a stream or other body of water, or the accumulation of water by drainage over areas, which are not normally submerged. Excludes Tidal flooding in coastal zones will be reported as "Storm Surge". (GLIDE)

Food Insecurity: A situation that exists when people lack secure access to sufficient amounts of safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. It may be caused by the unavailability of food, insufficient purchasing power, inappropriate distribution, or inadequate use of food at the household level. Food insecurity, poor conditions of health and sanitation, and inappropriate care and feeding practices are the major causes of poor nutritional status. Food insecurity may be chronic, seasonal or transitory. (FIVIMS)

Food Security: A situation that exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. (FIVIMS)

Forecast: Statement or statistical estimate of the occurrence of a future event. This term is used with different meanings in different disciplines, as well as "prediction". (UN DHA)

Foreshock: Earthquake which is often part of a distinctive sequence which precedes and originates close to the focus of a large earthquake (main shock). (UN DHA)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Forest/ Grassland Fire: Fires in forest or brush grasslands that cover extensive areas and usually do extensive damage. They may start by natural causes such as volcanic eruptions or lighting, or they may be caused by arsonists or careless smokers, by those burning wood or by clearing a forest area. (UN DHA)

Framework Agreement: A Framework Agreement is a negotiated agenda for 'Agreement in Principle' negotiations. It should identify the subjects for and objectives of the negotiations, and establish a timetable and the procedural arrangements for the negotiations. In the humanitarian context, a framework agreement often forms an important component of peace negotiations. For instance, a framework agreement was used by the UN to establish a political and humanitarian context for negotiation in Sierra Leone and Afghanistan. (OCHA)

Funding Commitment: Creation of a contractual obligation regarding funding between the donor and appealing agency. Almost always takes the form of a signed contract. This is the crucial stage of humanitarian funding: agencies cannot spend money and implement before a funding commitment is made; once it is made, they can begin spending against it, using cash reserves. (FTS Glossary)

Gap Analysis: A gap analysis reveals the quantifiable difference between a measured indicator and a standard. For example, if the standard is for each refugee to have 20 litres of water per day and each person only has 12 litres of water per day, then there is a gap of 8 litres of water per day per person. For a comprehensive discussion of gap analysis, please see the Section entitled "How to Use Standards & Indicators." (UNHCR Technical Glossary)

Gender-Based Violence: Violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, or other deprivations of liberty. While women, men, boys and girls can be victims of gender-based violence, because of their subordinate status, women and girls are the primary victims. (OCHA)

Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols: The four Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977 relating to the protection of victims in armed conflict are the principal instruments of international humanitarian law. Together, these instruments seek to limit the effects of armed conflict by protecting persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities, including wounded or sick military and naval personnel, prisoners of war, and civilian populations, and to restrict the means and methods of warfare. The four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I apply during international armed conflicts between two or more States, whereas only Article 3 common to the four Conventions and Protocol II apply during non-international or internal conflicts. As of March 2003, 190 States are party to the Geneva Conventions, 161 States are party to Additional Protocol I and 156 States are party to Additional Protocol II. These instruments are monitored principally by the International Committee of the Red Cross. (OCHA)

Genocide: As defined by Article II of the 1948 Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide: "Genocide" means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (OCHA)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Geological Hazard: Geological processes or phenomena that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.

Comment: Geological hazards include internal earth processes, such as earthquakes, geological fault activity, volcanic activity and emissions, and related processes such as mass movements, landslides, rockslides, avalanches, surfaces collapses, debris or mud flows and tsunamis. (ISDR)

Geographic Information Systems (GIS): An organized collection of tools (computer hardware and software), of information and of professional/technical knowledge which is used to input, store, retrieve, utilize, analyse and output geographically referenced data. A GIS uses geography as its organizing principle. A GIS is particularly useful in situations with a spatial dimension, such as knowing the locations of refugees, where water taps are and how far refugees need to walk to school. (UNHCR Technical Glossary)

Geographic Information System (GIS) Mapping: The use of a geographic information system, a computer-based tool, for risk or hazard mapping. GIS technology integrates database operations with the geographic analysis benefits offered by maps.

The benefits of the technique are the increase in productivity of hazard-mapping technicians, it can give higher quality results than can be obtained manually and it can facilitate decision-making and improve coordination among agencies when efficiency is at a premium.

The limitations of the technique include the lack of trained personnel; difficulties in exchanging data between different systems; difficulties in including social, economic and environmental variables; variability in access to computers and the quality and detail of the data required by GIS analysis. (UN HABITAT)

GLIDE Number: A unique identifier number for an emergency (Global Unique Disaster Identifier Number). The system that generates the numbers is managed by the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters. (FTS Glossary)

Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM): An indicator to assess the severity of malnutrition that provides the percentage of children wasted (GAM), generally among children between 6 to 59 months. It is measured using a weight-for-height index. (UNHCR Technical Glossary)

Global Humanitarian Assistance (GHA): GHA is an independent project, established by Development Initiatives in 1999 to monitor funding for humanitarian action. (DI)

Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP): A forum launched in July 2006 to bring together on an equal footing the three main families of the wider humanitarian community: non-governmental organizations, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the United Nations and related international organizations in order to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian action. (UNHCR)

Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD): The GHD initiative was created by donor governments at a meeting in Stockholm in 2003 with the idea of working towards achieving efficient and principled humanitarian assistance. The initiative provides a forum for donors to discuss good practice in funding humanitarian assistance and other shared concerns. By

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

defining principles and standards it provides both a framework to guide official humanitarian aid and a mechanism for encouraging greater donor accountability. (DI)

Good Practice: An innovative, interesting and inspiring practice that has the potential to be transferred in whole or in part to other national contexts. (UNHCR)

Gross Violations of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms: While no agreed definition exists of the term "gross violations of human rights", it can be concluded that, at a minimum, these violations include genocide; slavery and slavery-like practices; summary or arbitrary executions; torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; enforced disappearance; arbitrary and prolonged detention; deportation or forcible transfer of population; and systematic discrimination, in particular based on race or gender. (OCHA)

Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement: A series of principles that articulate standards for protection, assistance and solutions for internally displaced persons. The Guiding Principles were presented to the Commission on Human Rights by the Representative of the Secretary General for Internally Displaced Persons in April 1998. They reflect and are consistent with human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law, and provide guidance to States, other authorities, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations faced with issues of internal displacement. (UNHCR)

Hazard: Natural processes or phenomena or human activities that can cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.

Comment: Hazards have varied origins, and can arise from natural processes (geological, hydro meteorological and biological) and from human activities (environmental degradation and technological hazards). The term is used for both immediate hazard events as well as the latent hazard conditions that may cause future events. Actual hazard events can be characterized by magnitude or intensity, speed of onset, duration, and area of extent. For example, earthquakes occur rapidly and affect a relatively small area, whereas droughts are usually slow to develop and fade away but may affect large regions. In some cases hazards may be coupled, as in the flood that follows a hurricane or the tsunami that is created by an earthquake. Hazard risks may be described by the likely frequency of occurrence of different intensities for different areas, as determined from historical data or scientific analysis. (ISDR)

Hazard Mapping: The process of mapping hazard information within a study area of varying scale, coverage, and detail.

Mapping can be of a single hazard such as fault maps and flood plain maps or several hazard maps can be combined in a single map to give a composite picture of natural hazards.

The benefit of the individual mapping technique is a visual form of information for decision makers and planners, which is easily understood. Multiple hazard maps provide the possibility of common mitigation technique recommendations; sub-areas requiring more information, additional assessments, or specific hazard-reduction techniques can be identified; and land-use decisions can be based on all hazard considerations simultaneously. The limitations of the technique are that the volume of information needed for natural hazards management, particularly in the context of integrated development planning, often

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

exceeds the capacity of manual methods and thus drives the use of computer assisted techniques. (UN HABIAT)

Heat Wave: Marked warming of the air, or the invasion of very warm air, over a large area; it usually lasts from a few days to a few weeks. This is a rise of atmospheric average temperature well above the averages of a region, with effects on human populations, crops, properties and services. (ISDR)

HIV/AIDS: HIV is the virus that causes the Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). HIV attacks and slowly destroys the immune system by entering and destroying the cells that control and support the immune response system. After a long period of infection, usually 3-7 years, enough of the immune system cells have been destroyed to lead to immune deficiency. The virus can therefore be present in the body for several years before symptoms appear. When a person is immuno deficient, the body has difficulty defending itself against many infections and certain cancers, known as “opportunistic infections”.

