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Source: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

Date: 31 May 2001

The Role of OCHA in emergency United Nations operations following the earthquake in Gujarat, India -- 26 January 2001 A lessons learned study

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Geneva, 31 May 2001

Executive Summary

The Indian State of Gujarat was struck by a major earthquake on the morning of 26 January 2001. Approximately 20,000 people died; over 160,000 people were injured. Some 400,000 homes were destroyed, leaving almost a million people without immediate shelter.

The national response - from several levels of Government, private sector, civil society and individuals - was overwhelmingly dominant, and was impressive, given the circumstances. The international response was largely dominated by bilateral actions and by the actions of non-governmental organisations and the Red Cross Movement. As is often the case in natural disaster response, the United Nations was a relatively minor player in the emergency phase (26 January to 20 February 2001).

Although staffed by well qualified and highly motivated team members, the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination system was not able to be particularly effective, even in the limited context of the United Nations response. An UNDAC team was deployed to India, and established an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) in the city of Bhuj on 2 February, one week after the initial quake. The UNDAC team arrived too late to play any significant role in the search and rescue operation, which was winding down when the team arrived in Bhuj. During the subsequent phase, the team was too small, and too poorly equipped, to provide fully effective coordination or assessment services. Where the UNDAC team did appear to have added some value to the emergency response effort was in strengthening the coordination capacity of the Indian authorities.

Relations within the United Nations community were sometimes poor, and this affected performance. Neither the United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) nor the UNDAC team seemed entirely clear as to what the precise role of the UNDAC team should have been. Expectations were various and high, and could not be met. Donors and international non-governmental organizations were, , and were expressing some disappointment withby the UN's and by the team's performance.

There are important lessons to be learned at a number of levels. At the level of the United Nations system, there is a need to clarify the institutional arrangements which govern the system's response to natural disasters. A joint letter to all Resident Coordinators (RCs) from the UNDP Administrator and the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), dated 26 March 1999, usefully identifies the reporting lines that will apply in such circumstances. Little or nothing, however, has been done to turn the intent of this arrangement into an effective blueprint for disaster management. In the case of the Gujarat earthquake, the Resident Coordinator would have benefited from clear, quick guidance from the Emergency Response Coordinator.

Appeals risk being issued too late to be of real use during the emergency phase of natural disaster response. The 'Immediate Needs and Action Plan' (an ersatz appeal tailored to the Indian environment) was issued by the United Nations Disaster Management Team in Delhi on 8 February, too late to engender significant relief during the emergency phase of the response effort.

At the level of OCHA, there is a need to bring clarity to the role of the UNDAC teams. The generic Terms of Reference are focussed on support to the Resident Coordinator and the Disaster Management Team, but these relationships did not function well and need to be reworked. In a similar vein, there is a need for OCHA to sensitise RCs and DMTs to the role of UNDAC teams - well before disasters strike.

Within OCHA, there are improvements that need to be introduced to ensure the better functioning of the UNDAC teams. For example, the late arrival of the UNDAC team in Bhuj, and its inadequate numbers, can only in part be attributed to the particularities of the Indian situation - other international actors managed to overcome these constraints, and OCHA needs to learn from their flexibility. As for the inadequate equipment available to the team, this was a particular disappointment, as one Government explicitly offered to provide a support module at short notice, but was rebuffed. Better training should ensure that equipment which is needed and available is not again turned back.

The United Nations will not, in most cases, be the major player in natural disaster response. It does, however, have the legitimacy and the worldwide network needed to play a limited but effective role. Similarly, the UNDAC system - with its strong support from donor Governments, and its cadre of excellent personnel - should be a vital tool for the United Nations in playing that role. A number of specific measures that could be taken, and which are necessary to bring about the changes referred to here, are enumerated in the recommendations at the end of this report.

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Glossary of acronyms

DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DMT / UNDMT	Disaster Management Team / United Nations Disaster Management Team
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian Office
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
EU	European Union
GOG	Government of Gujarat
GOI	Government of India
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
IASC-WG	Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Office
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Action Groups
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OCHA	Office for the Co ordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
RC	Resident Coordinator
SAR	Search and Rescue
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SRSA	Swedish Rescue Services Agency
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WFP	World Food Programme

WHO World Health Organisation

I. Introduction

I.1 Background

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), through its Policy Development and Studies Branch, requested this lessons learned study on the OCHA response to the Gujarat earthquake. It was agreed that the study would be most useful if it were conceived broadly, incorporating a view of the United Nations disaster response capacity as a whole. Thus, though the starting point of the study is OCHA's performance in the Gujarat earthquake international emergency response, some wider questions are also touched upon. In particular, how can the elements of the United Nations system best work together to ensure a more effective disaster-response capacity?

I.2 Methodology

Terms of Reference are attached at Annex 1. These were shared with members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group (IASC WG) prior to finalisation, and the views of members of the IASC WG were taken into consideration.

The Study has been conducted through a review of documentation on the first response and on the basis of extensive interviews. Those interviewed include all members of the UNDAC team deployed in response to the Gujarat earthquake; United Nations staff Delhi, Geneva, New York and Rome; officials of the Government of India (GOI) and the State Government of Gujarat (GOG), and other Indian nationals associated with the response effort; UN and non-UN personnel deployed in the earthquake-affected area following the disaster, and others. A full list of those interviewed is attached at Annex 2.

The period of time under study is the emergency phase from 26 of January 2001 to 20 February 2001. To some extent, the date of 20 February is arbitrary, though there is a general consensus that after that date efforts were principally focussed on rehabilitation and recovery.

The principal issues for examination have been those with which OCHA and UNDAC are most closely associated: coordination and support to coordination, as well as assessment. Timeliness of response, services, accuracy and quality of information and relationships have all been considered in some detail. Attention has been paid both to the expectations as to what should have been delivered, as well as to the perceptions of what was actually delivered.

II. The context

II.1 The United Nations in India: changing context

India is a highly disaster prone area. Much of its landmass lies within the earthquake risk zones 3 and 5, and is also prone to cyclones, floods and droughts.

India has experienced steady economic growth for a number of years, benefiting from the global growth in the world economy and its progressive integration into that economy. The Government of India announced on 13 April 2001 that it expects the economy to grow some 6% in 2001, in spite of the downturn in the global electronic and information technology sectors. This growth has been made possible not least because of deregulation and general liberalisation of the Indian economy.

The increasing openness to the outside world of the Indian administration was reflected in decisions taken by the Government of India with respect to the response to the Gujarat earthquake. In particular, the new openness can be perceived in the early decisions of the Government of India to facilitate the receipt of international aid as spontaneously offered. The long-standing policy of the Government of India has been that it does not ask for, or appeal for, international aid in disasters. It does, however, also have an established policy to accept "expressions of solidarity". In the case of the Gujarat earthquake, the policy remained formally unchanged, though in practice the Government did engage with the international relief community more fully than it had in the past.

Given that the Indian authorities have traditionally assumed all responsibility for response to disasters through national resources, the United Nations system had only limited prior experience in how to engage effectively with the Indian authorities in a crisis-response situation. Much of what recent experience there was came from the response effort to the Orissa super-cyclone of 1998. .

II.2 The United Nations system and disaster response

In theory at least, the Resident Coordinator reports to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) when responding to complex emergencies and natural disasters. This arrangement was outlined by the UNDP Associate Administrator in an administrative instruction dated 3 September 1993. It was later reaffirmed by the UNDP Administrator and the ERC in a joint letter dated 26 March 1999. Some of the specific responsibilities of the role of the Resident Coordinator are spelled out in some helpful detail in the documentation annexed to the letter of 1999. The responsibilities of the Emergency Relief Coordinator in regard to the support and initiatives to take in relation to the RC and the disasters in the RC's country are, however, not very specific and have not been developed.

The UNDP training manual "Roles and Responsibilities for UNDMT" (draft April 2001) reads as follows:

In disaster and emergency-prone countries, the UN Resident Coordinator heads a Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) consisting of UN agencies concerned with response to humanitarian emergencies... It supports and assists the office of the UN Resident Coordinator in the exercise of its system-wide functions.

III. The earthquake and the first response

III.1 The Gujarat earthquake

The earthquake which struck India's western State of Gujarat at 08:46 local time on 26 January 2001 - India's Republic Day holiday - measured 6.9 on the Richter scale and lasted about 110 seconds. It was the most powerful earthquake to strike India in half a century. The effect was devastating, widespread and the impact of the quake was felt in distant locations across northern India, in Pakistan, Bangladesh and western Nepal.

III.2 The affected area (Map 1)

The State of Gujarat is one of the driest areas of India, and is also one of the most disaster prone states in a highly disaster prone country. Gujarat is currently experiencing the third year in a drought cycle; two years ago it suffered the impact of a cyclone in Kutch district. Nevertheless, Gujarat is one of the wealthier states in the Indian Union. It is the most industrialized, and has an active business community with extensive links to large expatriate Gujarati communities abroad. Within India, the Gujaratis have extensive and active links with communities around the country's important commercial centres. The State has a total population of approximately 41 million.

III.3 The impact of the earthquake

Five districts in the north-western part of Gujarat were highly affected by the earthquake. It had an impact on 21 of the 25 districts in Gujarat State and affected 15 million people, directly and indirectly. The epicentre of the earthquake was approximately 20 km northeast of Bhuj. In the town of Bachau, about 150 km northeast of Bhuj, 80-90% of all buildings destroyed or damage to the extent they will have to be demolished.

The earthquake killed 20,005 people and injured 165,000 (data as per end of March 2001). These casualty figures would have been higher had the earthquake not been preceded by an initial tremor that led large number of people to evacuate their homes. Some 800,000 people were rendered homeless by the earthquake, about 400,000 houses destroyed and one million houses damaged. The social infrastructure of schools and the health infrastructure both in urban and rural areas was severely disrupted. 1,200 schools, hundreds of rural and urban clinics and health centres, as well as three hospitals, were totally destroyed. Almost 8,000 villages were affected. In the worst affected areas of Kutch district, there are hundreds of villages where the physical destruction is between 70-90 % of all housing and service infrastructure, including those used by government administration, police and the courts. The calculation of the Government of Gujarat is of a 15% GDP loss for 2001 and a total loss of direct and indirect losses of USD 4.5 billion. Housing alone amounts to USD 2.1 billion.

There were some early disturbances in the communications with the region. Some of the main access roads were damaged but did not close for incoming traffic. The Indian Air Force base at Bhuj was disrupted immediately after the quake, but was opened for civilian and relief flights to facilitate the emergency response by the evening of 26 January.

