

# **GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL DEFENCE STRUCTURES**

## **1. Introduction**

In accordance with its Constitution, it is incumbent upon the ICDO to provide technical assistance to Governments of Member States in order to contribute to the development of civil defence at the national level.

To this end, the ICDO outlines in this document the main principles and lines of action which should govern the creation and development of civil defence structures.

## **2. Responsibilities of the State in the face of disasters**

The potential dangers facing States and populations require all levels of political authority (national, regional, local) to create a civil defence concept whose cornerstone is the establishment of an adequate system. This is a matter of political responsibility which has its foundation in the very notion of the State: organising the community and providing certain of its individuals' vital needs, amongst which the safeguard of lives, property and the environment rank first.

The development of this concept must be made by the State according to the:

### **2.1 Principle of legality**

Respect of the State's legal legitimacy requires that plans for the prevention of disasters and the lessening of their consequences be established in accordance with national and supranational legislation. This presupposes the existence of internal laws and regulations that take into consideration the hazards with which the country may be faced. The application of this principle of legality is of prime importance as in its absence the only possible course of action is to react according to need, implementing emergency measures imposed by an extraordinary situation, by virtue of the law of necessity and according to need, with the intention of protecting the population and institutions.

## **3. The State's strategy**

The State's strategy for preventing disasters and lessening their effect consists of establishing a system for protecting the population, property and the environment which is based on an evaluation of the hazards and dangers threatening the country.

It is indeed essential that the State's plan of action be founded on a systematic and periodic evaluation of the risks involved.

This system is built around the following elements:

### **3.1 Prevention**

The prevention of risks involves .

3.1.1 forecasting based on the knowledge and monitoring of natural or technological circumstances that may cause disasters (meteorological conditions at the origin of floods, drought etc.);

3.1.2 alerting the population by sounding a warning signal pre-agreed by the competent authorities;

3.1.3 risk reduction measures:

3.1.3.1 established measures imposing adherence to administrative and technical rules for the security of persons, property and the protection of the environment;

3.1.3.2 measures regulating urbanisation and allowing land exploitation rights in risk areas to be controlled;

3.1.3.3 protection measures designed to reduce the vulnerability of people and property (earth works);

3.1.3.4 informing the population of the hazards to which the country is exposed and also of the plans established to deal with them;

3.1.3.5 planning the measures to be taken and the means to be used when faced with impending or actual natural or technological disasters includes:

- the establishment of various national, regional and local plans of action;
- general plans for the organisation of assistance and specialised measures providing for direct intervention in different types of disasters, inventorying the resources to be employed, and co-ordinating the various public emergency services called upon to intervene within the framework of the established plans.

### **3.2 Crisis management**

Crisis management includes:

3.2.1 activating the rescue plans by the State's competent national, regional and local authorities;

3.2.2 implementing the rescue plans under the responsibility of the competent authorities.

### **3.3 Post-crisis management**

Post-crisis management includes:

3.3.1 return to normal

3.3.2 feed-back

## **4. Civil defence: a service of the State intended to co-ordinate the protection of the population**

In order to face up to this responsibility, many states have established within their borders various procedures aiming at thwarting the dangers which could threaten the population, vital installations required by the community and property, as well as the environment, and also at saving lives.

These procedures are administered by bodies which can have different names: civil safety, civil protection, civil defence, disaster or major risks prevention and fire fighting service, etc.

It must be borne in mind within this context that in 1965, the 20th session of the United Nations General Assembly called on "governments to establish an appropriate planning and executive body, best suited to their particular circumstances with a view to defining the scope and nature of the necessary assistance and centralising the management of relief operations" (Resolution 2034).

Further, another resolution of the General Assembly (No.3362) subsequently reminded the international community of its duties in terms of civil defence.

The creation by the State of a body responsible for applying this strategy must adhere to the following principles:

#### **4.1 Principle of subsidiarity**

This central principle states that the measures put in place to protect the population, property and the environment should correspond on a national, regional and local level to the specific competencies and means available to the agencies responsible for their application.