It is possible to monitor the development and degree of immuno deficiency, and while the impacts of the disease can be mitigated with proper treatment, there is no cure for AIDS once a person is infected with HIV.

There are three main ways in which HIV is transmitted among people:

1. By sexual contact
2. When infected blood is passed into the body (e.g., through blood transfusion or use of non-sterilized material)
3. From an infected mother to her child during pregnancy, childbirth or breastfeeding (World Bank)

Host Communities: Communities that host large populations of refugees or internally displaced persons, typically in camps or integrated into households directly. (OCHA)

Human Development Index (HDI): A measure of a country or region’s progress in terms of life expectancy, level of education and adjusted real income. (UNHCR)

Humanitarian Access: Where protection is not available from national authorities or controlling non-state actors, vulnerable populations have a right to receive international protection and assistance from an impartial humanitarian relief operation. Such action is subject to the consent of the State or parties concerned and does not prescribe coercive measures in the event of refusal, however unwarranted. (OCHA)

Humanitarian Action: Assistance, protection and advocacy actions undertaken on an impartial basis in response to human needs resulting from complex political emergencies and natural hazards. (ALNAP)

Humanitarian Assistance: Aid that seeks, to save lives and alleviate suffering of a crisis-affected population. Humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the basic humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality, as stated in General Assembly Resolution 46/182. In addition, the UN seeks to provide humanitarian assistance

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

with full respect for the sovereignty of States. Assistance may be divided into three categories - direct assistance, indirect assistance and infrastructure support - which have diminishing degrees of contact with the affected population. (OCHA)

Humanitarian Coordination: An approach based on the belief that a coherent response to an emergency will maximize its benefits and minimizes potential pitfalls. In each country, the coordination of UN humanitarian assistance is entrusted to the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator. OCHA, under the direction of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, is responsible for the coordination of a humanitarian response in the event of a crisis and carries out this role according to approved policies and structures set by the IASC. This coordination involves developing common strategies with partners both within and outside the UN system, identifying overall humanitarian needs, developing a realistic plan of action, monitoring progress and adjusting programmes as necessary, convening coordination forums, mobilizing resources, addressing common problems to humanitarian actors, and administering coordination mechanisms and tools. It does not involve OCHA in the administration of humanitarian assistance. (OCHA)

Humanitarian Engagement: The involvement of humanitarian agencies and organizations within a Complex Emergency to deliver protection, assistance and relief. (OCHA)

Humanitarian Information Centres (HIC): A semi-permanent facility established by OCHA in cooperation with other agencies and NGOs during a Complex Emergency that serves as an information and data resource and provides infrastructure and professional services to humanitarian organizations as they implement relief and rehabilitation projects. (OCHA)

Humanitarian Intervention: While there is no agreed upon international definition of "humanitarian intervention" yet, it is a doctrine generally understood to mean coercive action by States involving the use of armed force in another State without the consent of its government, with or without authorization from the UN Security Council, for the purpose of preventing or putting to a halt gross and massive violations of human rights or international humanitarian law. The UN's operations in Northern Iraq and Somalia, and NATO's operation in Kosovo have all been termed humanitarian intervention. (OCHA)

Humanitarian Operations: Operations conducted to relieve human suffering, especially in circumstances where responsible authorities in the area are unable or unwilling to provide adequate service support to civilian populations. (OCHA)

Humanitarian Operating Environment: A key element for humanitarian agencies and organizations when they deploy, consists of establishing and maintaining a conducive humanitarian operating environment, sometimes referred to as "humanitarian space". The perception of adherence to the key operating principles of neutrality and impartiality in humanitarian operations represents the critical means by which the prime objective of ensuring that suffering must be met wherever it is found, can be achieved. Consequently, maintaining a clear distinction between the role and function of humanitarian actors from that of the military is the determining factor in creating an operating environment in which humanitarian organisations can discharge their responsibilities both effectively and safely. Sustained humanitarian access to the affected population is ensured when the receipt of humanitarian assistance is not conditional upon the allegiance to or support to parties involved in a conflict but is a right independent of military and political action. (OCHA)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Humanitarian Principles: As per UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (19 December 1991), humanitarian assistance must be provided in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality. Adherence to these principles reflects a measure of accountability of the humanitarian community.

- 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. (OCHA)

Humanitarian Reform: The Humanitarian Reform aims to dramatically enhance humanitarian response capacity, predictability, accountability and partnership. It represents an ambitious effort by the international humanitarian community to reach more beneficiaries, with more comprehensive, needs-based relief and protection, in a more effective and timely manner.

The reform has four main objectives:

1. Sufficient humanitarian response capacity and enhanced leadership, accountability and predictability in "gap" sector/areas of response (ensuring trained staff, adequate commonly-accessible stockpiles, surge capacity, agreed standards and guidelines).
2. Adequate, timely and flexible humanitarian financing (including through the Central Emergency Response Fund).
3. Improved humanitarian coordination and leadership (more effective Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) system, more strategic leadership and coordination at the inter-sectoral and sectoral levels).
4. More effective partnerships between UN and non-UN humanitarian actors. (HR)

Humanitarian Worker: Includes all workers engaged by humanitarian agencies, whether internationally or nationally recruited, or formally or informally retained from the beneficiary community, to conduct the activities of that agency. (OCHA)

Humanitarian, United Nations & Associated Personnel: Includes the following groups of persons whose safety and security must be ensured during Complex Emergencies: Persons deployed by a humanitarian non-governmental organization or agency under an agreement with the UN Secretary-General to carry out activities in support of the fulfilment of the mandate of a UN operation; Persons engaged or deployed by the UN Secretary-General, whether as humanitarian personnel, members of the military, police or civilian components of a UN operation, or experts on mission; and Persons assigned by a Government or an intergovernmental organization with the agreement of the competent UN organ. (OCHA)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Human Rights: All human rights derive from the dignity and worth inherent in the human person. The concept of human rights acknowledges that every single human being is entitled to enjoy his or her human rights without distinction as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Human rights are legally guaranteed by human rights law, which is expressed in treaties, customary international law, bodies of principles and other sources of law. Human rights law places an obligation on States to act in a particular way and prohibits States from engaging in specified activities, thereby clarifying and protecting formally the rights of individuals and groups. It is noteworthy that human rights law applies in peace and in war. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) together with the 1966 International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) are known as the “International Bill of Rights”. (OCHA)

Human Rights Law: The body of customary international law, human rights instruments and national law that recognizes and protects human rights. Refugee law and human rights law complement each other. (UNHCR)

Human Security: A concept concerned with the security of individuals and promoting the protection of individuals’ physical safety, economic and social well-being, human dignity, and human rights and fundamental freedoms. It reflects the growing recognition worldwide that concepts of security must include people as well as States. (OCHA)

Hydrometeorological Hazards: Natural processes or phenomena of atmospheric, hydrological or oceanographic nature that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.

Comment: Hydrometeorological hazards include: floods, debris and mud flows; tropical cyclones, rain and wind storms, sand or dust storms, thunder and hailstorms, blizzards, and other severe storms; storm surges, drought, desertification, wildland fires, temperature extremes, permafrost and snow or ice avalanches.(ISDR)

Impartiality: An approach to the provision of humanitarian assistance and services that is non-discriminatory, proportionate to needs and free of subjective distinction. Impartiality is a guiding principle of organisations claiming to be humanitarian (ALNAP).

Impunity: The impossibility, de jure or de facto, of bringing the perpetrators of human rights violations to account - whether in criminal, civil, administrative or disciplinary proceedings - since they are not subject to any inquiry that might lead to their being accused, arrested, prosecuted and, if found guilty, sentenced to appropriate penalties, and to making reparations to their victims. [See ‘Accountability’] (OCHA)

In-Kind Contributions: Non-cash assistance in materials or services (e.g. food, tents, secondment of staff.) (FTS Glossary)

Indicator: A variable scale on which it is possible to objectively measure different points and that corresponds to, or correlates closely with, variations in the conditions of the refugees and persons of concern.

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Indicators are the quantitative or qualitative parameters (or yardsticks or measures) that determine, over time, performance of functions, processes, and outcomes, which imply that certain conditions exist.