III.4 Government of India: national and local response

Although detailed news of the earthquake was scarce during the early part of the 26 January, the central Government set up and activated its emergency management system. The Ministry of Agriculture operated an emergency operations centre and became relatively quickly the focal point for information gathering and sharing. The Cabinet met in emergency session and dispatched a senior member of the Cabinet to Gujarat to assist the State Government emergency operations. Towards the evening of the 26 January, a message from the Deputy Chief of Air Force Staff confirmed that the Air Force base strip was open for operations and would receive relief flights. A senior government official was dispatched for a first on-site assessment, and for discussions with the local administration officials. The Government had already decided that the scale of the disaster was such that international offers of assistance would be welcomed and facilitated. The first report back by the official confirmed that such a decision was correct.

The Government of Gujarat took responsibility for the leadership and direction of the emergency action and set up an operations cell in Gandhinagar, the administrative capital of Gujarat (at about 35 km from Ahmedabad, the commercial capital). Decisions were taken to reinforce the District organisation in the most affected areas of Kutch.

The military is traditionally a primary resource in disaster response in India. Military assets in the affected area were diverted to relief efforts almost immediately after the earthquake struck. Within hours, substantial out-of-area reinforcements were on their way. Military hospitals were set up, performing a vast number of surgical interventions. Heavy equipment for rescue work and transport of relief goods was provided in the early days. The air force used its assets for some of the early, crucial aerial surveys that provided some early understanding of the scope of the damage. Military personnel rescued hundreds of survivors from the rubble in the first days. Ultimately, more than 30,000 military and para-military personnel were deployed in the rescue and early relief operations.

Given the disruption of the communications network, the first few days inevitably produced some mixed messages about the extent of damage and need for assistance. After two days, however, the mobile phone network was re-established, thanks to immediate action requested by the India Telecom and executed by the operator. The Mobile phones remained the key communications channel for 2-3 weeks, until the land line phones were working reliably again.

In addition to the direct response of the civilian and military authorities in India, substantial early relief was provided by local voluntary organisations, including some with political and religious affiliations. Many of these immediately started organising relief to people who needed food and blankets.

Governments in neighbouring states dispatched medical teams. and relief. Private organisations, corporations, individuals reacted strongly with an outpouring of help. Relief in the form of food, clothing, blankets, money was donated, sent and individually transported in an unprecedented expression of community support.

A first situation report was issued during the day of 26 January by the Government of India, indicating that international assistance would be welcomed. It was also stated that the airport in Ahmedabad would facilitate entry of international search and rescue teams and relief goods. An instruction to the Ministry of External Affairs directed that 15-day visas would be issued on arrival for in-coming relief personnel.

It was clear from the information provided that the worst damage was in Bhuj, though there was still a lack of clarity as to the scope of the damage. Overall, the national-level reaction appears to have become more decisive and flexible with time. Early difficulties in obtaining information and direction gave some international actors the impression that the authorities were not acting strongly. This view was mistaken. The Ministry of Agriculture Operations Emergency Control Room, and the Air Force Flight Coordination Control Room, provided an early and effective basis for a surging national relief effort. Members of the United Nations system were generally not able to provide immediate support to the Indian authorities, largely due to the lack of pre-existing working relationships.

III.5 United Nations Disaster Management Team

The United Nations Disaster Management Team (UNDMT) was alerted to the earthquake by a phone call from OCHA Geneva. which, By 13:30 on 26 January, the UNDMT met to take first stock of the situation, albeit with very little information available. By 20:30 it was decided to seek more information by dispatching a small team of staff from UNDP and WHO Delhi for first assessments. UNICEF sent two staff from Delhi to Ahmedabad on the 27 January equipped with a satellite telephone.

OCHA Geneva made the offer of an UNDAC team on the 26th of January early in the day. After some discussion within the UNDMT, the offer from OCHA to dispatch an UNDAC team was accepted. UNDMT met daily during the first days. At this stage the agency representation was at senior level, although this seems to have changed after the first week. During the first week decisions were taken on sector lead agencies and on cooperation within the sectors. This was particularly relevant for the agencies that were already active in Gujarat (UNICEF, WHO, WFP, ILO, UNDP, UNFPA) which could use their established channels for first assessment.

The Delhi-based representatives of a number of donor Governments called United Nations agencies individually during the first days, asking for information about the disaster and about the UN's own plans. An information meeting with the donors was called for the following days, at the insistence of a donor Government. A coordination meeting under the leadership of WFP was also set up for non-governmental organisations. UNDMT requested OCHA to provide a staff member to assist with the preparation of an action plan for the UN in India. Daily situation reports to OCHA Geneva were sent from the UNDMT to OCHA Geneva until the UNDAC situation reports started being sent.

On 6 February the UN system in India issued a summary of the United Nations Action Plan, with a full document following two days later. The summary provided a quick overview of action taken within the UN system, indications of need for new resources, and a statement of how to use ongoing resources to meet the needs

generated by the disaster.

This document was mailed to all diplomatic missions in Delhi on the donor list. As a fundraising tool, the Action Plan was followed up by agencies individually, and the success of the early resource mobilisation largely depended on the substance of the action and the credibility of each individual agency with its own donor constituency. In general, the UN agencies developed their own operational strategies, while the UNDMT remained a forum for information exchange.

There was no corresponding focal point in the field. In the early days it appeared that UNICEF would provide some lead, but this initiative did not gain momentum. As UNDAC arrived, expectations were pinned to their ability to provide this lead role at field level. UNDP also arrived and informed the agencies of its mandate to coordinate and focus on rehabilitation and livelihoods.

III.6 OCHA and the UNDAC deployment

OCHA Geneva was alerted to the Gujarat earthquake early in the morning of 26 January through its earthquake monitoring system, which alerts the OCHA Duty Officer of any earthquake above 6.0 on the Richter scale. The Duty Officer and the Asia Desk informed both UNDMT Delhi and OCHA Geneva staff. The early estimation was that India would not require any assistance. It was only at about noon on 26 January, Geneva time, that the decision to dispatch an UNDAC team was taken. OCHA's Situation report No 1 of 26 January, issued at 10:00 Geneva time, states that the UNDAC system had been put on alert. Information given about the quake in that situation report indicated a strong sense of the potentially devastating impact of the quake. OCHA Situation report No 2 of 26 January stated that an UNDAC team would be dispatched on 28 January.

During this initial period, OCHA maintained close contact with the UNDMT in Delhi and with the Indian Permanent Mission in Geneva for information sharing. UNDMT sent daily situation reports from Delhi and the Indian Mission shared the Government situation reports. These three sets of situation reports were also posted on the respective websites of the organizations concerned.

The call for an UNDAC team resulted in five persons being selected. Given the nature of the event, a team with a profile of earthquake expertise was sought. Four members of this original team were professionals in the service of national governments, while one was an OCHA staff member. Several of them were experienced UNDAC team members with a number of earlier missions. The deployment of the team took more time than was perhaps warranted, reflecting, in part, the need for a request from the Emergency Relief Coordinator, the Resident Coordinator or the receiving state government - none of which was immediately forthcoming. Three members were routed via Geneva during the weekend, obtaining visas before departure from the Indian Consulate in Geneva on the afternoon of Saturday 27 January. The Consulate was opened on an exceptional basis for this purpose. This group departed Geneva on Sunday, 28 January, arriving in Delhi at close to midnight of 28-29 January, some 60 hours after the earthquake. A fourth member arrived in Geneva on Sunday 28 January, departing Geneva on Monday 29

January and arriving in Delhi the following day. A fifth member travelled directly from Australia to Delhi, also arriving on 30 January.

It seems that while the initial hesitation in deciding on the deployment of the UNDAC caused some delay, this could have been made up, had the deployment then been informed by a greater degree of urgency. While it is generally acknowledged that the team was too small, there was no initiative to mobilise more UNDAC members until replacements were required. Further, there was some question as to the leadership of the team. In normal circumstances, a senior staff member of OCHA would function as a team leader. In this case, , , the team leader was appointed from among the experienced members with national government service background.

Upon arrival in Delhi, the team leader discussed with the UNDMT Convenor (Deputy Resident Coordinator) regarding the UNDAC team Terms of Reference and other preliminary matters.

OCHA issued daily situation reports from 26 to 28 January 2001. No situation reports were issued on 29 and 30 January, though these resumed as of 31 January, with the following situation reports punctuated by intervals of several days. The information provided in these situation reports was compiled on the basis of situation reports from Bhuj and Delhi, as provided by UNDMT and later by UNDAC. Information from official Government of India sources was also used. This process of waiting for data to be generated by other sources, and then to reprocess the same data is a cumbersome one, and the information, when it finally reaches end users, is frequently otiose. While it is recognised that the United Nations is often constrained to provide information with an official imprimatur, there is a need for flexibility. A sudden-onset disaster is, inevitably, a fast-moving event, the response to which would benefit from dedicated information workers, if information is seen as one of the key products to be offered.

OCHA allocated almost USD 200,000 for relief materials from its own disaster fund and channelled cash from three donor Governments. These cash grants were announced to the UNDP office in Delhi, which undertook to implement the funds. This was done through two well-known Gujarat-based NGOs with which UNDP had recently initiated activities unrelated to the earthquake. These NGOs were entrusted with implementing the grants and providing relief materials to disaster victims.

III.7 International Search and Rescue teams and UNDAC

The international search and rescue (SAR) effort was traditionally a loosely coordinated network of governmental and non-governmental national search and rescue expert teams. There has been a trend, however, towards progressively closer coordination and cooperation. It is normally assumed that a search and rescue team must be in place rapidly, as the likelihood of finding trapped survivors in the aftermath of a disaster is very small after 4-5 days. The international search and rescue in Gujarat deployed 17 teams, comprising 399 members and 29 dogs, and rescued some 25 people.

One of the original purposes for which UNDAC was established was to provide on-

site coordination for the deployment and operations of search and rescue teams in the wake of major earthquakes. To play this role, however, UNDAC teams must arrive at the site of a disaster before or with the first search and rescue teams. In the case of the Gujarat earthquake, this did not happen.

The first international search and rescue team arrived in Ahmedabad on the late evening of 27 January, from Switzerland. Several other teams arrived on 28 January, and on the two following days. In most cases, the teams arrived directly at Ahmedabad and were assisted by the State Government of Gujarat to proceed to Bhuj. Once in Bhuj they operated without the benefit of international coordination services.

The first UNDAC team member to move to Bhuj arrived on the late afternoon of 30 January, almost five days after the initial quake. A request for reinforcement of staff and means of transport was sent. Two more UNDAC team members arrived on 1 February. An UNDAC On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) was established on 2 February 2001, one week after the quake, and after several of the search and rescue teams had already completed their operations and were arranging to depart.

III.8 Governments and donors

Most Governments have representation in India. Given the tradition of limited cooperation in disaster response, however, and given also the emphasis on development cooperation, the missions in Delhi generally lacked extensive experience in emergency relief work in India. In addition, many of the principal actors in international humanitarian assistance have been building up rapid deployment capacities based in their own countries. And these would use their in-country representations mainly for logistics and administrative support. In India, partly as a result of this, the Government of India and the United Nations were under pressure to provide government representatives with quick, sound and extensive information, which added some strain both to the host Government and to the UN. During the emergency response phase, donor government action was mostly in the form of search and rescue, relief flights and visits. The pressure for assessment also increased as time passed and as recovery and rehabilitation planning got under way.

