Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Mission statement

To reduce the impact humanitarian crises have on people, OCHA’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) works with governments and at-risk communities to strengthen their capacity to handle emergencies.

• With national authorities, ROAP promotes understanding of the international tools and services for emergency response and how to call them forward when needed.
• With people at risk of crisis, ROAP works to ensure that humanitarian response is informed by their needs and preferences.
• Together with other humanitarian organizations, ROAP engages a broader group of disaster response partners, from the private sector, military responders, and academic institutions, among others, to support nationally-led and coordinated action where appropriate.

Throughout, ROAP promotes the alignment of international support to national expectations, delivery of high-quality, rapid and at-scale support, and respect for international humanitarian principles.

Five core functions of OCHA

OCHA’s Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) works with regional and in-country partners across 27 countries to adapt international response tools and mechanisms to support localized humanitarian action. ROAP delivers OCHA’s mandate through:

**COORDINATION**

OCHA brings together people, tools and experience to save lives

ROAP maintains a constant state of readiness to rapidly deploy and provide specialized assistance to governments and in-country humanitarian partners in planning and coordinating an emergency response. In an emergency, ROAP strengthens coordination capacity, manages inter-agency strategic planning and resource mobilization, provides information management and public information products and ensures that affected communities, local civil society, private sector and military partners are engaged.

**ADVOCACY**

OCHA speaks on behalf of people affected by conflict and disaster

ROAP supports Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators to conduct public and private advocacy on the needs of crisis-affected people. Working with counterparts from other humanitarian agencies, ROAP ensures that humanitarian messages are communicated effectively to mobilize attention and resources, ensuring that assistance and protection support reach the most vulnerable.

**INFORMATION MANAGEMENT**

OCHA collects, analyses and shares critical information

ROAP gathers and shares reliable data, including hazard risks and potential impact on communities, from countries across Asia-Pacific region to support response preparedness, early warning and strategic planning. In an emergency, ROAP supports rapid needs assessments, while infographics and products are developed to support the coordination of the response.

**HUMANITARIAN FINANCING**

OCHA organizes and monitors humanitarian funding

In sudden and slow-onset disasters and protracted crises, ROAP works with in-country partners to advocate and secure funding to enable aid agencies to provide assistance to affected communities. This includes developing humanitarian response plans and secure grants from the UN’s Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to jumpstart relief operations.

**POLICY**

OCHA provides guidance and clarity on humanitarian policy

ROAP works with governments and humanitarian partners to identify, analyse and develop common policies on trends and emerging issues of humanitarian concerns. Since 2007, ROAP has held a series of multi-stakeholder policy and partnership forums to build consensus on good humanitarian practice. In February 2017, ROAP organized the first regional dialogue on the Grand Bargain aimed at operationalising the commitments made by donors and humanitarian partners at the World Humanitarian Summit.
Major disasters in the region 2004-2016

The Asia-Pacific disaster context

Key disaster numbers

- 154 disasters on average per year in the region
- 44% of all disasters worldwide occur in the region
- 690 ppl affected by disasters in millions (last five years)
- 95% of all ppl affected by a disaster in 2016 live in the region

Disaster event history 2012-2016

- 86 Earthquakes
- 26 Drought
- 301 Flooding
- 250 Storm

Recent disaster events 2015-2017

- Myanmar Floods Jul 2015
- Cyclone Winston, Fiji Feb 2016
- DPR Korea Floods Aug 2016
- TC Pam, Vanuatu Mar 2015
- Mongolia Dzud Feb 2016
- Viet Nam Drought Mar 2016
- Sri Lanka Drought Mar 2017

Area of responsibility

- 27 countries
- *Afghanistan and Pakistan will transition into ROAP’s Area of Responsibility (AOR) in 2017.

Disaster name

- Myanmar Floods
- Cyclone Winston, Fiji
- DPR Korea Floods
- TC Pam, Vanuatu
- Mongolia Dzud
- Viet Nam Drought
- Sri Lanka Drought

People affected

- 18 million
- 407m
- 159m
- 103m

Source: CRED EM-DAT
Response preparedness

Building on lessons learned from major responses, ROAP is working to adapt global guidance and develop an operational approach that specifically reflects the regional context and roles that the international community is expected to fill after disasters.

Such an approach places national responders and affected people themselves at the fore of response. The Rapid Response Approach to Disasters in Asia-Pacific (RAPID) informs Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) tools on Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) management and Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) with innovative approaches developed in the region, resulting in lighter and faster processes. Using country-specific risk profiles and vulnerability data, coupled with robust analysis of the immediate needs likely to emerge in a crisis, RAPID provides response planning tools that increase the speed, scale and quality of a response.