An indicator provides or “indicates” the prevailing circumstances at a given place at a given time or during a time interval. It is a tool by which we can measure the conditions in refugee or IDP situations and measure our progress within them. It is usually, but not always, a number or percentage that can be used to extrapolate multiple things. For example, an indicator that tracks how many girls are in school might be used in assessing the future earning potential of a population, women’s literacy rates, women’s rights and women’s health issues. Indicators are selected (since we can’t measure everything) on the basis of how useful they are, their relevance to planned objectives and their measurability. (UNHCR Technical Glossary)

Information Management (IM): The sum of all activities, collection, processing, organization and dissemination of information in order to help humanitarian actors achieve their goals in an effective and timely manner. Goals can include improved coordination, early warning, advocacy or transition. (Global Symposium +5)

Insect Infestation: Spreading or swarming in of various kinds of insects over or in a troublesome manner. Proliferation of insects or animal pests affecting communities, agriculture, cattle or stored perishable goods; for example locusts, African bees, etc. (GLIDE)

Integrated Approach: A planning approach that brings together issues from across sectors, institutions on national and local levels, and different population groups. (UNHCR)

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC): A body established in June of 1992 in response to General Assembly Resolution 46/182 to serve as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance in response to complex and major emergencies. The IASC is chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and has the membership of all UN operational humanitarian agencies, with standing invitation to ICRC, IFRC, IOM, UNHCHR, the Representative of the Secretary-General on IDPs, the World Bank and the three NGO consortia (ICVA, InterAction and SCHR). The IASC meets at least twice a year to deliberate on issues brought to its attention by the ERC and the IASC Working Group (IASC-WG), which is formed by senior representatives of the same agencies and meets four to six times a year. The primary objectives of the IASC are:

- to develop and agree on system-wide humanitarian policies;
- to develop and agree on a common ethical framework for all humanitarian activities;
- to advocate common humanitarian principles to parties outside the IASC;
- to identify areas where gaps in mandates or lack of operational capacity exist; and
- to resolve disputes or disagreement about and between humanitarian agencies on system wide humanitarian issues. (OCHA)

Intergovernmental Organization (IGO): An organization made up of State members. Examples include the United Nations Organization (UN), the Organization of African Unity

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

(OAU), the Organization of American States (OAS), the European Union (EU), and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). (UNHCR)

Internal Displacement: Involuntary movement of people inside their own country. This movement may be due to a variety of causes, including natural or human-made disasters, armed conflict, or situations of generalized violence. (UNHCR)

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs): Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to leave their homes or habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. A series of 30 non-binding “Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement” based on refugee law, human rights law and international humanitarian law articulate standards for protection, assistance and solutions for internally displaced persons. (OCHA)

International Criminal Court (ICC): A permanent court with jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute individuals accused of the most serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, namely genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. Unlike the International Court of Justice, whose jurisdiction is restricted to states, the ICC considers criminal cases against individuals; and unlike the Tribunals for Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia created to address crimes committed during these conflicts, its jurisdiction is not situation-specific and is not retroactive. The ICC has been established by the Rome Statute, which entered into force on 1 July 2002, and is located in the Hague, Netherlands. (OCHA)

International Humanitarian Law (IHL): A body of rules that seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare by prohibiting weapons that make no distinction between combatants and civilians or weapons and methods of warfare which cause unnecessary injury, suffering and/or damage. The rules are to be observed not only by governments and their armed forces, but also by armed opposition groups and any other parties to a conflict. The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their two Additional Protocols of 1977 are the principal instruments of humanitarian law. IHL is also known as the law of war or the law of armed conflict, and is part of international law. It does not regulate resort to the use of force; this is governed by an important, but distinct, part of international law set out in the UN Charter. (OCHA)

International Law: A body of laws regulating relations between States. (OCHA)

International Protection: The actions by the international community on the basis of international law, aimed at protecting the fundamental rights of a specific category of persons outside their countries of origin, who lack the national protection of their own countries. (UNHCR)

International Refugee Law: The body of customary international law and international instruments that establishes standards for refugee protection. The cornerstone of refugee law is the 1951 Convention and its 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees. (UNHCR)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Intervention: "[A] move by a state or an international organisation to involve itself in the domestic affairs of another state, whether the state consents or not." (Hoffman, 1993:88). Intervention can include: i) preventive interventions before the outbreak of a conflict; ii) curative intervention that aims at the solution, limitation, control or regulation of an existing conflict; iii) de-escalating intervention that aims at reducing tension and must be based on insight into the factors and mechanisms that led to escalation; and iv) escalating interventions, it can be in the interest of a permanent conflict resolution to escalate a 'cold' conflict (one in which the parties avoid both contact and confrontation). (Glasl, 1997:148-149). An emerging global consensus about the permissibility of multilateral coercive actions covers the following situations: i) "[t]o prevent and punish aggression by one state against another; ii) in a civil war, to reimpose peace terms on one party that has reneged, provided their terms had originally resulted from UN peacemaking; iii) to enforce violations of international agreements banning the possession, manufacture, or trade of weapons of mass destruction; iv) to enforce agreements banning or limiting trade in conventional arms, including trade in dual-use and forbidden technologies; v) to prevent an event certified by experts as an immediate impending ecological catastrophe; vi) to prevent genocide; vii) to protect an established democratic polity from antidemocratic armed challenges, but not to protect a dubious or fictitious one; and viii) to prevent and alleviate famine and mass epidemics". (Ernst B. Haas 1993:81). (FEWER)

Joint Programming: The process through which the UN country team and national partners work together to prepare, implement, monitor and evaluate the UN's contribution to most effectively and efficiently achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other international commitments related to the government's national development targets. (UNHCR)

Landslide: The usually rapid downward movement of a mass of rock, earth, or artificial fill on a slope. Under this denomination fall all mass movements other than Mud Slide and Avalanche. (GLIDE)

Last Resort: The principle that military force should only be relied upon once all viable non-military options for the prevention or peaceful resolution of a crisis have been reasonably exhausted, including negotiation, arbitration, appeal to international institutions, and economic sanctions. (OCHA)

Lesson Learned: Conclusions that can be generalised beyond the specific case. This could include lessons that are of relevance more broadly within the country situation, or globally, to an organisation or the broader international community (ALNAP).

Lifelines: The public facilities and systems that provide basic life support services such as water, energy, sanitation, communications and transportation. (UN DHA)

Livelihoods: Livelihoods comprise the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living linked to survival and future well-being. Livelihood strategies are the practical means or activities through which people access food or income to buy food, while coping strategies are temporary responses to food insecurity. (Sphere)

Local Integration: A durable solution to the problem of refugees that involves their permanent settlement in a country of first asylum, and eventually being granted nationality of

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

that country. Local integration is a complex and gradual process, comprising three distinct but inter-related legal, economic, and social and cultural dimensions. (UNHCR)

Locust Control: The use of monitoring techniques and remedial actions to control locust infestations. (UN DHA)

Logistics: The range of operational activities concerned with supply, handling, transportation and distribution of materials. Also applicable to the transportation of people. (UN DHA)

Main Shock: The biggest of a particular sequence of earthquakes. (UN DHA)

Malnutrition: Malnutrition encompasses a range of conditions, including acute malnutrition, chronic malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. Acute malnutrition refers to wasting (thinness) and/or nutritional oedema, while chronic malnutrition refers to stunting (shortness). Stunting and wasting are two forms of growth failure. (Sphere)

Mandate: The legal framework that defines the responsibilities of UN Agencies, peacekeeping operations and other international organisations such as the International Committee for the Red Cross.

- The mandates of UN Agencies, such as UNICEF and UNHCR, are agreed upon by the General Assembly. It is imperative that Agencies have clear and adequate mandates to ensure that all humanitarian issues are addressed appropriately and consistently. The protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs) is one issue that does not fall squarely within any Agency's mandate. Until such time, it is OCHA's responsibility through the IDP Unit to collaborate with Agencies to ensure that IDP interests are protected.
- Peacekeeping Mission mandates are agreed upon by the Security Council. It is imperative that an authorized UN Force is sufficiently large, well equipped and appropriately empowered with matching resources for the situation called for on the ground. (OCHA)

Mediation: A process in which a third-party neutral acts as a facilitator to assist in resolving a dispute between two or more parties in an armed conflict. It is a non-adversarial approach to conflict resolution, where the parties generally communicate directly; the role of the mediator is to facilitate communication between the parties, assist them in focusing on the real issues of the dispute, and generate options for settlement. (OCHA)

Millennium Declaration: A resolution adopted unanimously by the General Assembly following the UN Millennium Summit on 8 September 2000 that embodies a large number of specific commitments aimed at improving the fate of humanity in the 21st century. The key objectives identified in the Declaration are: Peace, security and disarmament; Development and poverty eradication; Protecting our common environment; Human rights, democracy and good governance; Protecting the vulnerable; Meeting the special needs of Africa; and Strengthening the United Nations. (OCHA)

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): A summary of development goals set at international conferences and world summits during the 1990s. (UNHCR)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Military Assistance: The use of military forces in humanitarian assistance missions during Complex Emergencies. Such assistance may take the form of military protection of humanitarian aid delivery, monitoring demobilization programs, providing logistics, arresting war criminals and protecting civilians. **Military and Civil Defence Assets (MCDA):** As defined in the 1994 “Oslo Guidelines”, “comprises relief personnel, equipment, supplies and services provided by foreign military and civil defence organizations for international humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, civil defence organization means any organization that, under the control of a Government, performs the functions enumerated in Article 61, paragraph (1), of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 1949”. When these assets are under UN control they are referred to as UN MCDA. (OCHA)

Mines: A munition designed to be placed under, on or near the ground or other surface areas and to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person or vehicle. It may include ‘anti-personnel landmines’ and ‘mines other than anti-personnel landmines’.