The bulk of the international aid provided during the emergency phase of the Gujarat earthquake response effort was channelled bilaterally. Aid passing through multi-lateral channels was mainly directed to the Red Cross Movement and to non-governmental organisations. A smaller part of the international assistance was channelled through United Nations agencies, with each agency using its established donor contacts to resource its operations for the relief and recovery phase. UNICEF achieved most success in raising resources (raising USD 10 million out of USD 12 million requested within a month).

III.9 Red Cross

Using its in-country resources, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and Indian Red Cross dispatched a small team to Bhuj and

Ahmedabad on 27 January, and immediately launched an early appeal of CHF 2 million to resource its envisaged action. Based on reporting back by the Red Cross team, it was decided that the focus would be on medical and material relief. A field hospital was mobilized and relief goods sought through a CHF 25 million appeal to International Red Cross donors. The Government hospital in Bhuj had collapsed completely in the earthquake and it was assumed that a hospital would be an asset both for the short term emergency and for the period thereafter. The field hospital was fully operational by 4 February. The field hospital was supported by water and sanitation units for clean water, and a logistics unit which was responsible for the management of incoming supplies. The ability of the Red Cross to launch and sustain this high-profile action was based on a number of factors: the role played by the Indian Red Cross as a point of contact with the Indian authorities at all levels; the agreement of different members of the Red Cross Movement to be coordinated; and the intensive and effective flow of information from India, both via Bhuj and via offices in Ahmedabad and Delhi.

III.10 Indian and international NGOs

In mid-February, the UNDAC team noted that there were almost 300 NGOs and private organisations active in the earthquake area, though this number fell sharply in the following weeks. The local NGO sector in Gujarat is strong and active. Many of these are experienced in working with the Government and were able to take on roles in the relief work. Several had pre-existing partnerships with international NGOs, either through the ongoing drought mitigation action, or through development programmes. The large international NGOs have, in most cases, long-standing operations in India and were able to use their existing organisations, with some reinforcement, to gear up substantial emergency relief operations. Oxfam India, Save the Children Fund, Care International, World Vision, Caritas, Médecins Sans Frontières, Lutheran World Federation were among the larger NGOs present and operating in the earthquake-affected area in the emergency phase.

At the request of the Indian authorities, the Gujarat umbrella group Abhiyan took on the role of providing some coordination for the local non-governmental organisations. Abhiyan initiated coordination and information exchange meetings, undertook detailed assessments and information gathering about damage, and was looked upon by the local administration as useful in providing this service to the NGOs and thus relieving the Government of some of the pressure. Abhiyan undertook these services largely to the exclusion of its own relief efforts, and was generally effective. It also served as an important bell-wether for concerns within the local community. The international organisations recognised Abhiyan as an important resource, and interaction was frequent though a full integration of the mechanisms was never achieved and would not perhaps have been feasible.

IV. The Developing Response

IV.1 OCHA's role as coordination of the UN system mobilisation

OCHA's role within the United Nations system is described as being "to provide assessment and coordination leadership in the overall international disaster response."

The 1998 reorganisation of responsibilities between UNDP and OCHA broke up the disaster management cycle by assigning responsibility for preparedness and mitigation to UNDP while keeping the mobilization and coordination of resources for response with OCHA. While the need for coordination is underlined by all stakeholders, good coordination can be expected only when all actors contribute to the coordination, and when the goal of the coordination is shared by all. "The UN is a framework, not a body." And this framework is indeed used as if it were a body for reasons of visibility and resource mobilisation. The situation in the Gujarat earthquake illustrates how that framework was too weak to achieve real unity of purpose or for good coordination to happen.

OCHA's response to the Gujarat earthquake was limited by at least two extraordinary events. First, two other UNDAC teams were already deployed when the team was assembled for the Gujarat earthquake response - one in El Salvador, in connection with the recent earthquake there, and one in Mongolia, in connection with the extended drought and winter storms. This may have imposed significant constraints as the UNDAC roster which, although it nominally has 132 names, in fact comprises a much smaller group of people ready and able to be deployed at short notice. Second, the senior management and staff of OCHA were preoccupied with a helicopter accident in Mongolia, in which Head of the Asia Desk of OCHA's Disaster Response Branch had been killed, along with several other members of the assessment team.

Nevertheless, as early as the day of the earthquake itself it was clear that the Gujarat disaster was an event of historic importance. The focus of the world was for some days on India and the international response system, which OCHA is mandated to coordinate, was geared to mobilise. Because the United Nations system in India had limited capacity for disaster response, leadership was needed, and there was an opportunity to assist the national efforts in an important way. OCHA had the experience and resources to perform this role.

In the following, the OCHA response, which consisted mainly of the deployment of an UNDAC team, will be discussed on the basis of the relationships the UNDAC team established, and the perception their counterparts had of their value added.

To understand the situation that the UNDAC team found on arrival, it should be noted that donors felt that the United Nations agencies had already dissipated their capacity for cohesive action. They had sent mixed messages to donors and other partners by giving different reports, and by not acting according to any agreed plan. This was the case, despite the fact that the UNDMT engaged in daily meetings, and was making efforts to ensure that information was shared and that the United Nations was seen to be taking action. The UNDMT left the impression with several observers of being uncertain as to whether it would have a role in the relief phase at all. Some observers felt that the UNDAC team added to this confusion. Above all, there seemed to be a lack of clarity as to for whom the UNDAC team was providing services.

IV.2 What can be expected of UNDAC and what does UNDAC expect to contribute? Is the UNDMT the counterpart of the UNDAC team and its support function, or the other way around?

According to its standard Terms of Reference, the UNDAC role is to support the Resident Coordinator role and the UNDMT, to strengthen it and to add resources. This requires that there is a mutual understanding of what should be achieved and the ground rules that apply. The ground rules are expressed in the Terms of Reference of the UNDAC team, while the role of the Resident Coordinator is detailed in the documentation referred to above. The UNDMT has a loose mandate and is expected to function on the basis of good will and individual leadership. While members of the UNDMT in India were generally loyal to the idea of supporting the UNDMT and the Resident Coordinator, there were a number of concerns characteristic of many coordinated ventures. These concerns included the role of the individual agencies versus the role of the UN system; the lack of proper consultation processes for important decisions; the emphasis of profile and visibility at the expense of substance. The member agencies of the UNDMT recognized that the concept of the Resident Coordinator as Humanitarian Coordinator was obvious and valid, but felt that the RC must have the capability and resources to exercise the function in a convincing manner.

IV.3 Arrival of the UNDAC team: " too little, too late"

Not all members of the UNDMT were convinced that it was a good idea to have an UNDAC team. The questions raised concerned their expertise: Did they know how to work in India? What would they add? And previous experiences of not-very-smooth relations with UNDAC teams were raised. It was however agreed that the offer should be accepted. Proposals were made that the in-country UN agencies should contribute members to the UNDAC team, but this suggestion seem to have lost momentum and was not carried through. On arrival, the UNDAC team leader was not able to meet with the Resident Coordinator. Indeed, the team leader did not meet with the Resident Coordinator until the Emergency Relief Coordinator arrived in India as the emergency phase of the operations was coming to an end.

The UNDAC team was deployed by Geneva without any of the standard support modules that are designed to make them functional. The team appears to have deployed in the expectation that it would be materially supported by the UNDP in Delhi, and did not request the support that Geneva could have mobilised from member states with which it has well established stand-by agreements. The lack of such support affected both the team's ability to be effective in its work and the living conditions of team members

The team's function was also affected by the lack of knowledge among UN agency personnel about both OCHA and, especially, the UNDAC system. Only those few who had previously worked with an UNDAC team seemed to have any clear sense of what it was and what they could expect from it. The expectations as to what UNDAC could do for them and for others differed widely as a consequence. This lack of understanding, and the unrealistic expectations that accompanied it, might account to some extent for the negative impression of the UNDAC team's contribution that was left with many members of the United Nations system in India.

When asked in the context of this study, India-based representatives of the international system generally defined their expectation of United Nations

coordination in the following terms:

To Do:

- Information gathering and sharing;
- Linking to the government and authorities, bringing information from those authorities and feeding back questions and concerns to them;
- Supporting, as required, the Government coordination of international relief arrivals and logistics;
- Knowing what needs there are;
- Know where there are gaps and being able to give information on the gaps;
- Leading, directing and managing coordination meetings, and bringing them to meaningful conclusions;
- Coordinating search and rescue teams;
- Preparing reports;
- Providing service tools that agencies need in the field, such as workplaces, e-mail connections and fax/phones, maps and practical information.

Not to do:

- Assessments - agencies felt that they should do these themselves in their sectors of competence, and that UNDAC team members were, in any case, lacking the sectoral expertise necessary to do this.
- "Telling us what to do."

IV.4 UNDAC in the field

The UNDAC team proceeded to Ahmedabad and remained there for one week. The first antenna of the UNDAC team arrived in Bhuj five days after the earthquake. Since Day 1 of the earthquake, however, it was Bhuj that had been the centre of activity. Given this, and given that the team was small in numbers and scope of expertise (it was intended to bring earthquake expertise, and did), the UNDAC team had little initial impact on the information flow for the UN agencies which were present in the disaster area and which maintained their own reporting functions and lines. WHO and UNDP deployed staff together with the UNDAC team, which reinforced the team both in health expertise and assessment techniques as well as in local knowledge. Contacts with UNICEF were satisfactory good in Ahmedabad but sparse in Bhuj, since UNICEF decided not to set up office in Bhuj. Relations with WFP field staff was perceived by UNDAC to be good, albeit distant. The On-Site Operations and Coordination Centre was strategically well placed at the compound of the District Collector in Bhuj but not large enough or well enough resourced to attract the other agencies to join in and thus create a natural cooperative environment.

While the UNDAC team saw as its first priority task to coordinate the international search and rescue teams, the late arrival of the team rendered this marginal. Some assistance was provided in Ahmedabad for teams arriving from 29 January on.

The UNDAC team members were perceived to bring added energy by arriving fresh and rested. They had, and were seen to have, the strong team spirit that is characteristic of the UNDAC system. They were also perceived as task-oriented, if somewhat "elitist", in their work style. They were also perceived as reporting more to Geneva than to anywhere else, and as not being fully transparent in sharing reports and information bulletins. The UNDAC reports did, in fact, go to UNDMT in Delhi as well as to Geneva, and got better over time. The reports seem, however, not to have benefited from the reports other agencies and organisations were filing at that time.