#### **4.2 Principle of co-ordination**

The management of safety measures (prevention, crisis and post-crisis management) is co-ordinated by an ad hoc body endowed with public powers under the aegis of the State. This is normally the civil defence Service.

In fact, civil defence is a co-ordinating organ. Operating in a multi-sector context, it is the ideal management tool for the multiple and divers operations aiming at the safeguard of life, property and the environment.

In that capacity, it is up to it to co-ordinate the action of the various State bodies concerned by the prevention of disasters and the lessening of their consequences (public health services, police, defence, agencies responsible for protection of the environment, of energy, etc.) which may belong to various ministries (interior, health, environment, education, defence, etc.).

### **5. The role of civil defence**

Considering the strategy to be adopted, it would appear that the broad characteristics of the organisms created or designated by the State to protect populations are as follows:

#### **5.1 A vehicle for reflection**

Civil defence is above all a vehicle for reflection responsible for anticipating and preparing for disasters, formulating strategies and developing feed-back based on experience, etc.

#### **5.2 An advisory organ**

Civil defence also has an advisory role which it performs as technical adviser to the State in disaster management matters. Civil defence must put pressure on the government to integrate disaster prevention and preparation measures in its long-term economic and social development policies and to ensure that budget allocations for these activities are granted despite the financial constraints affecting most States. Moreover, civil defence must argue for priority to be given to prevention and preparation measures which may reduce the incidence and consequences of disasters as well as the recourse to assistance and rehabilitation measures.

### **6. Fields of action of civil defence**

Given the role of civil defence organisations, their co-ordinating activities will cover the following areas:

#### **6.1 Information and training**

Informing and training populations on the dangers and risks, on the way to prevent and prepare for them and on the established plans of action;

Training civil defence managers and personnel.

### **6.2 Warning of the imminence or occurrence of a disaster**

Installing and managing an alarm centre coupled with a disaster forecast and detection system enabling population protection measures to be taken without delay.

### **6.3 Protection of and assistance to the population**

In case of an imminent or actual disaster, it is necessary to safeguard the population, in particular by taking evacuation and confinement measures and maintaining the continuity of its daily life and survival by providing food, sanitary and medical assistance.

### **6.4 Assistance in disaster situations**

Rescue, food, sanitary and emergency medical assistance, providing shelter to victims and survivors.

### **6.5 Rehabilitation**

Repairing the infrastructure necessary for maintaining living conditions (reconstruction, decontamination, mine clearance, etc.).

## **7. Different civil defence structures**

It is up to the State to define the structure of the civil defence organ to be established, taking into consideration, in accordance with the principles of subsidiarity and co-ordination, the means already existing. Consequently, civil defence structures can take different forms: in certain countries it is a ministry; in others it is a legal entity administered by representatives of the State and of the economic and social groups concerned; in others still, it is an inter-ministerial co-ordination office; etc.

Furthermore, civil defence structures can have very variable human and material resources: from one extreme to another, it may thus have its own operational means or simply co-ordinate those made available to it by other state agencies. The variations are endless and each State shall decide which suits it best considering its own political and administrative characteristics.

## **8. Developing civil defence structures**

Taking into account the aforesaid population, property and environment protection programmes, the development of national civil defence structures should adhere to the following blueprint, subject to the necessary response to an emergency situation with existing means:

8.1 Analysis of risks and dangers.

8.2 Definition of priorities.

8.3 Inventory of means available.

8.4 Definition by the State of the matters for which the various agencies involved in safeguarding the population, property and the environment are responsible.