- **Anti-Personnel Landmines (APM):** A device primarily designed to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person and that will incapacitate, injure or kill one or more persons. APM are indiscriminate in terms of target and time, as they continue to kill and maim people long after a conflict has ended.
- **Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Landmines (MOTAPM):** Unlike APM, MOTAPM are designed to be triggered by the contact with or the proximity of a vehicle and to destroy vehicles and tanks. Like APM, MOTAPM retain their ability to function even years after they have been placed. (OCHA)

Mine Action: Refers to all activities that aim to reduce the social, economic, and environmental impact on populations of landmines and other unexploded ordnance. The objectives of mine action are to reduce the risk from landmines and UXOs to a level where people can live safely; in which social, economic, health, environmental and development can occur free from the constraints of landmines; and in which the victim’s need could be addressed UN mine action encompasses five complementary core components:

- mine awareness and risk reduction education;
- minefield survey, mapping, marking, and clearance;
- victim assistance, including rehabilitation and reintegration;
- stockpile destruction; and
- advocacy to stigmatise the use of landmines and support a total ban on antipersonnel landmines. (OCHA)

Minimum Necessary Force: The measured and proportionate application of coercion or violence, sufficient only to achieve a specific objective and confined in effect to the specific and legitimate target intended. [See ‘Proportional Means’] (OCHA)

Mitigation: Measures taken in advance of a disaster aimed at decreasing or eliminating its impact on society and environment. (UN DHA)

Monitoring: System that permits the continuous observation, measurement and a valuation of the progress of a process or phenomenon with a view to taking corrective measures. (UN DHA)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Monsoon: Seasonally heavy rains and wind the direction of which varies from one season to another. They occur particularly in the Indian Ocean and South Asian areas. (UN DHA)

Mudflow: The down-slope transfer of fine earth material mixed with water. (UN DHA)

Mudslide: A type of landslide, which occurs when the slope is saturated with water. This more destructive flow can pick up rocks, trees, houses and cars. As the debris moves into river and stream beds, bridges can become blocked or even collapse, making a temporary dam that can flood neighbouring areas. (GLIDE)

Multilateral Aid/ Assistance: Multilateral humanitarian aid is funding given to UN agencies, international organisations or the European Commission to spend entirely at their own discretion within their mandate. (DI)

National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction: A nationally led forum or committee of multiple stakeholders to coordinate and mainstream disaster risk reduction into all relevant sectors through the development of better integrated policies, plans and programmes.

Comment: Disaster risk reduction does not lie neatly within any sector, but requires the knowledge, capacities and inputs of a wide range of sectors and organisations. Most sectors are affected directly or indirectly by disasters and many have specific responsibilities that affect disaster risks. The national platform concept provides a means to enhance national action to reduce disaster risks. (ISDR)

Natural Disaster: Natural disasters are events brought about by natural hazards that seriously affect the society, economy and/or infrastructure of a region. Depending on population vulnerability and local response capacity, natural disasters will pose challenges and problems of a humanitarian nature.

The term “natural disaster” is used for ease. It is important to understand, however, that the magnitude of the consequences of sudden natural hazards is a direct result of the way individuals and societies relate to threats originating from natural hazards. The magnitude of the consequences is, thus, determined by human action, or the lack thereof. (*Protecting Persons Affected by Natural Disasters*, IASC Operational Guidelines, 2006)

Natural Hazards: Natural processes or phenomena that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.

Comment: Natural hazards are a sub-set of all hazards – see definition of “hazard”. (ISDR)

Negotiation: The deliberation which takes place between two or more parties regarding a proposed agreement. In the context of armed conflict, negotiations often relate to permitting humanitarian access, agreeing upon a ceasefire, or establishing peace through a framework agreement or peace accord. (OCHA)

Non-Discrimination: The principle that a measure of general protection for civilian populations against certain consequences of war without any adverse distinction based, in particular, on race, nationality, religion or political opinion (e.g. the establishment of hospitals and safety zones and of neutralized zones, the protection of civilian hospitals and their staff, the free passage of relief supplies, etc.). Also, the principle under human rights law that

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

States must undertake measures to respect and to ensure to all individuals within their territories and subject to their jurisdiction the rights recognized in the 1966 International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. This principle applies equally in times of peace as it times of war. (OCHA)

Non-Governmental Organization (NGO): An organized entity that is functionally independent of, and does not represent, a government or State. It is normally applied to organizations devoted to humanitarian and human rights causes, a number of which have official consultative status at the United Nations. (OCHA)

Non-Refoulement: A core principle of International Refugee Law that prohibits States from returning refugees in any manner whatsoever to countries or territories in which their lives or freedom may be threatened. This principle is a part of customary international law and is therefore binding on all States, whether or not they are parties to the 1951 Refugee Convention. (OCHA)

Nuclear Accident: Accidental release of radiation occurring in civil nuclear facilities, exceeding the internationally established safety levels. (UN DHA)

Oil Spill: The contamination of a water or land area by oil. (UN DHA)

Participatory Approach: An approach to development and/or government in which key stakeholders (and especially the proposed beneficiaries) of a policy or intervention are closely involved in the process of identifying problems and priorities and have considerable control over analysis and the planning, implementation and monitoring of solutions. (UNHCR)

Peace: Peace is a condition that exists in the relations between groups, classes or states when there is an absence of violence (direct or indirect) or the threat of violence. (OCHA)

Peacebuilding: The Statement by the President of the Security Council on Peacebuilding in 2001 (S/PRST/2001/5) holds that peacebuilding activities are aimed at preventing the outbreak, recurrence or continuation of armed conflict and therefore encompass a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and

mechanisms. They require tailored short and long-term actions that focus on fostering sustainable institutions and processes in areas such as sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and inequalities, transparent and accountable governance, the promotion of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law and the promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence. (OCHA)

Peace-Enforcement: Most commonly, multinational military intervention to impose peace or restore cease-fires. "The use or threat of armed force as provided for in Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter aimed at restoring peace by military means such as in Korea (1950-1953) or Iraq (1991). It can take place without the agreement and support of one or all the warring parties. It can refer to both an interstate or an intra-state conflict, [serve] the mitigation of a humanitarian emergency or in situations where the organs of state have ceased to function. Peace enforcement actions include: i) carrying out international sanctions

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

against the opposing sides, or against the side that represents the driving force in the armed conflict; ii) isolating the conflict and preventing arms deliveries to the area, as well as preventing its penetration by armed formations; iii) delivering air or missile strikes on positions of the side that refuses to halt its military actions; iv) rapid deployment of peace forces to the combat zones in numbers sufficient to carry out the assigned missions, including the localising of the conflict and the disarming or eradicating of any armed formations that refuse to cease fighting." (Demurenko & Nikitin, 1997:118-119). (+) (FEWER)

Peacekeeping Forces: "Civilian and military personnel designated by the national governments of the countries participating in the peace operation. These personnel are placed at the disposal of the international organisation under whose mandate the given operation is being conducted. Generally, peacekeeping forces are made up of national contingents under international command. Each national contingent is assigned either a zone of responsibility or specific functional duties." (Demurenko & Nikitin, 1997:123-124).(FEWER)

Peacekeeping Mandate: "The UN's interpretation of the use of force in selfdefence is ambiguous. Peacekeeping (PK) has traditionally been described as a noncoercive instrument yet since 1973, the guidelines approved by the Security Council for each PK force have stipulated that self defence is deemed to include resistance to attempts by forceful means to prevent the PK force from discharging its duties under the mandate of the Security Council". (British Army, 1997, chapter 4: 5). (+) (FEWER)

Peacekeeping Operation (PKO): UN field operations that often consist of several components, including a military component, which may or may not be armed, and various civilian components encompassing a broad range of disciplines.