Soon after arrival, the UNDAC team was requested by the Resident Coordinator to provide an interim report on the situation in the earthquake-affected area by the 3 February. This was a task that the UNDAC team leader judged to be outside of the team's competence, and he requested guidance from Geneva on how to handle the request. It was decided, after discussion, that the team should provide the report. Eventually, with some delays, an UNDAC team Interim Report, dated 11 February, was delivered. An UNDAC team Final Report, dated 20 February, was presented in Geneva. It was not clear to the team what the purpose of the report was. If it was to provide background to the action plan by the UN system in India that was presented to the media and in-country donor missions on 6 February, the report was too late.

The development of the report caused friction between UNDAC/OCHA and WFP. The friction arose because of a seemingly simple statement about food needs as a result of the earth quake disaster in the draft UNDAC Interim Report. The statement, while seemingly straightforward, was perceived by WFP to question its programmatic approach to Gujarat. The merits of the arguments on either side are less interesting than the fact that the dispute was able to cause such a major diversion of effort on all sides, and that it was not ultimately resolved without the intervention of senior managers from OCHA and WFP. The incident highlights some of the weaknesses in the deployment of this UNDAC team. It had no strong institutionally experienced leadership in Bhuj or in Delhi that could help to sort out issues such as this. With such leadership, the Interim Report, once drafted, might have been processed within Delhi to ensure agency ownership. As it was, however, it was never entirely clear as to whether this was an OCHA /UNDAC report, which needed just to reflect the views of the team, or whether it was a UN system report, requiring much broader ownership.

According to the United Nations agencies, UNDAC developed good relations with the local government officials. But since the agencies had their own established working relations, these were not seen as value added for the agencies. In the field, however, there is no doubt that strong ties with the local authorities were useful, both to the team and to Indian authorities in their own efforts.

The UNDAC team did fill a gap in the information flow by focusing strongly on gathering and systematizing information, by working side-by-side with the local authorities, and by being able to help them in getting answers to questions raised. One UNDAC member was committed full-time to meeting with local administration officials to cross-check information and damage-assessment data. The UNDAC team,

however, was in a weak position to use and share this information, as the team lacked the equipment to do this, at least until the support modules were deployed later on in the mission.

UNDAC took the initiative to set up sectoral and general coordination meetings with agencies. This was generally perceived as useful. But, again, UNDAC was perceived by some not to be managing the process of the meetings strongly enough.

The physical working conditions improved only when WFP requested the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA) to deploy the support modules that had been on stand-by for approximately two weeks, in case UNDAC called for them. OCHA had been asked by the SRSA if the modules were needed and had indicated that they were not. The support modules eventually arrived in Bhuj on 11 of February.

The link between the UNDAC team members in the field and the UNDMT in Delhi was not satisfactory. It would seem that the UNDMT, appropriately resourced and trained would be the only logical focal point for linking the OCHA role and the in country UN system responsibilities. To make the system fit and work well together requires some special attention at all levels of the involved organisations.

The handover of the UNDAC knowledge and work to the UNDP unit for recovery and rehabilitation was felt by those interviewed to have been reasonably handled. UNDAC had to extend its stay longer than planned. The UNDP handover team came in from Geneva and New York to assist the UNDP office in setting up the recovery unit. For the outside observer, there was a gap in activity for a week or so while the new team warmed up, but then it moved ahead well, and with a new energy. This unit now is presently focusing on UNDP's priority concern of programming for recovery and rehabilitation.

IV.5 Relations with the Government of India and with Indian NGOs

The overall impression gained from Delhi and also from Bhuj has been one of consistently good relations between UNDAC and the Government of India at all levels. The UNDAC team was regarded in Bhuj as a valuable support to the local authorities.

The On-Site Operations and Coordination Centre was established within the District Collector's office in Bhuj and this physical proximity with local officials generally eased communications with the government. In the words of a senior government official in Bhuj, "[the team] brought a sense of calm purpose, seeming to know what they were there to do: just put down their tables and started working. It was calming in that situation to have them there." The UNDAC representatives judged the situation from a different perspective and also anticipated problems likely to arise. They assisted in systematising information that no-one else had the time to deal with, and when the local administration was under pressure from all quarters to share the latest news related to the disaster the UNDAC team was ready with structured information about the international relief effort.

The UNDAC team worked in a limited but positive capacity with the local NGO,

Abhiyan. Initially there were two daily coordination meetings: one run by Abhiyan for the Indian NGOs and one run by UNDAC for the internationals. The team supported Abhiyan's coordinating role in this respect, and found a way to avoid unnecessary duplication.

IV.6 Relations with governments and national Search and Rescue teams

The UNDAC team had no direct contact with foreign government representatives apart from those who visited the On-Site Operations and Coordination Centre or crossed paths with them in the early days in Ahmedabad. The UNDAC system was generally seen in by foreign governments in the same light as the United Nations as a whole, that is, as having responded too late, too little and in a manner which was ill-coordinated and lacking in leadership. Though present in both Ahmedabad and in Bhuj, strong views have been put forward suggesting the UNDAC team did not appear to represent the United Nations system or provide leadership.

The On-Site Operations and Coordination Centre was only operational at the very end of the search and rescue phase. The UNDAC team invested considerable time and energy in locating and registering search and rescue teams and obtaining their reports. They acquired a reasonable overview, but could offer no significant services.

The Virtual OSOCC was used actively during this emergency and proved to be a flexible and useful tool. It does depend on the active utilisation by its members. Its members made active use of it to maintain contact with the search and rescue teams.

IV.7 Relations with the Red Cross and international non-governmental organisations

UNDAC and Red Cross working relations were good and mutually beneficial. This can partly be explained by the fact that they already know and understand each other's systems, since they develop them together and conduct joint training programmes. Immediately after the disaster, information exchange took place not only daily but several times a day, though the Red Cross continued to pursue its own contacts with the host government. Later, contact between UNDAC and the Red Cross continued but was less formal. When the Red Cross set up its own data collection system contact with UNDAC dwindled. Another reason for the generally non-committal nature of the relationship was that in practice the Red Cross depends on the United Nations neither for relations with authorities nor for understanding the local context, resources or assessments. In India, the Red Cross relied on the Indian Red Cross for relations with the national authorities and turned to the international elements of the Red Cross Movement as a basic resource.

The international NGOs are invariably critical of UNDAC, and the United Nations in general, for failing to provide any leadership or to fulfil their coordinating role. The United Nations is seen as unpredictable, sometimes performing well and sometimes poorly. As one experienced person has said, "OCHA's role is vital and huge opportunities exist for OCHA. However, they seem unable to live up to these expectations." Criticism of the UN system performance following the Gujarat earthquake is reflected in the (UK) Disaster Emergency Committee monitoring

mission report of March 2001, which can be found on the DEC website. DEC represents 14 experienced British NGOs. While some of the specific criticism is justified in this context, the strong condemnations very likely also reflect general perceptions of the United Nations among European international non-governmental organisations.

IV.8 UNDAC and the media

The United Nations in Delhi issued six press statements during the initial earthquake response phase. Greater advantage could have been taken of the opportunities offered by the media. One member of the UNDAC team was requested to join the UNDMT in Delhi for the launch of the action plan press conference. This seemed a reasonable request, but was perceived by UNDAC as too time consuming, likely to detract from their tasks in the field and not part of the team's mandate.

IV.9 OCHA headquarters' role in emergency action

The OCHA office in Geneva is charged with the management and mobilisation of response resources for natural disasters, and is responsible for deploying and supporting UNDAC teams.

OCHA's regional desks, which have recently undergone a reorganization whereby each desk responsible for a specific geographical region now covers both complex emergency and natural disaster response, seem under-used as a reference for potential UNDAC opportunities and problems. This seems particularly true in a case like this where there is no OCHA field representative to provide that guidance and take responsibility for decisions. Although OCHA's UNDAC system is theoretically almost independent, in reality the situation, and the expectations the teams face, justify a more hands-on approach. If the desk and the management in Geneva responsible for deploying UNDAC teams and defining their tasks were to extend increased support to these teams, UNDAC would be strengthened and its resources better used, to the greater satisfaction of clients and team members alike.

IV.10 OCHA as a source of information on disasters

OCHA Geneva provides a considerable amount of information through situation reports on disasters. These depend, in cases like the Gujarat earthquake, on secondary information obtained from the field, initially gleaned from UNDMT daily updates, and later on from reports by the UNDAC team in the field. These are rounded out with easily available updates from Indian Government websites and from the Indian Permanent Mission in Geneva.

Daily situation reports were issued over the first three days. There was then a two-day gap before the next situation report, after which they were published regularly until the UNDAC team's departure on 20 February 2001. The frequency of situation reports thereafter was determined by the flow of reports from Delhi and from the disaster site. The Geneva office found it hard to issue timely and substantive situation reports from the meagre information arriving from the field, which gave an incomplete picture of circumstances and developments in Gujarat.

Some potential users of the situation reports, such as donor governments looking for a basis for decisions on allocation of resources, require constant progress reports on fast-changing developments, and their decisions may have been delayed by the break in the information chain. Irregular reports are more useful to more passive participants who are less dependent on the timeliness of the information and the level of detail.

Information and analysis are key coordinating tools. Their collection and dissemination must be carried out with the multiple interests of the stakeholders in mind. It is possible that more than one tool should be employed to meet the wide-ranging needs of clients.

IV.11 Geneva working level contacts with Governments

OCHA has well-developed relationships with a strong group of donors which extends moral and financial support to OCHA in the interests of strengthening United Nations coordination in complex emergencies. A similar boost to resources and leadership may be required in the sphere of natural and technological disasters.

The UNDAC teams are supported by a group of governments which are not merely donors but which are also actively engaged in deploying and using their national resources for international search, rescue and relief operations. Increasingly this resource base is used both in natural disasters and in complex emergencies. As underlined in the recent UNDAC review, this places increased pressure on UNDAC teams in terms of competence and knowledge of the capacities of other players. Rather than using the teams more widely, it would be productive to focus first on understanding how the operational environment for all kinds of United Nations response intervention has changed.

Those donors wishing to use OCHA for operational contributions may find that they are not the most effective partner. The flow of financial resources through the organisation for relief assistance to earthquake victims was minimal. In a fast-moving emergency in a country where it has no established network of partners, OCHA's ability to engage in early relief action may be limited.

The related issue of the modalities for launching resource mobilisation campaigns and/or appeals requires some attention. It is an important part of the service that OCHA offers Governments and organisations inclined to channel contributions through the United Nations system. The Government of India does not appeal for aid but welcomes aid being given as an expression of solidarity. There is little doubt that a structured request consolidated and issued by OCHA early on in the process would be helpful both to donor and receiver. The precise format for this would of course, have to be explored with Government of India representatives well in advance of any disaster.