8.5 Establishment of the terms of reference and powers of the civil defence bodies.

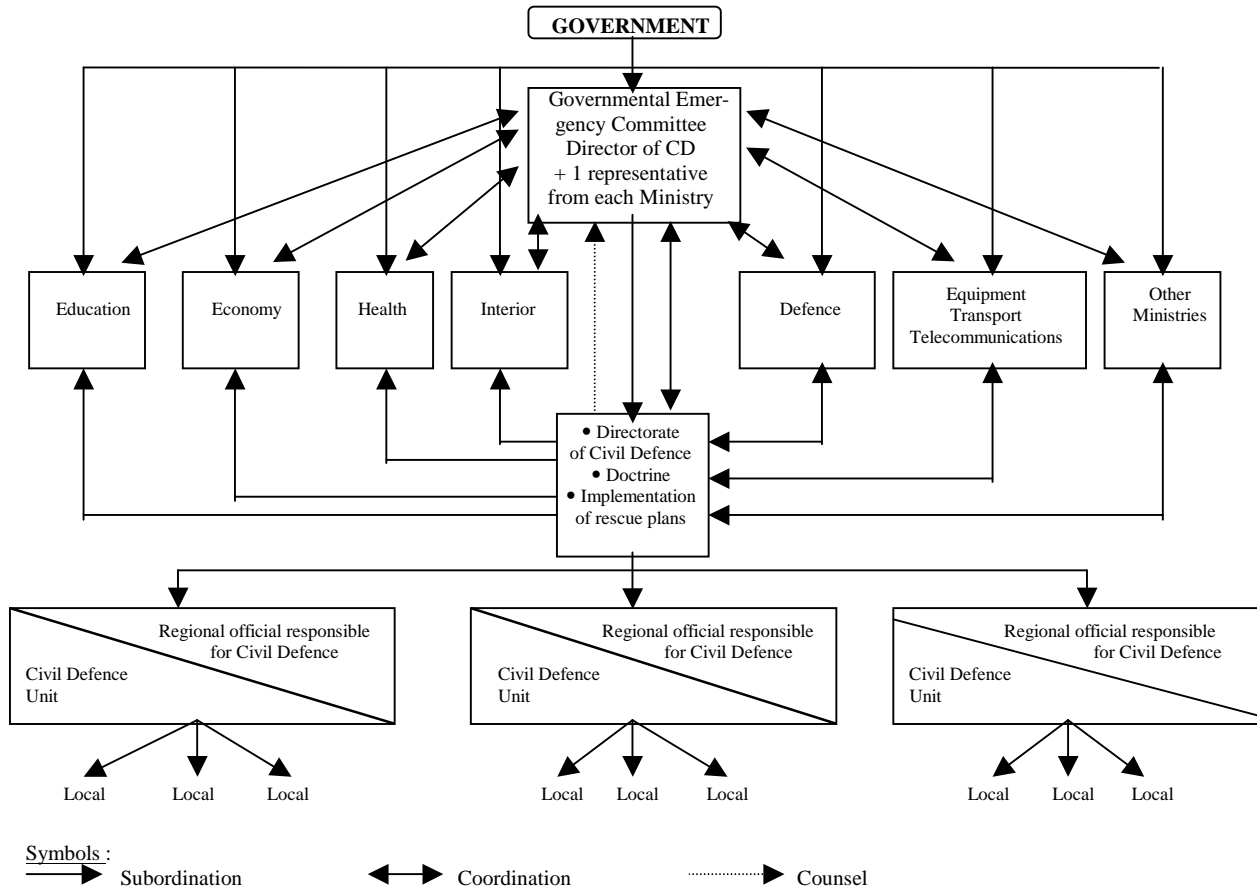
8.6 Creation or strengthening of the civil defence agency.

## 9. Conclusion

These guidelines should allow every State and particularly those that do not have such an ad hoc administrative service to establish their own programmes to create or strengthen civil defence structures along simple, universal and proven lines based on the positive experiences of many countries.

CIVIL DEFENCE STRUCTURES :  
SUGGESTED ORGANISATION CHART

*Annex 1*



## *Annex 2*

### **NATIONAL ORGANISATION AND RESCUE PLANS**

National organisation and rescue plans in case of disasters are the tools which enable the authorities to foresee, co-ordinate and implement the various protection and assistance operations undertaken by State services and, in some instances, by the private sector, to safeguard life, property and the environment.