Depending on their mandate, peacekeeping missions may be required to: deploy to prevent the outbreak of conflict or the spill-over of conflict across borders; stabilize conflict situations after a ceasefire to create an environment for the parties to reach a lasting peace agreement; assist in implementing comprehensive peace agreements; lead states or territories through a transition to stable government based on democratic principles, good governance and economic development. (OCHA)

Peacemaking: The use of diplomatic means to persuade parties in conflict to cease hostilities and to negotiate a peaceful settlement of their dispute, essentially through means as those foreseen in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. The UN can usually play a role only if the parties to the dispute agree to it. Peacemaking thus excludes the use of force against one of the parties to enforce an end to hostilities, an activity that in United Nations parlance is referred to as "peace enforcement". Post-Conflict Transition: The tenuous period immediately following the termination of conflict during which humanitarian needs must still be met and programs such as those for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation and for rebuilding infrastructure remain at an early stage. This period may also involve the temporary transfer of government functions to a UN transitional administration, as occurred in Kosovo and East Timor. (OCHA)

Pledge: A non-binding announcement of an intended contribution or allocation by the donor. Can be specific as to appealing agency and project, or specify only the crisis (e.g. a pledge for the Darfur crisis or for the Sudan Consolidated Appeal). (FTS Glossary)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Population at Risk: A well-defined population whose lives, property, and livelihoods are threatened by given hazards. Used as a denominator. (UN DHA)

Post-Conflict Reconstruction: A generic term referring to the rebuilding of society in the aftermath of conflict. Physical infrastructures have to be repaired or re-built, governmental institutions have to be reformed, psychic traumas of civilians and combatants have to be treated, the economy has to be restarted, refugees to be repatriated, reconciliation between the belligerents has to be initiated, justice has to be delivered. Such efforts require sustained support from the international community. (FEWER)

Post-Conflict Transition: The tenuous period immediately following the termination of conflict during which humanitarian needs must still be met and programs such as those for disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and rehabilitation and for rebuilding infrastructure remain at an early stage. This period may also involve the temporary transfer of government functions to a UN transitional administration, as occurred in Kosovo and East Timor. (See "Transitional Administration") (OCHA)

Potable Water (Drinking Water): Water that satisfies health standards, with respect to its chemical and bacteriological composition, and is agreeable to drink. (UN DHA)

Preparedness: The capacities and knowledge developed by governments, professional response organizations, communities and individuals to anticipate and respond effectively to the impact of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions.

Comment: Preparedness action is carried out within the context of disaster risk management and should be based on a sound analysis of disaster risks and be well linked to early warning systems. It includes contingency planning, stockpiling of equipment and supplies, emergency services and stand-by arrangements, communications, information management and coordination arrangements, personnel training, community drills and exercises, and public education. It must be supported by formal institutional, legal and budgetary capacities. (ISDR)

Prevention: Activities to provide outright avoidance of the adverse impacts of hazards and means to minimize related environmental, technological and biological disasters.

Comment: Depending on social and technical feasibility and cost/benefit considerations, investing in preventive measures may be justified in areas frequently affected by disasters. These measures may include structural or non-structural measures. Public awareness and education can be used to promote a "culture of prevention" and to encourage local prevention activities. (ISDR)

Encompasses activities designed to provide permanent protection from disasters. It includes engineering and other physical protective measures, and also legislative measures controlling land use and urban planning. (UN DHA)

Preventive Diplomacy: Action to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to prevent existing disputes from escalating into conflicts and to limit the spread of the latter when they occur. (OCHA)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Prisoner of War: A person belonging to one of several categories set forth in the 1949 Geneva Conventions, including members of the armed forces of a Party to a conflict or otherwise part of or attached to such forces, who has fallen into the power of the enemy and is guaranteed certain fundamental protections while in captivity. (OCHA)

Proportional Means: The scale, duration and intensity of the planned military intervention should be the minimum necessary to secure the defined human protection objective. (OCHA)

Protected Areas: Areas designated by the UN to be demilitarized to protect civilians and facilitate circumstances for a peaceful, negotiated resolution to the conflict. (OCHA)

Protected Persons: Persons accorded protection under International Humanitarian Law, who take no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed hors de combat by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely, without any adverse distinction founded on race, colour, religion or faith, sex, birth or wealth, or any other similar criteria. (OCHA)

Protection: A concept that encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and spirit of human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. Protection involves creating an environment conducive to respect for human beings, preventing and/or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific pattern of abuse, and restoring dignified conditions of life through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation. (OCHA)

Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: Structures and policies developed by the UN, States and other humanitarian actors, and based in international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law, to protect vulnerable populations from the effects of armed conflict, ranging from the most immediate priorities of minimizing civilian casualties to more long-term priorities of promoting the rule of law and security, law and order within a State. (OCHA)

Public Awareness Raising: The processes of developing and communicating factual information for the general population in order to increase their levels of awareness of disaster risks and their understanding of how they can act to reduce their exposure and vulnerability to hazards.

Comment: Public awareness activities foster changes in behaviour leading towards a culture of risk reduction. This involves the development and dissemination of public and educational information through radio, television and print media, as well as the establishment of information centres, networks, and community or participation actions. Public awareness programmes strongly benefit from the active involvement of senior public officials and community leaders. (ISDR)

Reconciliation: An element of conflict resolution and peacebuilding involving the promotion of confidence building and co-existence. The process of achieving reconciliation generally involves five interwoven and related strands: (i) developing a shared vision of an interdependent and fair society; (ii) acknowledging and dealing with the past; (iii) building positive relationships; (iv) significant cultural and attitudinal change; and (v) substantial social, economic and political change. It can be a challenging and long-term process for communities deeply divided along political or ethnic lines. While reconciliation must grow

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

between and within communities, it can benefit from international support, especially when people and/or political leaders are unable or unwilling to initiate it. (UNHCR)

Reconstruction: A set of activities aimed at achieving the medium- and long-term recovery of the components and structures that have been affected by a disaster or emergency. (CRID)

Recovery: A focus on how best to restore the capacity of the government and communities to rebuild and recover from crisis and to prevent relapses into conflict. In so doing, recovery seeks not only to catalyze sustainable development activities, but also to build upon earlier humanitarian programmes to ensure that their inputs become assets for development. (UNHCR)

Recruitment: Encompasses compulsory, forced and voluntary recruitment into any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group. The conscripting or enlisting of children under the age of fifteen years into the national armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities constitutes a war crime under the Rome Statute. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict prohibits direct participation in armed conflict of persons below 18 years and establishes a ban on their compulsory recruitment. (OCHA)

Refugee: A person, who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, or for reasons owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge outside his country of origin or nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of his country of origin or nationality. (OCHA)

Refugee Camp: A plot of land temporarily made available to host refugees fleeing from an armed conflict in temporary homes. UN Agencies, particularly UNHCR, and other humanitarian organizations provide essential services in refugee camps including food, sanitation, health, medicine and education. These camps are ideally located at least 50 km away from the nearest international border to deter camp raids and other attacks on its civilian occupants. (OCHA)

Refugee Law: The body of customary international law and various international, regional, and national legal instruments that establish standards for refugee protection. The cornerstone of refugee law is the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Optional Protocol. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated by the UN to provide international protection to refugees and to seek permanent solutions to their problems through its Statute, adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1950. (OCHA)

Rehabilitation: A set of measures aimed at restoring normal living conditions through the repair and reestablishment of vital services interrupted or degraded by a disaster or emergency. (CRID)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Reintegration: A process which enables returnees to regain the physical, social, legal and material security needed to maintain life, livelihood and dignity and which eventually leads to the disappearance of any observable distinctions vis-à-vis their compatriots. (UNHCR)

Relief: Assistance and/or intervention during or after disaster to meet the life preservation and basic subsistence needs. It can be of emergency or protracted duration. (UN DHA)

Remittances: Private transfers between individuals – often relatives or friends – in another country. (DI)

Remote Sensing: Remote sensing refers to the process of recording information from sensors mounted either on aircraft or on satellites. The technique is applicable to natural hazards management because nearly all geologic, hydrologic, and atmospheric phenomena are recurring events or processes that leave evidence of their previous occurrence.

The benefits of the technique are that revealing the location of previous occurrences and/or distinguishing the conditions under which they are likely to occur makes it possible to identify areas of potential exposure to natural hazards. It additionally provides comprehensive displays of disaster information to assess vulnerability, enhance mapping, and monitor.