OCHA relations with governments outside the organisation's donor network, and not involved in complex emergencies in countries where OCHA has a presence, do not have a strong enough base. The result in the arena of natural disaster response is that OCHA lacks the knowledge and status necessary for providing relevant support on

behalf of the United Nations to the governments of certain affected countries.

IV.12 Geneva HQ relations with UN partners

While there is close cooperation and engagement in areas of complex emergencies, there is much less senior level (and also technical level) engagement with the relevant UN agency partners as far as natural disasters are concerned. These issues have traditionally been given limited attention at the political level of the organisation and middle management has low expectations of strategic and practical cooperation. At the same time, the information flow and the analysis of natural disaster response issues seems limited both within OCHA and the other agencies involved.

Were the intentions expressed in the Speth/Vieira de Mello letter of 1999 to be put into practice, and the model for frequent reporting on the evolution of events, as described in the letter, to be adopted, the Emergency Relief Coordinator would be provided with an opportunity to develop UN and OCHA support to governments affected by natural disasters.

The senior leadership of OCHA and WFP were called upon to resolve the issue that arose from the Interim UNDAC report, but they were given no advance notice and no briefing on this event. This demonstrates the prevailing need for a more active OCHA engagement in management and deployment of teams, support to field teams and UNDAC members, and better preparation of UNDAC teams for assignments involving cooperation with in-country UN teams. It underlines the necessity of establishing a field coordination function within the disaster-struck country, to resolve such issues with authority and confidence before they poison inter-agency relations and donor confidence in the judgement of agencies.

OCHA has several UN agency partners in disaster response. Its most pivotal partner in the area of natural disaster response and preparedness is the UNDP. While there is some measure of cooperation between the two, it neither seems to lead to smooth cooperation in the field nor to a clear cut adherence to the natural disaster response mandate given to these two agencies by the international community. In the case of India, it appears that both organisations may have decided to set up offices with regional responsibilities for response preparedness and disaster preparedness. Both organisations suffer when this confusion of mandates is openly exposed before partners and donors.

V. Conclusions

V.1 United Nations response to the earthquake

Overall appreciation by all actors: weak, slow, confused and lacking direction. It appears that the UNDMT group was in doubt as to whether to respond to the acute emergency or to focus on planning for the early recovery phase. While United Nations partners support the need for internal coordination mechanisms, the reactions of other partners ranged from viewing the mechanism as lacking in expertise and basic understanding of disaster management, and as being unable to react swiftly, to actually stating that there was no need for such a mechanism. It was felt that greater

investment of resources in the UN disaster response system might improve its work.

This discouraging overview is mitigated by the positive comments of individual agencies on cooperative and determined action. WHO both acted in a focused and determined manner and contributed to good cooperation. UNICEF did contribute to relief assistance in Gujarat by means of its State representation and the assistance it offered to arriving UN agencies by providing them with contacts and information about how to operate in Gujarat.

The United Nations is seen as a group of individual agencies each doing its own thing. Agencies were unable to provide any leadership to donors and non-UN partners seeking information and some direction. Some donors appreciate the information provided by individual agencies or the carried out by specific agencies, though these are generally the fruit of personal relations.

It is commonly accepted that the United Nations lacks disaster management capacity and skills in India, and that this is the result of its traditional work focus but also of the long established policy of the Government of India to assume an almost exclusive role in the rescue and relief phase of a disaster. The rapidly changing environment in India has given rise to opportunities for cooperation and mutual learning. OCHA and UNDP could use this opportunity to facilitate support and engagement by the international community with the Government of India in strengthening national disaster management resources.

The deployment of an UNDAC team to assist the UNDMT with coordination and assessment was a high-risk venture given the circumstances. The UNDAC team was small and arrived too late for an entity intending to take up leadership. The UNDMT needed support, and so did the UNDAC team. It required logistical and administrative support, as well as information and guidance. There was a vacuum where there should have been mutual understanding between UNDAC and the UNDMT. This was observed in their interpretation of their roles, in general and in the specific circumstances of the Gujarat mission.

WFP was tasked to lead an NGO coordination info meeting in Delhi. The meeting was perceived to be useful and informative. Some donor governments attended this meeting as no other regular meetings were held for them.

While the early phase was a disappointment to most, the early recovery and rehabilitation phase was characterised by better action at field level. However, an ability to work as a system and to engage donors in a much-needed strategic dialogue on issues such as housing reconstruction was not demonstrated.

V.2 OCHA

OCHA has tended to focus mainly on complex emergencies. Natural and technological disasters have been looked after by a machinery of response mechanisms that has a strong base in UNDAC and the units that administer and mobilise this resource. As a result, there is a gap in the strategic and political significance afforded to natural disasters. Within OCHA, this has led to less efforts

and resources being invested in developing further the required tools and strategies for natural disaster response and coordination. Contacts and working-level relations between the senior managers of OCHA and concerned Governments have not been close or have not developed.

OCHA had no established working relationship with disaster management authorities in India prior to the Gujarat earthquake, and relied heavily on the excellent relations of a single middle management staff member for its understanding and relations with India. Arguably the most disaster-prone country in the world, India aspires to participate in international cooperation. At the time of the earthquake OCHA staff and management were seriously preoccupied with the helicopter crash in Mongolia which killed members of an OCHA/UN assessment team, including staff from OCHA and members of the UNDAC system. The senior management was absent from the office.

The early reaction to news of the earthquake in India was to assume that the Indian government would adhere to its established practice of refusing international assistance in spite of pointers that this government policy was undergoing a change. This initial hesitation generated less than the desirable scope of the team. Though Delhi was consulted about deployment of a team there was no shared analysis of requirements or of the team's most crucial task. . No discussions took place about the extent of logistical and administrative support the UNDMT/UNDP could provide. The result was deployment of a team which lacked appropriate equipment to carry out its work. The tardy deployment forced the UNDAC team to spend their time catching up. Leadership can only be provided if the aspiring leader is the first on-site.

The deployment of a team with such limited scope (small, late, and with insufficient experience of the country) was tactically unwise. The UNDAC system is questioned widely in United Nations circles. Its ownership is unclear, and deployment in these circumstances exposed good professionals to the risk of failure.

The UNDAC system has all the elements of a strong, versatile and successful tool, provided it is led and managed with a strategic sense of purpose and flexibility and teams are tailored to situations. Speed is also of the essence. All this can be achieved.

The team was deployed in three separate groups, all arriving at different times, and was inadequately briefed in Geneva and Delhi. The accepted philosophy of all concerned seemed to be that UNDAC is self reliant and "independent"; this unresolved role eventually led to unmet expectations and friction between representatives of the United Nations system in Delhi and the team in Bhuj.

OCHA information sharing was up to the mark in the first days after the disaster. Four situation reports were issued in the first three days (two on first day) but after the fourth day the situation reports started appearing at intervals of several days. They depended on daily updates from UNDMT Delhi and situation reports sent by UNDAC teams, as well as on the official situation reports of the Government of India. OCHA situation reports are factually well documented and cautious but authoritative. They will continue to be too slow an information tool for the early phase of an earthquake disaster if they cannot be issued with more timeliness and

frequency.

The Virtual OSOCC is an OCHA information exchange tool developed to give access to INSARAG and UNDAC teams to an informal and fast-moving information tool. It has the potential to become an excellent information tool of a less formal nature, if used by OCHA staff and by actors in the field. As with all tools of this nature, it depends on the users to make it worthwhile.

OCHA did not consider formally launching an appeal for resources for the relief effort in Gujarat. There was a request by the UNDMT in Delhi for an appeal-like process but OCHA declined this on formal grounds. OCHA should consider establishing a more flexible format for resource mobilisation in support of UN action in natural and other disasters, designed to mobilise support without resorting to traditional "appeal" models. It is a fact that many governments and institutional donors are as much in need of the opportunity to provide assistance as countries undergoing disasters are in need of resources.

When the UNDAC team was in trouble with the UNDMT about a request to write a report, it would have been helped by strong guidance and support by OCHA and an OCHA function which could have assisted in revealing the risks entailed in such a report and could have approached the UNDMT about the actual purpose and desired contents of the report.

The request for the report caused friction because the UNDAC team believed that since they wrote the report, it should reflect their own views. Meanwhile the UNDMT considered this report should reflect the UN system's views and assessments. Given the situation the latter seems the obvious choice but such issues require formal resolution if they are to avoid detracting from future inter-agency relations. When the report generated a debilitating conflict between the team and WFP, OCHA Geneva did not take the lead in resolving the problem.

V.3 The UNDAC team

While the team and the team leader quickly realised their difficult situation in being too late to provide serious leadership for the search and rescue teams, and in being too few to address the overwhelming needs, the team immediately sought to rationalise its role. The first group arriving was a team of three persons.

The incoming UNDAC team was given a midnight briefing by senior members of the UN Country team upon arrival in Delhi on 28-29 January, before leaving for Ahmedabad at 06:15 on 29 January. The UNDMT group shared what information they had at that point. The UNDAC team in Ahmedabad and in Bhuj was working with two staff members from the UN team in Delhi: one medical doctor from WHO and one UNDMT manager from UNDP. Both proved invaluable for the team.

The desire to keep an antenna in Ahmedabad was sound. Once the full force of the international organisations moved over to Bhuj, the rescue and relief operation became too focused on Kutch, to the detriment of other affected areas. The UNDAC team did not, however, have sufficient personnel or resources to cover both locations.

The UNDAC team established the OSOCC in the compound of the District Collector. This was an excellent location, laying the foundation for a good relationship with the local administration in charge of leading the rescue and relief operations. It was widely acknowledged that the team established good relations with the leadership of the local administration. The UNDAC team was also perceived to have been very valuable for that administration in handling the international agencies and managing some of the information gathering and sharing. The local NGOs with whom the UNDAC team worked formed a generally positive impression about the working style and openness of the team.

UNDAC team members are selected and trained to be task oriented, self reliant and to function well as a team. While this helped the team to withstand the difficult conditions and the lack of appropriate resources to meet the expectations, it also generated some distance in the relations with some of their working partners who felt that the team at times behaved in an "elitist" way.

The UNDAC team dealt better with the expectations of the Indian administration and the Indian counterparts than with those of the United Nations system and the international NGOs. While the national counterparts were unfamiliar with the system, and hence not in a position to be specific in expectations, they were nevertheless positive about the experience of having worked with the UNDAC team.

The international system - UN, international NGOs and donor Governments - had more specific expectations on the one hand, but also more responsibility to contribute to make the expectations on coordination realistic.

The team focused on information gathering, ad hoc assessments that were not documented in writing, and on setting up more structured coordination meetings -- not managing the meetings so much as ensuring that they took place. They managed to put some structures into place and to provide a focal point - the OSOCC - for visitors and people looking for information to turn to. But the team was almost completely without the resources needed to do this important job.