The RAPID approach links a comprehensive preparedness planning approach directly to response activities, through four key stages:

1. Disaster Impact Model
2. Needs Analysis
3. Response Capacity Analysis
4. Planning and Advocacy

The four stages are complemented by an integrated monitoring and testing process. The full RAPID cycle strengthens response preparedness by ensuring that feedback from communities and response lessons inform future planning.
**Response**

ROAP provides a first wave of responders to support national authorities and in-country teams to coordinate the international component of response to major emergencies. ROAP also provides targeted support to the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators and their teams upon request. Between 2012 and 2016, ROAP deployed 113 staff to 41 emergencies in the region and across the world. ROAP responds on average to eight disasters each year.

**RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS**

**COORDINATION SURGE**
In November 2013, Category 5 Typhoon Haiyan cut a path of destruction across the central Philippines. Even before the typhoon made landfall, ROAP had deployed a team of four as the front line of a coordination surge that would eventually encompass 1,700 OCHA and partners’ staff. Coordination hubs were quickly established in five locations across the typhoon-affected areas to support national and international responders to deliver life-saving assistance.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
The common service approach to community engagement – now a global good practice – was piloted in a number of emergency responses in the Asia-Pacific region. In the first days after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, ROAP worked with international and local humanitarian and private sector partners to establish a Common Feedback Project. This helped to ensure that information from affected communities was analysed, consolidated and acted upon by humanitarian decision-makers, with results shared back with communities to strengthen their future preparedness and resilience.

**HUMANITARIAN CIVIL-MILITARY COORDINATION**
When Tropical Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu in March 2015, logistics was a key priority. Foreign military assets from governments in the region were used extensively to deliver critically-needed aid through a dedicated Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) mechanism supported by ROAP. Throughout the response, 24 assessment teams consisting of 155 people were transported across 23 islands. The joint logistics operation is considered as good practice and has set a standard for cooperation in the Pacific.

**ROAP deployments 2004-2017**

Number of times an OCHA team deployed

- **PHILIPPINES**
  - 13
- **INDONESIA**
  - 9
- **MYANMAR**
  - 8

**TC PAM VANUATU**
March 2015

**NEPAL EARTHQUAKE**
April 2015

**HAIYAN PHILIPPINES**
November 2013
People at the centre of response

Acknowledging that affected communities themselves are the first responders in any crisis, ROAP has invested in developing technical expertise in key areas that protect and enhance communities’ involvement in the planning, delivery and monitoring of humanitarian response. Where required, ROAP can deploy staff with specialized knowledge to coordinate among agencies and with communities in these areas.

PROTECTION
People affected by crises should be able to expect that their basic rights as individuals will be respected during and as part of a humanitarian response, in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law. ROAP works to ensure that assistance provided to crisis-affected people meets their immediate needs without doing them longer-term harm and comply with international principles and standards. With governments and humanitarian partners, ROAP seeks to reduce overall risks to affected persons by decreasing threats, reducing vulnerability and enhancing capacities for provision of assistance and to address or prevent patterns of violence, abuse, coercion and deprivation.

GENDER
Women and girls are disproportionately affected by humanitarian crises, accounting for more than 75% of displaced persons and at risk of violence, economic deprivation and other protection concerns. ROAP supports the integration of gender analysis into humanitarian action as essential to ensuring that the impact of underlying gender norms and inequalities are recognized and mitigated by responders; that the gender and age specific vulnerabilities and needs of women, girls, boys and men are addressed; and that all individuals are empowered to be agents of their own recovery.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
People affected by crises have the right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives, to receive the information they need to make informed decisions, and to make a complaint when they feel the help they receive is not adequate or has unwelcome consequences. ROAP works with other humanitarian agencies to ensure that community voices, including those of women, men, girls and boys, are systematically influencing the way in which responders provide assistance. ROAP works to promote common standards and approaches to community engagement as means of achieving system-wide accountability to affected people.

CASH COORDINATION
As an alternative to in-kind assistance, cash-based programming is quickly becoming a preferred aid modality. Not only does evidence show that it can be more-cost effective, but it also recognizes that each affected family and individual has specific priorities and coping strategies to meet their most acute needs. ROAP works with partners to ensure opportunities for cash-, voucher- and/or other transfer-based programming are considered as part of response planning.
Diverse operational partners

ROAP works with an increasingly diverse array of partners to match response capacity to needs.