The limitations of the technique include the requirement for expert science writers and graphics designers to translate and package the resulting information into images and explanations that can be easily understood by a wide variety of users; and while space technology has advanced rapidly in recent years, a number of countries still lack the human, technical and financial resources required to conduct even the most basic space-related activities. (UN HABITAT)

Reproductive Health: Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life, the capacity to reproduce, and the freedom to decide if, when, and how often to do so. (UNHCR)

Resettlement: The transfer of refugees from the country in which they have sought refuge to another State that has agreed to admit them. The refugees will usually be granted asylum or some other form of long-term resident rights and, in many cases, will have the opportunity to become naturalized citizens. For this reason, resettlement is a durable solution as well as a tool for the protection of refugees. It is also a practical example of international burden- and responsibility-sharing. (UNHCR)

Resettlement Country: A country that offers opportunities for the permanent settlement of refugees. This would be a country other than the country of origin or the country in which refugee status was first recognized. (UNHCR)

Resident Coordinator (RC) and Humanitarian Coordinator (HC): The Resident Coordinator is the head of the UN Country Team. In a Complex Emergency, the RC or another competent UN official may be designated as the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). In large-scale Complex Emergencies, a separate HC is often appointed. If the emergency affects more than one country, a Regional HC may be appointed. The decision whether to and who to appoint as HC is made by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, in consultation with

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. In countries where large multi-disciplinary UN field operations are in place the Secretary-General might appoint a Special Representative (SRSG). The relationship between the SRSG and the RC/HC is defined in a note issued by the Secretary-General on 11 December 2000 (Note of Guidance on Relations between Representatives of the Secretary-General, Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators, dated 30 October 2000). (OCHA)

Residual Risk: The risk that remains in unmanaged form, even when effective disaster reduction measures are in place, and for which emergency response capacities must be maintained and resources committed, to prepare for, respond to and recover from, emergency situations.

Comment: Residual risk implies a continuing need for emergency services and for socio-economic policies such as safety nets and risk transfer mechanisms. (ISDR)

Resilience: The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to resist, adapt, and recover from hazard events, and to restore an acceptable level of functioning and structure.

Comment: Resilience means to “resile from” or “spring back” after a shock. The resilience of a social system is determined by the degree to which the system has the necessary resources and is capable of organizing itself to develop its capacities, to implement disaster risk reduction and to institute means to transfer or manage residual risks. (ISDR)

Responsibility to Protect: A concept that imposes a responsibility on the international community to protect a population that is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it. The 2001 Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) notes that the responsibility to protect encompasses three essential components:

- The responsibility to prevent a human catastrophe by addressing root causes and direct causes of internal conflict and other man-made crises;
- The responsibility to react to an actual or apprehended situation of compelling human need, should one occur, with appropriate measures, which may include coercive measures such as sanctions, international prosecution and military intervention in extreme cases; and
- The responsibility to rebuild after the intervention through the provision of full assistance with recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation.

The responsibility to protect is founded on the obligations inherent in the concept of state sovereignty, the responsibility of the Security Council under Article 24 of the UN Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security, specific legal obligations under human rights and human protection instruments, international humanitarian law and national law, as well as in the developing practice of states, regional organizations and the Security Council. While this concept is under discussion, it has not yet been adopted by the UN. (OCHA)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Restitution: The concept that victims, their families or dependents, who have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are in violation of criminal laws operative within Member States, should receive fair recompense. Such recompense should include the return of property or payment for the harm or loss suffered, reimbursement of expenses incurred as a result of the victimization, the provision of services and the restoration of rights. (OCHA)

Restorative Justice: A problem-solving approach to crime that focuses on restoration or repairing the harm done by the crime and criminal to the extent possible, and involves the victim(s), offender(s) and the community in an active relationship with statutory agencies in developing a resolution. The modes for delivering restorative justice include, but are not limited to, restitution of property, restitution to the victim by the offender, reparations and truth commissions. (OCHA)

Returnees: Refugees who have returned to their country or community of origin. (UNHCR)

Richter Scale: Devised by C.F. Richter in 1935, an index of the seismic energy released by an earthquake (as contrasted to intensity that describes its effects at a particular place), expressed in terms of the motion that would be measured by a specific type of seismograph located 100 km from the epicentre of an earthquake. Nowadays several "magnitude scales" are in use. They are based on amplitudes of different types of seismic waves, on signal duration or on the seismic moment. (UN DHA)

Risk: Degree of danger associated with a given operation, course of action, or failure to act in crisis situation. For conflict forecasting, it makes sense to distinguish between levels of risks, for example: i) high risk; ii) high moderate risk; iii) moderate risk; iv) low moderate risk; v) low risk. (FEWER)

Risk Assessment: Calculation and/or simulation of degree of danger attached to a course of action for the purpose of uncertainty reduction. "[R]isk assessment and early warning are distinct but complementary activities. Risk assessments are based on the systematic analysis of remote and intermediate conditions. Early warning requires near real-time assessment of events that, in a high risk environment, are likely to accelerate or trigger the rapid escalation of conflict." (Gurr, 1996b: 137). (FEWER)

Risk Mapping: A risk map is a map of a community or geographical zone that identifies the places and the structures that might be adversely affected in the event of a hazard. The production of a risk map requires consideration of areas and features threatened within the community or geographical zone, consultation with people and groups of varying expertise, and the discussion of possible solutions to reduce risk.

The benefits of this technique are that it helps to locate the major hazards; they can create shared criteria for decision-making, they can provide a record of historical events that have had a negative impact on the community, and they identify risks so a community may find solutions or take precautions. (UN HABITAT)

Risk Management: A structured approach to manage uncertainty and potential losses through a process of risk assessment and the development of strategies and specific actions to control and reduce risks.

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Comment: In the field of disasters, risk management strategies include avoiding the risk (prevention), reducing the negative effect of the risk (mitigation), transferring the risk to another party (insurance), and accepting some or all of the consequences of a particular risk (retained risk). In some key sectors affected by natural hazards, such as water supply, energy, agriculture and transportation, risk management may be a core element of business activity owing to the potential for both gains and losses. (ISDR)

Risk Transfer: The process of spreading or transferring the costs of risk whereby a potentially affected nation, enterprise or group can obtain resources from another party when a disaster strikes, in exchange for ongoing or compensatory social or financial benefits provided to that party.

Comment: Risk transfer comes at a price; it is an exchange of resources. For example, to obtain insurance cover for a risk, it is necessary to pay premiums to the insurer. If help is received from a family member after a disaster, it will be accompanied by expectations of return help if needed in future. Public social safety nets are funded from taxation. At a larger scale, Governments, insurers and other major risk-bearing entities may establish mechanisms to cover losses in major events, such as re-insurance, catastrophe bond issues, credit facilities and reserve funds, where the costs are covered by premiums, bond discount prices, interest rates and past savings, respectively. (ISDR)

Rule of Law: A governing principle by which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, and including the state itself, are accountable to democratically determined, publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated rules which are substantively and procedurally consistent with international law, particularly human rights standards, including the following: (OCHA)

- Government decisions are made according to written law and rules;
- Government sanctions cannot be made up after the fact (ex post facto);
- Rules are applied as much as possible consistently to all; and
- Citizens are afforded consistent written process (due process) before life, liberty or property is taken away.

Safe Areas/ Safety Zones: Areas, zones, or locations established to protect civilians during a time of conflict. The terms and conditions of establishing safety zones are governed by the law of armed conflict. (UNHCR)

Sanctions: Restrictions imposed by one or more countries upon another for political reasons. They may take a number of forms, of which economic and targeted sanctions are most common.

- **Economic Sanctions:** Restrictions on the international trade and finance of a country. Experience has shown that such measures can have devastating impacts on the civilian populations in countries under a sanctions regime.
- **Targeted (or “smart”) Sanctions:** Restrictions designed to impact on the elite in a given country in order to minimise effects on innocent civilians. They allow trade in

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

- unambiguously humanitarian goods and require centralized scrutiny of “dual-use” goods that can be used for both military and civilian purposes. Humanitarian exemptions would include food medicines and clothing, whereas smart sanctions may include freezing leaders’ overseas accounts, a strong arms embargo, and limitations on goods of value to weapons research. (OCHA)

Sanitation: The application of measures and techniques aimed at ensuring and improving general hygiene in the community, including the collection, evacuation and disposal of liquid and solid wastes, as well as measures for creating favourable environmental conditions for health and disease prevention. (UN DHA)

Sea Surge: A rise in sea level that results in the inundation of areas along coastlines. These phenomena are caused by the movement of ocean and sea currents, winds and major storms. (UN DHA)

Search and Rescue: The process of locating and recovering disaster victims and the application of first aid and basic medical assistance as may be required. (UN DHA)

Sectoral Group: See “cluster”.

