

## A. PREFACE

<b>A.1. Introduction to the Handbook</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>A.2. How to contact OCHA</b>	<b>2</b>

### A.1. Introduction to the Handbook

The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination, (UNDAC) handbook is intended as an easily accessible reference guide for members of an UNDAC team before and during a mission to a disaster or emergency. The handbook is not an authoritative instruction but rather represents an accumulation of institutional memory related to processes and procedures for coordination as seen in the scope of the UNDAC terms of reference. Its focus is on the “how to” of coordination but also includes sufficient context to ground the user in the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs’ (OCHA) mandate. It gives guidance on coordination functions and structures as well as helping “trouble shoot” coordination barriers that may be encountered. It provides an insight into coordination resources, partners, and important contextual information that may contribute to UNDAC effectiveness.

Although the chapters are written as stand-alone documents, they are intended to be read as a whole as they reference material across chapters. The sequence of chapters generally follows the progression of typical UNDAC missions.

The UNDAC handbook has been developed by OCHA and members of the international UNDAC system. The information contained in the handbook draws on references from a variety of sources, including:

- OCHA publications.
- The United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) “Field Operations Guide” and “Disaster Assessment Procedures Manual”.
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) “Handbook for Emergencies” and other UNHCR reference material.
- The World Food Programme (WFP) publication “Food Aid in Emergencies”.
- The UNICEF handbook “Assisting in Emergencies”.
- Training modules of the United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme (DMTP).
- The Oxfam publication on landmines, “Legacy of Conflict”, by Rae McGrath.
- Publications by the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) “Guidelines for Emergency Assessment”.
- The Sphere Project publication “Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response”.

The UNDAC handbook has been developed by the Field Coordination Support Section (FCSS) of the Emergency Services Branch (ESB) of OCHA. FCSS is financed entirely through voluntary contributions from interested governments. Any comments on the handbook or proposals for improvements should be addressed to FCSS.

## A.2. How to contact OCHA

### NEW YORK

**During Office Hours: +1 212 963-1234**

United Nations Headquarters switchboard. If known, direct numbers to OCHA officers may also be used.

**In Emergencies: +1 212 963-4962**

Facsimile: +1 212 963-9489/1312/1040

Email: [ochany@un.org](mailto:ochany@un.org)

Mail:

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
1 United Nations Plaza  
10017 New York  
USA

### GENEVA

**During Office Hours: +41 (0)22 917-1234**

United Nations Office at Geneva switchboard number. If known, direct numbers to OCHA officers may also be used.

**In Emergencies: +41 (0)22 917-2010**

OCHA-Geneva maintains a 24-hour duty system 365 days-a-year. The call is received by an answering service, Digicall, which conveys the message to the OCHA-Geneva Duty Officer who then calls back.

Facsimile: +41 (0)22 917-0023

Telex: 414242 OCHA CH

Email: [ochagva@un.org](mailto:ochagva@un.org)

Mail:

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  
Palais des Nations  
CH- 1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland

***UNDAC mobilization and missions***

An UNDAC team is mobilised by FCSS from OCHA-Geneva. During an UNDAC mobilization and mission two separate lines will be opened by FCSS, exclusively for communications with the UNDAC team:

Facsimile: +41 (0)22 917-0023  
Telephone: +41 (0)22 917-1600  
Email: undac\_alert@un.org

***Other purposes***

For any other purpose, or when an UNDAC team has not been activated, FCSS should be used as the point of contact.