Organising assistance involves two planning phases:

#### **1. Preventive planning for assistance**

Preventive planning aims at perfecting the organisation and effectiveness of services in charge of civil defence. It involves a rational and precise analysis of the needs and means so as to match these to the reality of the risks. To this end, it must:

- identify risks of whatever nature (natural or due to man; ordinary or exceptional) at the local, regional or national level;
- establish an inventory of existing and available human and material resources required to face those risks;
- examine previous rescue operations to determine how best to use these resources through the setting up of programmes for equipment, recruitment, training and establishment of civil defence units.

#### **2. Planning for crises**

Crisis management requires a rapid and appropriate response to allow civil defence services to fulfil efficiently their mission of safeguarding population, property and the environment. For this, it is important that each State develops its own assistance plan covering any exceptional situation at the local and the national levels. Such planning must identify a series of active measures against disasters and their consequences and must for this lay down objectives for:

- protecting and assisting the population: food, medical and sanitary (public hygiene) aid, evacuation and provision of shelter to victims and survivors;
- protecting property and the environment (hospitals, road and rail networks, forests, etc.).

Such assistance plans may be general or specific and must be activated by a previously nominated competent authority:

##### **2.1 General plans for organising assistance**

These aim at

- setting up an assistance committee co-ordinated by the body responsible for safeguarding from disasters populations, property and the environment ( civil defence for example) which brings together representatives from:
  - all state agencies concerned, including the ministries of interior, health, transport and communications, energy, economy, etc.;
  - all private entities concerned (non-governmental organisations, private clinics, etc.).

Depending on the political and administrative structures of each State, this assistance committee is placed under the authority of the ministry most involved in the protection of populations, property and the environment.

- compiling a directory listing public and private means and the conditions for their use:
  - inventory of material resources: hospitals, medical and sanitary equipment, accommodation centres, food stocks and vital necessities such as blankets, clothes, etc.;
  - inventory of human resources: the various authorities, services or entities or personnel likely to be called upon in case of disasters (telephone numbers of the persons responsible for those services or entities).

## **2.2 Specific plans for organising assistance**

As a complement to general plans, specific plans for organising assistance aim at:

- organising assistance for specific risks. These plans must be specially adapted to the nature of the risk or of the installation concerned and must be revised should these risks or scientific knowledge change;
- establishing strategies for the operations to be undertaken by civil defence services and perfecting measures for informing and protecting populations (alert situations, evacuation, etc.).

Co-ordination of assistance is ensured by an assistance committee under the authority of the responsible ministry.

If the scope of the disaster is such that the specific organisation plan is insufficient, the general plan can be activated at the same time.

## *Annex 3*

# **INTEGRATION OF DISASTER PREVENTION MEASURES IN LONG-TERM NATIONAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

## **1. Importance of prevention**

The prevention of dangers and risks is the first step in the State's strategy for protecting populations from natural or man-made disasters, the other two steps being crisis management and post-crisis management.

Prevention has a major role within the structures established by the State for protecting populations, this to the extent that it enables:

- the occurrence of accidents and disasters to be limited;
- their consequences to be lessened when they do occur;

and therefore to limit the number of victims and damage to property and the environment as well as the rehabilitation operations which follow disasters.

## **2. Integrating prevention in long-term development policies**

Prevention of disasters, which involves various measures (forecasting disasters, alert, protection and assistance, rehabilitation), must be the object of a continuous planning and decision-making process taking all sectors into account since the effectiveness of disaster prevention depends on reliable co-ordination and a valid combination of these measures.

They must therefore be closely integrated in the long term socio-economic development policies, and since responsibility for population protection falls to the government it is for it to ensure this integration.

National civil defence bodies have a role to play in this respect:

- it is above all they who must argue in favour of prevention with the bodies concerned amongst which political and economic decision-makers figure prominently;
- they must also develop within the population a prevention culture through training and information campaigns

*Annex 4*

**PLAN FOR OBTAINING ASSISTANCE FOR DEVELOPING CIVIL DEFENCE STRUCTURES**

Many Civil defence structures need external assistance in order to develop and fulfil their mission.

The plan suggested below should enable those States wishing to create or strengthen their civil defence structures to draw up their basic documents for development co-operation.