Secondary Hazards: Those hazards that occur as a result of another hazard or disaster, i.e., fires or landslides following earthquakes, epidemics following famines, food shortages following drought or floods. (UN DHA)

Self-Reliance: The ability of an individual, household or community to depend (rely) on their own resources (physical, social and natural capital or assets), judgement and capabilities with minimal external assistance in meeting basic needs, and without resorting to activities that irreversibly deplete the household or community resource base. (UNHCR)

Severe Local Storm: A tornado, waterspout, or a thunderstorm with winds of 50 knots (25 m/s) or greater and/or hail $\frac{3}{4}$ ” (20 mm) or greater in diameter at the ground. Usually results to significant wind damage (several downed trees) and/or large hail. (GLIDE)

Sexual Abuse: Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, including inappropriate touching, by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. (OCHA)

Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV): Acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threat of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty, that target individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender. (UNHCR)

Sexual Exploitation: Any abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes; this includes profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. (OCHA)

Shelter: Physical protection requirements of disaster victims who no longer have access to normal habitation facilities. Immediate post-disaster needs are met by the use of tents. Alternatives may include polypropylene houses, plastic sheeting, geodesic domes and other similar types of temporary housing. (UN DHA)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW): As referred to in the Report of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms (A/52/298), SALW are used by all armed forces, including internal security forces, for, inter alia, self-protection or self-defence, close or short range combat, direct or indirect fire, and against tanks or aircraft at relatively short distances. Broadly speaking, Small Arms are those designed for personal use and Light Weapons are those designed for use by several persons serving as a crew. (OCHA)

Smuggling in Persons: The voluntary transnational transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of migrants, often in dangerous or degrading conditions. (OCHA)

Snow Avalanche: Mass of snow and ice falling suddenly down a mountain slope and often taking with it earth, rocks and rubble of every description. (GLIDE)

Stakeholder: All those – from agencies to individuals – who have a direct or indirect interest in the humanitarian intervention, or who affect or are affected by the implementation and outcome of it. Within the context of the Quality Pro Forma, primary stakeholders refers to both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries within the affected population. (ALNAP)

State Responsibility: The principle that States bear primary responsibility for the functions of protecting the physical security and lives of their citizens and promoting their welfare. During Complex Emergencies occurring within their territories, this includes initiating, organizing, coordinating, and implementing humanitarian assistance programs. State responsibility also means that national political authorities are responsible to the citizens internally and to the international community through the UN, and are accountable for their acts of commission and omission. This principle was recently reinforced by the International Law Commission in its final report on State Responsibility, adopted in 2001, as draft Article I of the report provides that: “Every internationally wrongful act of a State entails the international responsibility of that State”. (OCHA)

State Sovereignty: A concept that signifies the legal identity of states in international law and provides order, stability and predictability in international relations since sovereign states are regarded as equal, regardless of comparative size or wealth. Sovereignty is not a grant to states of unlimited power to do all that is not expressly forbidden by international law; rather, it entails the totality of international rights and duties recognized by international law. The principle of sovereign equality of states is enshrined in Article 2.1 of the UN Charter and means that a sovereign state is empowered to exercise exclusive and total jurisdiction within its territorial borders without intervention from other states (principle of non-intervention).

Membership of the United Nations is viewed as the final symbol of independent sovereign statehood and the seal of acceptance into the community of nations. Membership also entails responsibilities to the citizens internally and to the international community through the UN. 191 States are Members of the United Nations as of March 2003. (OCHA)

Stateless Person: A person who, under national laws, does not have the legal bond of nationality with any State. Article 1 of the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons indicates that a person not considered a national (or citizen) automatically under the laws of any State, is stateless. (UNHCR)

Statelessness: The condition of not being considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law. (UNHCR)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Starvation: The state resulting from extreme privation of food or of drastic reduction in nutrient intake over a period of time leading to severe physiological, functional, behavioural and morphological differences. (UN DHA)

Stockpiling: The process of prior identification, availability and storage of supplies likely to be needed for disaster response. (UN DHA)

Storm: 1. An atmospheric disturbance involving perturbations of the prevailing pressure and wind fields, on scales ranging from tornadoes (1 km across) to extra tropical cyclones (2000-3000 km across). 2. Wind with a speed between 48 and 55 knots (Beaufort scale wind force 10). (UN DHA)

Storm Surge: The difference between the actual water level under influence of a meteorological disturbance (storm tide) and the level, which would have been attained in the absence of the meteorological disturbance (i.e. astronomical tide). (GLIDE)

Structural/ Non-Structural Measures: Structural measures: Any physical construction to reduce or avoid possible impacts of hazards, or application of engineering techniques to achieve hazard-resistance and resilience in structures or systems;

Non-structural measures: Any measure involving knowledge, practice or agreement, that leads to reduced risks and impacts, in particular through policies and laws, public awareness raising, training and education.

Comment: Common structural measures include dams, flood levies, ocean wave barriers, earthquake-proof construction, escape routes and shelters, while common non-structural measures include building codes and land use planning laws and their enforcement, research and assessment, information resources, and public awareness programmes. (ISDR)

Sustainability: Sustainability 'is concerned with measuring whether an activity or an impact is likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn ...many humanitarian interventions, in contrast to development projects, are not designed to be sustainable. They still need assessing, however, in regard to whether, in responding to acute and immediate needs, they take the longer term into account' (DAC Evaluation Criteria). Minear has referred to this as connectedness: the need 'to assure that activities of a short-term emergency nature are carried out in a context which takes longer-term and inter-connected problems into account' (Minear, 1994). (ALNAP)

Sustainable Development: Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Comment: This succinct definition from the Brundtland Commission, 1987, embodies two key concepts: firstly the role of social and economic development in meeting the needs of people, particularly the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given, and secondly the recognition that environmental capacities are limited and if overused and degraded, will compromise our ability to meet future needs. Successful sustainable development requires a basis of socio-cultural development, political stability, economic growth and ecosystem protection, which are also important for disaster risk reduction. At the

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

same time, the reduction of disaster risks will contribute to more sustainable development. (ISDR)

Technological Disaster: Air accident, multiple collisions, building fire, etc. Under this category operators will classify the following:

- Automobile, rail, aircraft or navigation accidents, including transportation accidents.
- Damages or collapse of any type of structure for reasons such as excess weight in public places, bridges, etc. Damages in structures caused by natural phenomena should be reported as an effect of these phenomena.
- Urban fires caused by technological failures and explosions of any type, but limited to those induced or highly connected to non-natural phenomena different that Complex Emergency (social conflict, i.e. terrorist attacks, etc.).
- Pollution events: Concentration of polluting substances in the air, water or soils, at levels harmful to human health, crops or animal species, including leaks of harmful liquid, solid or gas substances, whether radioactive or not. (GLIDE)

Technological Hazards: Hazards originating from technological or industrial accidents, dangerous procedures, infrastructure failures or specific human activities that may cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.

Comment: Examples of technological hazards include industrial pollution, nuclear radiation, toxic wastes, dam failures, transport, industrial or technological accidents (explosions, fires, chemical spills). (ISDR)

Temporary Ceasefire: The temporary cessation of hostilities by agreement between the warring parties. A ceasefire or armistice may be 'general', in which case hostilities cease throughout the theatre of war, or 'local', in which there is only a partial cessation of hostilities. A general ceasefire often precedes a peace treaty. (OCHA)

Terrorism: While there is no agreed upon international definition of "terrorism" yet, it is a concept generally understood to mean a criminal act or acts intended to inflict dramatic and deadly injury on civilians and to create an atmosphere of fear, generally in furtherance of a political or ideological (whether secular or religious) purpose. Terrorism is most often carried out by sub-national or transnational groups, but it has also been known to be practiced by rulers as an instrument of control. (OCHA)

Tidal Wave: An abrupt rise of tidal water (caused by atmospheric activities) moving rapidly inland from the mouth of an estuary. (UN DHA)

Tornado: A violently rotating storm of small diameter; the most violent weather phenomenon. It is produced in a very severe thunderstorm and appears as a funnel cloud extending from the base of a Cumulonimbus to the ground. (GLIDE)

Trafficking in Persons: The 2000 Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention against