MILITARY PARTNERS
Since 2005, ROAP has worked with regional partners to tailor global guidance on humanitarian civil-military coordination (UN-CMCoord) to the regional context and to strengthen humanitarian civilian-military coordination for response preparedness, as well as ensure enhanced predictability of civil-military coordination processes and platforms during response. In 2014, ROAP established the Regional Consultative Group (RCG) on UN-CMCoord for Asia and the Pacific, which meets annually. The RCG now has five sub-groups focused on enhancing preparedness and cooperation in countries at high risk of large-scale, sudden-onset disasters in which foreign military assets are likely to support international response, including Bangladesh, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal and the Philippines. A logistics sub-group looks at enhanced cooperation to support civil-military operations throughout the region.

PRIVATE SECTOR
During an emergency, ROAP supports in-country information sharing and coordination between the humanitarian community, private sector and governments, and receives and matches offers of assistance from the private sector with appropriate humanitarian partners. ROAP works closely with and facilitates linkages to the humanitarian community for the growing network of private sector-led coordination platforms established as part of the Connecting Business initiative (CBi). CBi national platforms are up and running in Fiji and the Pacific, Myanmar, Philippines and Sri Lanka.

REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
In 2009, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) became the first regional organization to adopt a legally-binding disaster management framework. ROAP and the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) – ASEAN’s operational arm for disaster management – have developed a strong working relationship focused on enhancing cooperation during preparedness to achieve inter-operability in disaster response. ROAP also manages the broader UN System partnership with ASEAN on disaster management, under which the ASEAN-UN Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management 2016-2020 (JSPADM) is supported by 17 UN departments, agencies, programmes and funds.

Regional coordination

ROAP supports humanitarian coordination across the Asia-Pacific region to strengthen response preparedness, ensure harmonized approaches to regional and cross-border concerns and crises, and promote the sharing of lessons learned and good practices.

The focus of this regional coordination effort is the IASC Regional Network for Asia and the Pacific, an informal body that brings together IASC members based in the region and representatives of Asian civil society, and which is chaired by ROAP. ROAP co-facilitates the IASC Regional Network’s working groups on Emergency Preparedness and Gender in Humanitarian Action, as well as the ad hoc task teams that may be created to develop regional policy briefs on key issues.

ROAP also supports regional inter-governmental processes on disaster risk reduction, including the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction and other work related to the Sendai Framework.

GLOBAL COORDINATION

OTHER REGIONAL COORDINATION INITIATIVES

IASC REGIONAL NETWORK FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

GENDER IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION working group
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS working group
OTHER COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE
RESPONDING TO GLOBAL PRIORITIES

ROAP’s will continue to be responsive to the changing global policy context, and will take a proactive and forward looking approach to ensuring that global priorities, initiatives and guidance are adapted to be fit for purpose in the Asia-Pacific context.

ROAP is working with partners to follow up the outcomes World Humanitarian Summit and the Grand Bargain appropriately and effectively in Asia-Pacific. This includes recognition that the ability to implement an effective response requires including issues such as localization, people centred response and the humanitarian-development-peacebuilding nexus into preparedness work.

FUTURE OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN ASIA-PACIFIC

Increased capacity and strengthened governance structures mean that national and local actors are already handling the majority of disaster response in Asia-Pacific with international actors reinforcing national and regional efforts when required.

As this trajectory looks set to continue in Asia-Pacific, ROAP is increasingly looking to ensure that it can augment local responses by increasing not only the speed and volume of assistance but ensuring a greater emphasis on the quality of response for sudden and slow onset disasters, protracted crises and conflict situations. This involves providing technical guidance to ensure responses are based on global best practice including with regards to issues such as effective engagement with communities, gender sensitive programming and protection.

Donor acknowledgements

OCHA receives voluntary contributions from a diverse set of donors. Their generous contributions and constant active support allow OCHA to deliver its services and to develop innovative ways to meet or address the challenges confronting the global humanitarian community. OCHA highly values its donors’ funding year after year and counts on continued support during a period of unprecedented humanitarian need.

Future strategic priorities

The Asia-Pacific region is highly vulnerable to natural disasters. It also has rapidly strengthening economies and increasing government capacity for response.
ONLINE PLATFORMS

OCHAAsiaPac

ochaasiapac

ocharoap.exposure.co

www.unocha.org/roap

www.reliefweb.int

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