Software for databases was not user friendly and they had to restart the database work more than once to get them to function. Team members seem to have spent a large amount of time putting in data into databases that they could not print out or otherwise share because of lack of equipment.

The team had one vehicle between them for the early period, seriously limiting team members' ability to move around.

The team did not receive any support with incoming information flow either from Delhi or Geneva about what the rest of the world saw happening in Gujarat until a reinforcement to the team arrived, and began working out of the Office of the Resident Coordinator in Delhi.

The UNDAC reports were not very informative in the early stage, but improved.

Report writing is not a standard UNDAC role. As the team leader pointed out when

the team was requested to produce an interim report to the UNDMT, the team was completely under-resourced and insufficiently briefed on the country programme strategies of the various UN agencies to be able to prepare a useful report in the necessary time-frame.

The assessments the team did carry out added little value. The team was too small and limited in the required profiles to enable them to do a thorough assessment. The issue of assessment is a strategic one. Most agencies state they do not want the UNDAC to do assessment. The argument is generally that UNDAC teams lack the expertise. But the basic issue is about the profile and credibility each organisation invests in the quality of its assessment. It would be of great value to the system, if OCHA and United Nations agencies would invest in rationalising assessment processes while also making the assessments better.

The team felt -- and this was shared by most others in the field - that relations with United Nations colleagues in the field were generally good. The problems within the United Nations community were mostly in Delhi. The UNDAC team was well aware of the view in Delhi that the team was failing to provide needed information. For their part, team members felt that the UNDMT was weak, and prone to internal competition between agencies.

The UNDAC team, and specifically the team leader, was not equipped to handle the situations that the team faced. The team leader was experienced as an UNDAC team member, but not experienced with the United Nations system, which made it extraordinarily difficult for him to fulfil his terms of reference. The normal practice of having a senior OCHA staff member leading a team of this nature is sound. This team was abandoned to fight fights they had little preparation for and tolerance with. Team leaders need and deserve to get the training and preparation required to handle the external relations of the team.

It seems that the team and the team leader could, at an early stage, have made it clear to Geneva that more staff and equipment, either from Geneva or from the local UN agencies, were required, as well as immediate deployment of support modules. Had this reinforcement come early, this could have changed the general perception of the outcome of the mission.

The standard Terms of Reference of UNDAC missions are clear on the role and responsibilities of the team (though they are at variance with what many UNDAC system members perceive their role to be). The practice is that the ToR are discussed with the Resident Coordinator on arrival and agreed upon. In practice the role of the ToR may be too flexible. It ought to be the responsibility of the team leader to make sure that the agreement is developed and pursued in dialogue. In particular, this will be important if there seem to be disagreements about their role emerging.

V.4 Indian and international NGOs in Gujarat

Many Indian NGOs are very experienced and used to working with the government in Gujarat. Most of them have no international counterparts, though some of the major ones are used to working with international partners. They have limited

experience in disaster management since their normal work is in development. The NGOs had already gained some experience by participation in drought relief operations. The earthquake victims could be immediately assisted in locations by these local NGOs.

Some of the large Indian NGOs observed that while they had been functioning as partners to enable implementation of relief to some of the international organisations, notably the United Nations, once this was over it was unclear if the working partnership would continue. In one case, an organisation commented that it had been referred to so often as a partner of a specific agency that other potential donors and partners apparently felt the NGO could not handle more, and avoided further close contact. The lesson learned for this organisation was to ensure they have a more active contact network, with its own partners and donors, so as not to allow one donor, even unintentionally, to represent them and to give inappropriate signals.

The international NGOs present in the earthquake-affected area were a mix. Some were organisations with a long engagement in development in India, but without a strong local capacity for disaster response. Others had this capacity available, partly by drawing on their resource base of Indian staff. They were often experienced in working with media, and generally enjoyed reliable funding from strong donor bases. They also had long experience of working alongside and with the UN system, and this was reflected in relationship that was sometimes uncomfortable. The monitoring report of the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), referred to above, reflects a strong perception from the community of INGOs that the United Nations' coordination efforts were a failure. This reflects, among other things, a sense of frustration and unmet expectations from a community that is looking for a well functioning and successful UN coordination mechanism. As one observer points out, the INGOs are often not good at operating in places where there are functioning Governments in the lead. The INGOs are explicit in their expectation that the UN should provide the role of being a go-between and a link to the Government. With the lack of senior and unified UN presence in the Gujarat field operations, the UN could not offer this to the INGOs. The UNDAC team could neither offer the quick and updated information the INGO community had hoped for, nor could it clearly indicate where there were gaps in the relief effort that needed to be filled. There was a sense that the United Nations received information but gave little information - and little of anything else - in return.

Local and international NGOs started their own coordination and information sharing meetings in smaller groups. These were more productive than the general meetings, and were particularly useful for agencies that were not based in Bhuj. In the early phase of the relief operation there were 3-4 parallel "coordination" points.

The Red Cross group had good, though not intense, working relations with the UNDAC team. The Red Cross did not need the United Nations for access to the authorities, as they had well established contacts of their own. The Red Cross also started its own data gathering for relief, as the UNDAC data gathering had not made enough progress.

V.5 Donors in Delhi

Representatives of donor governments based in Delhi expected initiative from the United Nations system in providing information, and some leadership, in the response to the earthquake. The donor group requested the United Nations to call a meeting of donor government representatives. The meeting - in the first week of the operation - "was difficult," unproductive, and was not repeated until 6 April. (There was one meeting in between on the occasion of the visit of the UNDP Administrator. This meeting did not focus on the earth quake response.) Following this first meeting, donors reverted to pre-existing channels of communications with individual agencies. A number of them visited Bhuj and shared information among themselves.

Representatives of governments of member states of the European Union group met as a group frequently, to exchange information and to receive feedback from people visiting Gujarat and Bhuj. They did not consider inviting UNDMT, which was not perceived to have information that would add anything. The EU internal coordination functioned well.

The EU, and ECHO in particular, was an active partner in the response effort, channelling substantial funds through a number of organisations, including the Red Cross. Like others, they found it difficult to establish a modus operandi without the United Nations system assuming what they felt to be its role. The donor group was not experienced in emergency response in India, though its members did have some collective experience with working with the UN system on complex emergencies.

V.6 Government of India.

The Government of India mounted a massive, complex and largely efficient early rescue and relief operation, for which it has received little credit. After some early mixed signals, the Government of India showed a great deal of flexibility in welcoming the international rescue and relief personnel arriving to the country without much advance notice. The public response and relief effort was also massive and important, and may reflect important changes taking place within Indian society and within the Indian economy.

The Government of India has also been quick to focus on areas in which it believes it can improve its performance. It has taken measures to strengthen its national and state level disaster management system, and has developed a very flexible framework for cooperation with the international system in contingency planning and in future disaster response efforts.

VI. Recommendations to OCHA Senior Management Team

(These recommendations are addressed to the senior management team of OCHA, which commissioned the present study, though several of the recommendations would have implications for others.)

Most of the important lessons that need to be learned have at least been identified before. The problem, it appears, is less in understanding the problems and their solutions than it is in actioning those solutions. With respect to the UNDAC system, the lesson learned study of the Turkey earthquake deployment, and to some extent the

UNDAC Review of 2001, are relevant and should be read in parallel with the following.

The UNDAC system is a valuable tool for the implementation of OCHA's assigned role within the international disaster management system. There is a risk, however, that it could be marginalized as other similar initiatives - within the United Nations system, within the European Union and within the Red Cross Movement - gain momentum. To survive and prosper, the UNDAC system will have to improve its performance. Deployments need to be faster, to be better equipped, to be adequately manned, and to be clearer about the role it is expected to play. For this to happen, a number of things need to change.

VI.1 OCHA's management of the UNDAC system

1. Confirm the ownership of UNDAC by OCHA. The present ambiguity as to the ownership of the UNDAC system - partly as a tool of governments, partly as a tool of the United Nations system - is not helpful. The responsibility of OCHA to drive the development of the UNDAC must be established with its stakeholder group of Governments and United Nations agencies.
2. Assign accountability for driving the process within OCHA at senior management level. The development process must be based on a clear analysis of how UNDAC teams can support OCHA's role in the coordination and mobilization of disaster-response resources. Such an analysis will, among other things, call for the reweighting of skills within the UNDAC system, with fewer search and rescue specialists, and more people with broader humanitarian skills: information management; experience with non-governmental organizations and the United Nations system, expertise in the generation of appeals.
3. Ensure that UN partners and the governments of disaster-prone countries know what the UNDAC system is, how it works, and what can reasonably be expected of it when disaster strikes.
4. Acknowledge that UNDAC system performs a variety of different functions, and needs to have a range of skills, resources and roles to fulfil those functions. Sometimes, the UNDAC system will be required to coordinate and service international search and rescue teams; sometimes it will be required to work within or alongside a United Nations Country team; sometimes its closest links will be to the host government. It is the responsibility of management to assess the context of deployments and to get the team composition and the expectations right..
5. Give more support to assist the UNDAC teams and the line management to manage and lead according to the different requirements they face. While the UNDAC teams will continue to be deployed to situations where there are substantial United Nations Country Teams, there will still be many situations where the team will be best deployed to provide direct support to the national government authorities.
6. Ensure that, with the new structure in OCHA, UNDAC deployments will have a managerial structure that supports, directs and analyses what is needed in each

specific UNDAC deployment, and ensure that UNDAC has the ability to be flexible and adjustable to rapidly developing field situations.

7. Evolve the desk system in the new OCHA structure to focus on building country knowledge. The ground for a successful deployment is laid between deployments. Desk Officers need to nurture contacts with potential counterparts both at the political level and at the working level.

8. Ensure that the UNDAC teams returning from deployments are invited to contribute to the further improvement of the system by taking part in internal lessons learned exercises involving members of the management in order to ensure the system's problems get sufficient exposure. It is equally important to understand and document the factors that generate success.

9. Review and update the other response and service tools that OCHA offers the international community. This includes the timeliness of its situation reports, who is responsible for providing material and ensuring that these are responsive to the audience's needs. A senior Indian Government official remarked that he felt the Red Cross and INGO reporting on their operations was excellent, and expressed a wish that the UN system and the bilateral Governments would have similar reporting procedures.

10. Support the Virtual OSOCC. It is a good initiative that has considerable potential for further development provided that its use remains clearly understood and supported. At present, its principal drawback is a lack of users. Resources could usefully be committed to increasing awareness and use of the tool.

11. Enhance OCHA's ability to launch resource-mobilisation appeals. Hitherto, the United Nations has not succeeded in generating appeals during the critical first few days of a disaster when public and political attention are greatest. Other organizations have managed to develop 'flash' appeal processes that could be adopted, with appropriate modifications, for use by the United Nations system in certain circumstances.