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Transnational Organised Crime defines trafficking in persons as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. Victims of trafficking have either never consented or their initial consent has been rendered meaningless by the coercive, deceptive or abusive actions of the traffickers. Trafficking can occur regardless of whether victims are taken to another country or only moved from one place to another within the same country. (OCHA)

Transit Camp: An area, with at least overnight facilities, where refugees are gathered prior to moving on to a more permanent settlement. (UNHCR)

Transitional Administration: A transitional authority often arising from a negotiated peace process and established by the UN Security Council to assist a country during a government regime change or passage to independence. It typically consists of three segments: (i) public administration including civilian police, (ii) humanitarian assistance, and (iii) UN Peacekeeping Force. Transitional administrations have been authorized in countries including East Timor (UNTAET) and Kosovo (UNMIK). (OCHA)

Transitional Justice: As a political transition unfolds after a period of violence or repression, a society is often confronted with a difficult legacy of human rights abuse. The measures that need to be taken might involve both judicial and non-judicial responses to violations of human rights. These may include: prosecuting individual perpetrators; offering reparations to victims of state sponsored violence; establishing truth-seeking initiatives about past abuses; reforming institutions like the police and the courts; and removing human rights abusers from positions of power. Increasingly, these approaches are used in combination to achieve a more comprehensive and far-reaching sense of justice. Each country situation is unique and therefore might need different set of complementary measures. (OCHA)

Tropical Cyclone: Generic term for a non-frontal synoptic scale cyclone originating over tropical or sub-tropical waters with organized convection and definite cyclonic surface wind circulation. (The term is also used for a storm in the South-West Indian Ocean in which the maximum of the sustained wind speed is estimated to be in the range of 64 to 90 knots and in the South Pacific and South-East Indian Ocean with the maximum of the sustained over 33 knots.) (WMO)

Tropical Storm: See "tropical cyclone".

Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A temporary body established and officially sanctioned to investigate and report on patterns of human rights abuses occurring over a period of time in a particular country or in relation to a particular conflict. Truth commissions are intended to provide a full accounting of past atrocities and an official acknowledgement of the corresponding suffering of victims, promote national reconciliation, bolster a new political order and/or legitimize new policies, and provide recommendations on how to prevent a recurrence of such abuses. To the extent that official truth is a step towards a full and inclusive national memory that allows the voices of the victims and survivors to be

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

heard, a truth commission can be a crucial step towards addressing the needs of a transitional society.

It is noteworthy that truth commissions do not have the power to prosecute or punish perpetrators, make judicial pronouncements, or implement the reforms or reparations programs that they may recommend in their reports. Their implementation depends entirely on the will and interest of the political authorities. There have been over 20 truth commissions around the world over the past 25 years. (OCHA)

Tsunami: Seismic sea waves (mistakenly called “tidal waves”), which are a series of enormous waves created by an underwater disturbance such as an earthquake, landslide, volcanic eruption, or meteorite. A tsunami can move hundreds of miles per hour in the open ocean and smash into land with waves as high as 100 feet or more. (ITIC)

UN Country Team (UNCT): The ensemble of agencies of the UN System in a given country. The objective of inter-agency cooperation in general, and of UNHCR’s participation in the UN Country Team in particular, is to ensure that a coherent approach is taken by UN bodies in their collective response to humanitarian, developmental, and other strategies relevant to the country in which they are operating. (UNHCR)

UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF): The UNDAF is the common strategic framework for the operational activities of the UN system at country level. It aims to provide a collective, coherent and integrated UN system response to national priorities and needs, including Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) and equivalent national strategies. A key component of the UNDAF process is the formulation of a Results Matrix (RM), which forms the UN’s business plan at country level. (ODI)

UN Military and Civil Defence Assets (UN MCDA): Military and civil defence resources requested by the UN humanitarian agencies and deployed under UN control specifically to support humanitarian activities and military and civil defence resources that might be available. (OCHA)

Unexploded Ordnance (UXO): An explosive weapon that has been primed, fused, armed or otherwise prepared for use or used. It may have been fired, dropped, launched, or projected yet remains unexploded, either through malfunction or design or for any other reason. Ammunition consists of artillery shells, artillery rockets or mortar, some of which can dispense submunitions; the warheads (simply known as carrier) are adapted to discharge their payload with a delay or proximity fuse function. Submunition are bomblets or minelets that form part of a cluster bomb or artillery shell payload. A minelet is anything designed to be initiated by its victim. Bomblet is the term normally used to indicate a submunition containing a high explosive designed to detonate on impact or after short delay. (OCHA)

United Nations Security Phases: The five security phases, taking into consideration the particular political, geographical and other relevant circumstances of the duty station concerned, are as follows:

- Phase one – Precautionary: Warn staff that the security situation in the country or a portion of the country is such that caution should be exercised. Travel to the duty station requires advance clearance from the Designated Official.

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

- Phase two – Restricted movement: All staff members and their families will be required to remain at home, unless otherwise instructed. No travel, incoming within the country, will occur unless specifically authorized by the Designated Official as essential travel.
- Phase three – Relocation: Indicates a substantial deterioration in the security situation, which may result in the relocation of staff members or their eligible dependants.
- Phase four – Programme suspension: Apart from staff directly concerned with emergency or humanitarian relief operations or security matters, other internationally recruited staff members who heretofore were considered essential to maintain programme activities will be evacuated.
- Phase five – Evacuation: The decision to initiate Phase Five, declared following approval by the Secretary-General, signifies that the situation has deteriorated to such a point that all remaining internationally recruited staff members are required to leave. (UNHCR)

Violence: The concept of violence is contested, and definitions generally reflect moral and political motivations. A relatively neutral definition is "psychological or physical force exerted for the purpose of injuring, damaging, or abusing people or property" (US Department of Justice, 1996:D-3). (+) (FEWER)

- **Violence, cultural:** New term introduced by J. Galtung,; "[t]hose aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence - exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics) - that can be used to justify, legitimise, or direct structural violence" (Galtung, 1996:196). (FEWER)
- **Violence, psychological:** Indirect acts of negative influence that aim to affect or arouse fear or break mental resistance of a target audience by indoctrination (brain-washing), misinformation, propaganda, blackmail or terror. (FEWER)
- **Violence, structural:** Introduced by J. Galtung this is a broad concept referring to concealed violence in unjust, unequal and unrepresentative social structures, and to situations in which the "actual somatic and mental realisations of human beings are below their potential realisations." (cit. International Alert, II:5). (FEWER)

Violent Wind: Violent storm – wind with a speed between 56 and 63 knots (Beaufort scale wind force 11). (GLIDE)

Volcanic Eruption: The discharge (aerially explosive) of fragmentary ejecta, lava and gases from a volcanic vent. (UN DHA)

Voluntary Agencies: Non-governmental agencies or organizations that exist in many countries throughout the world. Some possess personnel trained to assist when disaster strikes. Some volags have capabilities that extend from the local to national and international levels. (UN DHA)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

Voluntary Repatriation: The free and voluntary return of refugees to their country of origin in safety and dignity. Voluntary repatriation may be organized, (i.e. when it takes place under the auspices of the concerned States and UNHCR), or spontaneous (i.e. when refugees return by their own means with UNHCR and States having little or no direct involvement in the process of return). (UNHCR)

Vulnerability: The conditions determined by physical, social, economic and environmental factors or processes, which increase the susceptibility of a community to the impact of hazards. For positive factors, which increase the ability of people to cope with hazards, see definition of 'capacity'. (ISDR)

War Crime: Grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, namely, any of the following acts against persons or property protected under the provisions of the relevant Geneva Convention, committed as part of a plan or policy or as part of a large-scale commission of such crimes, including:

- Wilful killing;
- Torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments;
- Wilfully causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or health;
- Extensive destruction and appropriation of property not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly;
- Compelling a prisoner of war or other protected person to serve in the forces of a hostile Power;
- Wilfully depriving a prisoner of war or other protected person of the rights of fair and regular trial;
- Unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement;
- Taking of hostages.

War crimes also consist of many other serious violations of the international laws and customs applicable in international and non-international armed conflicts, including intentionally directing attacks against a civilian population as such, against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities or against civilian objects. (OCHA)

Warning: Dissemination of message signalling imminent hazard which may include advice on protective measures. See also "alert". (UN DHA)

Wild Fire: An unplanned, unwanted wildland fire including unauthorized human-caused fires, escaped wildland fire use events, escaped prescribed fire projects, and all other wildland fires where the objective is to put the fire out. (NWCG)

RELIEFWEB GLOSSARY OF HUMANITARIAN TERMS, Continued

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Notes

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