VI.2 Cooperation with UN agencies

12. Develop a standard operating procedure for implementing the intent of the letter signed by Messrs Speth and Vieira de Mello on 26 March 1999. This letter provides for the leadership of the ERC in natural disaster response situations. The ERC, however, has never taken significant steps to implement that letter. As a result, a Resident Coordinator without a strong background in crisis management can find him or herself without needed guidance and support.

13. Give priority to working with the most disaster-prone countries in planning for a disaster situation. A more aggressive outreach programme in high-vulnerability countries would provide strong returns.

14. Motivate all agencies involved in an operation to do joint inter-agency lessons learned exercises, instead of each agency doing its own internal exercise. These

should be done at the management level as well as among operational staff. There is a need for the progressive improvement of senior management in natural disaster response.

15. Invest in revitalizing training for in-country disaster managers in the UN system, the national system and with other organisations. UNDP and OCHA have a shared responsibility to build local capability in disaster management.

16. No efforts should be spared to engage UNDP in active co-operation to use scarce resources to contribute to building both local capacities and the international response system. This includes contingency planning, training, cooperation with non-UN partners, sponsoring innovative frontline thinking and action, making use of a modern and easily available technology; promote change.

17. Take the lead in developing inter-agency co-operation on rapid deployment systems. UN partner agencies should be encouraged to contribute specialized staff to OCHA deployment as a complement to and alternative to building their own systems. This goes beyond technical contributions and should aim at building transparency of mission objectives, a cooperative environment on the ground and better performance of the system as well as of individual agencies.

VI. 3 Indian and international NGOs

18. Strengthen understanding of the differences in expectations between NGOs, members of the United Nations system and other stakeholders in coordinated action. Non-governmental organisations do have some specific needs that the United Nations can help meet. Engage NGOs in a give-and-take process in testing ideas and models for cooperation in specific situations. In order to reinforce mutual understanding, try to encourage staff exchanges by recruiting staff familiar with and understanding the motivation and conditions of the non-governmental sector.

VI.4 Governments

19. Support the further development of United Nations coordination. Provide people and resources with the skills that make coordination possible.

20. Assist the UN system to decrease competitive behaviour. Donor governments share responsibility for the success of the system by being consistent in its messages and action.

21. Support OCHA senior management in developing the system to better suit the needs of disaster response of this decade. Confirm that OCHA is the owner of the UNDAC system on behalf of the UN system and is held accountable for its success. Recognise that the focus has moved away from just supporting search and rescue efforts, and that some retooling is necessary and warranting support.

22. Support the strict application of the selection criteria that the UNDAC team has developed and introduced. Only sponsor UNDAC membership for people who are genuinely available for UNDAC missions. Only taking this seriously will ensure the credibility of the system.

23. Avoid supporting several international rapid deployment systems that will contribute to having more actors on disaster sites competing for staff and leadership roles. Donors may and have created a degree of confusion by supporting very similar crisis-response systems which draw on very similar range of support arrangements.

24. Initiate dialogues to clarify the role of OCHA and UNDAC, and to keep expectations realistic. Support UNDAC by encouraging United Nations agencies and others to provide personnel, resources and good interface to the UNDAC system.

Annex 1. Principal documents used for background and reference.

1. UNDAC team Final Report, 20 February 2001.
2. UNDAC team Interim Report, February 2001.
3. UNDAC REVIEW 2001, A Review of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team.
4. OCHA Situation reports 1- 11, issued in Geneva as of 26 January 2001.
5. UNDMAT Updates, issued in Delhi as of 26 January 2001.
6. UN Press releases on Gujarat earthquake, Delhi.
7. UN system action plan, Issued in Delhi February 2001.
8. Letter to all Resident Coordinators from Mr G. Speth and Mr S. Vieira de Mello, 26 March 1999.
9. "Cooperation between UNDP and the UN Department for Humanitarian Affairs" UNDP/ADM/93/57. 3 September 1993.
10. Terms of Reference for the UNDAC team.
11. UNDAC Field Handbook.
12. UNDAC selection criteria for UNDAC team members. (OCHA memo).
13. Various UNGA decisions re the creation of DHA and OCHA.
14. UNGA resolutions on the ERC mandate in natural disasters. (Internal OCHA memo summarizing these.)
15. OCHA in 2001. Activities and extra-budgetary funding requirements.
16. UNDP Roles and Responsibilities for UNDMT. Draft Document April 2001.
17. The Earthquake in Gujarat, India: Report of a Monitoring Visit. Disasters Emergency Committee, March 2001.

In addition, a substantial amount of internal material relating to the Gujarat earthquake

response was shared by all the agencies and organisations met with in the course of this study.

Annex 2. The Role of OCHA in Emergency UN Operations following the Earthquake in Gujarat, India (January 26 2001): Lessons Learned Study

Terms of Reference

Background: The earthquake in Gujarat/India on January 26 2001 triggered a large-scale international relief operation which posed a complex coordination challenge to OCHA because of the magnitude of the disaster and the involvement of a multitude of actors (governmental/ army, bilateral donors, international Search and Rescue teams, NGOs, Red Cross, media).

Now that the emergency phase is over, it is a matter of high priority to conduct a study in order to draw lessons concerning the over-all coordination during the emergency phase. The study should be conducted without delay in order to make sure that important lessons will not be lost as efforts get underway for reconstruction, rehabilitation and redevelopment of the region.

Specific Terms for the Study

1. Time focus: The Study will be limited to the emergency phase of the response to the earthquake, i.e. from January 26 to the date that the Government of India in Bhuj declared the emergency phase of operations over.
2. Substantive focus:
 - a) Within the context of the Government of India's position on international assistance and the overall international response to the earthquake in Gujarat, India, describe and analyse the overall response mechanism of the UN system: The organisational set up and its evolution in the course of operations.
 - b) Describe and analyse OCHA's role in providing assessment and coordination leadership in the overall international response: Integration and function within the overall coordination/assessment efforts.
 - c) Describe and analyse the mechanisms within the UN system, and OCHA's role in this, to ensure liaison and coordination with non-UN partners: 1. Government of India - 2. Bilateral donor Governments - 3. International Search and Rescue teams - 4. NGOs, Red Cross - 5. Media.
3. Expected Outcome:
 - a) In its conclusions, which should be arrived at in consultation with the Government of India both in the field and in the capital, the study will provide a concise set of statements as to the adequacy of the UN response within the context of its overall international response mechanisms (cf. 2a), OCHA's assessment and coordination leadership (2b), and the UN's internal organisation on the ground (2c).

b) Where the study finds shortcomings in the above-mentioned areas, it will provide recommendations as to improvements for future operations.

4. Support:

a) Overall coordination for the Study, as well as administrative support, lies with the OCHA's Policy Development and Studies Branch.

b) Relevant units of OCHA Geneva will provide the Study team with background information and documentation as required, as well as guidance in the practical conduct of the Study (partners on the ground to be interviewed, advice on the OCHA's standard procedures for Disaster Response, etc.).

c) The Study team consists of one consultant and one Policy Development Officer provided by OCHA in Geneva.

5. Methodology:

On the basis of the information/documentation provided by OCHA Geneva, and along the lines of the substantive outline under pt. 2a to c, the Study team will conduct:

a) In depth interviews with concerned functionaries of the Government of India in Bhuj, Gujarat and Delhi.

b) In-depth interviews of representatives of the UN country team

c) In-depth interviews of other partners (cf. 2c) on the ground in Bhuj.

d) In-depth interviews of relevant units within OCHA headquarters.

6. Timeline:

The consultant will spend two working days in Geneva in order to collect background information (see 4 b/5 c). He/she then will proceed to India for two weeks in order to conduct the field work (see 5 a/b). A draft of the Study will be made available to OCHA, and through OCHA to relevant partners, by mid-May. After receiving comments from OCHA and relevant partners, a final version will be completed until end-May.

New York, 5 April 2001

Annex 3. List of persons interviewed in connection with the present study

In Geneva

- Mr Ross Mountain, Assistant Emergency Relief Coordinator and Director OCHA, Geneva.
- Mr Rudolf Muller, Response Coordination Branch, OCHA, Geneva.
- Mr Shinji Matsuka, Response Coordination Branch, OCHA, Geneva.
- Ms Ulla Lehmann Nielsen, Minister Counselor, Permanent Mission of

Denmark to the United Nations Office in Geneva.

- Mr Thomas Peter, Field Coordination Unit, OCHA/Geneva.
- Dr Piero Calvi-Pariseti, Consultant, Geneva.
- Mr Thomas Linde, Policy Development and Studies Branch, OCHA, Geneva.
- Ms Anne-Marie Petit, International Organization of Migration, Geneva.
- Ms Yasmin Aysan, United Nations Development Programme, Geneva.
- Ms Maria Olga Gonzalez, Emergency Response Division, UNDP, Geneva
- Mr Arjun Katoch, Chief, Field Coordination Unit, OCHA/Geneva.
- Mr Gerhard Putman-Cramer, Emergency Services Branch, OCHA/Geneva.
- Mr Jesper Lund, Member, UNDAC team for Gujarat earthquake and OCHA/ESB/FCSS staff member, Geneva.
- Mr Edward Pearn, Head of UNDAC team for Gujarat earthquake, Geneva.
- Mr Simo Wecksten, Member, UNDAC team for Gujarat earthquake.
- Mr Sebastien Segioun, Member, UNDAC team for Gujarat earthquake.
- Mr Joseph Reiterer, Member, UNDAC team for Gujarat earthquake and OCHA/ESB/MCDU staff member, Geneva.
- Ms Solveig Thorvaldsdottir, member of UNDAC team for Gujarat earthquake, Reykjavik.
- Mr Joe Barr, member of UNDAC team for Gujarat earthquake, Canberra.
- Mr Steffen Schmidt, Member of UNDAC team for Gujarat earthquake, Geneva.
- Ms Carolyn McAskie, Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Geneva.
- Mr Werner Schleiffer, Director, WFP Office, Geneva.
- Mr Kenzo Oshima, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Geneva.
- Mr Sharat Sabharwal, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Mission of India, Geneva.
- Mr Martin Griffiths, Director HD Centre, Geneva.
- Ms Janet Lim, Director, Emergency and Security Services UNHCR, Geneva.
- Mr Michel Gaudé, Chief, Emergency Preparedness and Response Section, UNHCR, Geneva.
- Mr Craig Sanders, Senior Officer, Emergency and Security Services, UNHCR, Geneva
- Mr Toni Frisch, Head Swiss Disaster Relief, Government of Switzerland.
- Mr Jean Ayoub, Director, Disaster Management and Co ordination division, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.
- Mr Halvor Fossum Lauritzen, Director International Department, Norwegian Red Cross and Federation team leader in Bhuj 27/1-25/2 2001.

In London

- Mr Mukesh Kapila, Head, CHAD, DFID London.
- Mr Matthew Baugh, Head of Humanitarian Programmes team, CHAD, DFID London
- Mr Rob Holden, Crisis Response Manager, CHAD, DFID, London
- Mr Louis Sida, Save the Children Fund, London.
- Mr Robert McGillivray, Save the Children Fund, London.

- Mr Tony Vaux, Independent Consultant, London
- Mr Alan Matthews, Emergency Response team, CHAD, DFID, London

In New Delhi, India

- Mr Dennis Lazarus, DRR Operations, UNDP, Delhi/Convenor UN DMT, Delhi.
- Dr Rajan Gengaje, UNDP DMT, Delhi.
- Ms Jyoti Rao, UNDP DMT, Delhi.
- Dr T. Walla, Deputy Head, WHO Country Office, Delhi.
- Dr Egil Sorensen, WHO Regional Office for Southeast Asia.
- Ms Maria Calivis, UNICEF Country Representative, Delhi.
- Mr Ajit James, Procurement Officer, UNICEF, Delhi.
- Mr George R. Aelion, WFP Programme Advisor (and UN DMT focal point), Delhi.
- Mr Ashok Koshy, IAS, Additional Chief Secretary and Commissioner, Government of Gujarat.
- Mr Jonas Lovkrona, Deputy Head, Development Cooperation Section, Embassy of Sweden, Delhi.
- Mr Robert Mister, Emergency Response Division, UNDP, Delhi.
- Mr Alan Bradbury, Regional Disaster Preparedness Delegate, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Delhi.
- Mr Bob McKerrow, Head of Regional Delegation, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Delhi.
- Mr Peter DelaHaye, Deputy Director of Operations, UNICEF, Delhi.
- Mr Peter Medway, Emergency Programme Officer, UNICEF, Gujarat.
- Mr Pedro Medrano, Country Representative, WFP, Delhi.
- Mr R.R. Shah, Additional Secretary, Government of India, Delhi.
- Mr Mandhuka Gupta, Facilitator, UN Special Initiatives, UNDP, Delhi.
- Mr Gopi Menon, Gujarat earthquake focal point, DFID, Delhi.
- Ms Dorothy Gordon, Deputy Resident Representative, UNDP, Delhi.
- Mr Hiroshi Yamane, Counselor (Development), Embassy of Japan, Delhi.
- Mr Anil Sinna, Head, National Centre for Disaster Management, Delhi
- Mr Jaap Jan Speelman, First Secretary and State Coordinator Gujarat, Netherlands Embassy, Delhi
- Mr William S. Berger, Regional Advisor, United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Nepal.
- Mr Jose Felix Merladet, Head, Office of the European Commission, Delhi.
- Mr Luis Lechiguero, Advisor, European Commission, Delhi.
- Ms Geeta Narayan, UNFPA, Delhi.
- Mr Jens Boye Möller, First Secretary, Danish Embassy, Delhi.
- Mr Maurizio Bussi, Deputy Director, ILO, Delhi
- Ms Brenda McSweeney, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, Delhi.
- Mr B Murali, Senior Executive Officer, UNDP, Delhi.

In Gujarat

- Mr Praveen Singh Pardeshi, UNDP Programme Manager, Gujarat.
- Mr Mihir R. Bhatt, Disaster Mitigation Institute, Ahmedabad.
- Ms Reema Nanavathy, General Secretary, SEWA (Self Employed Womens Action), Gujarat.
- Mr M. Sahu, Additional Chief Executive Secretary, Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority.
- Dr PK Mishra, CEO, Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority.
- Mr Sarath Dash, Project Manager IOM, Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
- Dr Yogendra Mathur, UNICEF Gujarat State Representative
- Dr Siddharth Nirupam, Project Officer, UNICEF Gujarat State Office.
- Mr V. Thiruppugazh, Director , Gujarat State Disaster Management Authority.
- Mr Sundhanu Shekhar Singh, Deputy Programme Manager, Catholic Relief Services, Bhuj.
- Mr Arockiam V., Chief Coordinator, Relief and Rehabilitation Programme, CARITAS India.
- Wing Commander Deepak Sathe, Indian Air Force Station, Bhuj.

In Rome

- Mr Jean Jacques Graisse, Director Operations, WFP Rome.
- Ms Angela van Rynbach, Deputy Director Asia and CIS regional bureau, WFP Rome.
- Mr Francesco Strippoli, Head Office of Humanitarian Affairs, WFP Rome.
- Mr Allan Jury, Chief Policy Service, WFP Rome.
- Ms Robyn Jackson, Senior Officer, Policy Service, WFP Rome.
- Ms Sarah Longford, Emergency Officer, ALITE, WFP Rome.
- Mr Thomas Keusters, Chief Logistics Officer, WFP Rome.

In Stockholm

- Mr Kjell Larsson, Head International Department, Swedish Rescue Services Agency, Stockholm.
- Mr PA Berthlin, Senior Liaison Officer, International Department, Swedish Rescue Services Agency, Stockholm.
- Mr Dag Nielsen, Ericsson Radio Systems AB, Stockholm.
- Mr Johan Schaar, Deputy Head of Humanitarian Assistance Office, SIDA, Stockholm.
- Ms Marika Fahlen, Ambassador, Global Cooperation Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Stockholm.

Annex 4. United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team (UNDAC)

Terms of Reference

The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team ensures close links between country-level and international relief coordination efforts following sudden-onset disasters. It assists in meeting international needs for early and qualified information on the situation and, when necessary, in the coordination of international relief at the site of the emergency. The following are generic terms of reference for the mission of an UNDAC team, which may be modified depending on the requirements of a given emergency situation.

When on mission, the UNDAC team:

1. assists and works under the authority of the United Nations Resident / Humanitarian Coordinator (the Coordinator), or any other humanitarian lead entity appointed by the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator;
2. participates in the work of the United Nations Disaster Management team (DMT) in country, in support of the relief efforts of the country affected as well as those of the international humanitarian community;
3. focuses on on-site and cross-sectoral support of emergency information and response coordination, in accordance with established UNDAC field coordination guidelines. If required, the UNDAC team assists in the identification of common support requirements, such as telecommunications, for the effective delivery of international assistance;
4. assists in the joint assessment of the emergency situation and international relief requirements stemming from it, with a particular view to the consistency of assessment information and relief programmes across the sectors involved and the identification of priority areas in need of in-depth evaluation;
5. when required by the emergency situation, supports the establishment of an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC), for the effective integration and use of international relief assets in support and under the leadership of the appropriate national emergency management authority;
6. reports to the Coordinator and informs him/her of developments in the emergency situation and other information which might be included in field and OCHA situation reports distributed to disaster relief organizations and the international community;
7. when appropriate, assists in the preparation of an appeal for immediate international assistance - if requested by the government of the country affected - under the leadership of the Coordinator;
8. maintains links with and reports on the progress of its mission to OCHA headquarters throughout the duration of its mission.

Annex 5. Lesson learned as offered by agencies and organisations talked with during the study

This annex introduces, without attribution or further comment, brief lessons that interviewees felt should be learned from the emergency relief phase of United

Nations response to the Gujarat earthquake. Where possible, the comments are direct quotations from interviewees.

- Governments don't know and understand the mandate of OCHA, let alone UNDAC. Nor do agencies.

- It must be clearer to everyone - including the UNDAC team members - what UNDAC's role is. Does it do appeals? Does it do assessments independent of UN agencies?

- There is a need to learn how to use assessments better. Assessment is not the end of the process. It is a dynamic and on-going process.

- Coordination within the United Nations system does not exist at the Delhi level. There is no functioning mechanism for it. Each agency wants to establish its own identity and its own visibility. Identity is not with the United Nations, it is with the individual agency - or just with the individual.

- Were organisations able to use the funding given for immediate use? For what purpose?

- Who's going to use the database being set up? The user's angle is the only measure of its value.

- The identification of a lead agency identification within each sector is essential.

- Media pressure drives the "story", until it all suddenly goes quiet. If you miss the wave, forget the funding.

- There was a cost associated with not having a presence in Bhuj: a trade-off had to be made between visibility and performance.

- The United Nations has a better appreciation of the Government's problems than its own NGOs and media.

- Uneven relief distribution creates political problems.

- Line management of supplies: concentrate on basic infrastructure restoration and do not get all carried away with distribution of relief.

- Understand and appreciate the mental state of people in the disaster -- give them hope through clear and purposeful action.

- The Government of India provided 80% of the resources for the response, yet the international NGOs were the most visible.

- The Abhiyan coordination network gave image of a strong NGO and a weak UN.

- UN Resident Coordinators do not seem to be chosen for their crisis-management skills. Their basic instincts are almost always in the development area, which are often inappropriate in a fast-moving situation.

- Good coordination is about speed, having a ready-made tool box for information sharing and coordination.
- If you cannot send the best people, or do the job properly, better not send anyone at all (the cost is too high in loss of credibility).
- Training should be given to people going on emergency missions and for DMT members.
- Disaster areas get "flooded" with teams creating confusion. Try to streamline the inter-agency missions and have joint teams, and fewer teams. There was an initial idea to have joint team.
- A lot of energy in the beginning but then it fizzled out. Initiating response seems to be easier than sustaining it.
- UNDAC teams should incorporate members of the in-country UNDMT, including national professionals. This arrangement should be hard-wired into the United Nations system.
- Perhaps I had too high an opinion of UN people. I was really disappointed. Lots of turf wars.
- UNDAC team should have been 15, not 5.
- Visibility is important. You are flying the UN flag.
- In UNDAC we tend to see ourselves as experts from countries. The UN tend to see us as UN people. This is often wrong; we do not know enough to play a useful role in "the UN process."
- Team leaders should have, and deserve to be given, special team leader training.
- Need to have ready tool kit of reporting formats and style sheets for all we do. No time to invent anything in the field.
- Information is a market place. You have to give to receive.
- The United Nations should not be used at all in disaster response.
- The failure of the UN system cannot be replaced by an UNDAC team.
- Emergency response going through a competitive development, and the United Nations is going to lose out.
- OCHA is a "political buffer" to Governments.
- Coordination and partnering requires goodwill. There is no reward system in the UN for people who do it well.
- The UNDAC mission was doomed before they left the ground: the team

composition was too light; there were no resources, and OCHA's leadership was not engaged.

- OCHA's performance has been so up and down, so people just said this is a bad one, and gave up.

- There is a need for an "OCHA"- it is the way this role is executed that creates friction at times.

- There are sometimes unrealistic expectations of coordination. The best experience is when it is light, flexible and able to move with fast moving situations. It is worst when another heavy structure comes in on top of other (heavy) structures.

- UNDAC training too focussed on the search and rescue which is, in any case, only for the first 3-4 days.

- UNDAC managed not to offend anyone (except WFP). It is an achievement.

- Bring in people who can cope, like UNDAC provides.

- We felt used by UN system. Our name was used so often that their donors withdrew from funding and co-operation, and opportunities were lost.

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!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">