This is UNDAC
United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system is a part of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It serves as the international response system for sudden-onset emergencies, such as an earthquake or a flood, and is designed to help the United Nations and governments of disaster-affected countries during the first phase of an emergency.

ABOUT OCHA

OCHA is the part of the United Nations Secretariat responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies. OCHA’s vision is one of a world that comes together to help crisis-affected people rapidly get the humanitarian assistance they need. Our mission is to coordinate the global emergency response to save lives and protect people in humanitarian crises. We advocate for effective and principled humanitarian action by all, for all.
United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination

THE TEAM

An UNDAC team can be deployed at very short notice (12-48 hours) anywhere in the world.

The UNDAC system is designed to support national governments, the UN in-country, Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Country Teams, and incoming international responders with coordination during the first phase of a sudden-onset emergency. It also aims to advise and strengthen national and regional disaster response capacity.

UNDAC teams are equipped to be self-sufficient.

They are trained in various skills, such as coordination, needs assessments and information management. The teams also advise and strengthen national and regional disaster response capacity.

When required, an UNDAC team establishes and runs an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) and a Reception and Departure Centre (RDC), which provide a platform for cooperation, coordination and information management for international humanitarian response agencies and national responders. First responders use the Virtual OSOCC website for real-time information exchange during ongoing emergencies.

MANAGEMENT

The UNDAC system is managed by the Emergency Response Support Branch (ERSB) in OCHA Geneva.

As well as working with OCHA regional offices and other parts of OCHA, ERSB works with UNDAC national focal points. ERSB also acts as the secretariat of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), which is the global network of countries and organizations dedicated to improving standards and coordination in urban search-and-rescue (USAR) preparedness-and-response operations.
The UNDAC system consists of four components:

**STAFF**

Professional and experienced emergency managers and humanitarian experts made available by their respective governments or organizations, together with OCHA staff. UNDAC team members are specially trained and equipped for their task. For the devastating floods in Peru in 2017, the UNDAC team was able to deploy experts to support the UN Resident Coordinator and the Government in responding to the disaster.

**METHODOLOGY**

Predefined methods for coordination, including collection and management of information, coordinated assessment and coordination support structures for the first phase of a sudden-onset disaster. For instance, USAR coordination and advice to Government methodology proved effective in the earthquake response in Mexico in 2017.

**MOBILISATION PROCEDURES**

Proven systems to mobilise and deploy an UNDAC team to a disaster site anywhere in the world within 48 hours of request. For the earthquake response in Nepal, the UNDAC team was able to arrive in Kathmandu in less than 24 hours after the disaster.

**OPERATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS AND EQUIPMENT**

Personal equipment and service packages enabling UNDAC teams to be self-sufficient, as well as operational partnerships optimising service provision for the humanitarian community during UNDAC missions. In 2017 after the impact of two extremely powerful hurricanes affecting several Caribbean islands, the UNDAC team mobilised with equipment and specialist staff from various operational partners providing logistics, ICT, mapping and assessment & analysis support.
Facts and Figures

SINCE 1993 MORE THAN:

- **NUMBER OF DEPLOYMENTS**: 1600 members deployed
- **NUMBER OF MISSIONS**: 285 missions carried out
- **NUMBER OF COUNTRIES**: 100 affected countries

**TOP 5 DEPLOYMENTS**

1. 2004 Indian Ocean: Earthquake and Tsunami - 45 deployments
2. 2016 Caribbean: Hurricane Matthew - 24 deployments
3. 2005 Pakistan: Earthquake - 23 deployments
4. 2010 Haiti: Earthquake - 23 deployments
5. 2013 Philippines: Typhoon Haiyan - 23 deployments

**TOTAL MISSIONS**

Number of missions in country

1. 2. 3. 4+
Milestones

The UNDAC team was established, with the first induction course held in Switzerland.

1993

Regional team of the Americas is established.

1995

UNDAC team’s first 10 missions are completed.

1994

Africa joins Europe regional team. Record number of missions — 20 in one year.

2004

Middle East joins Africa and Europe regional teams.

2009

UNDAC completes its 200th mission.

2010
First system review examines overall operations and geographical and demographic composition.

Asia joins Pacific regional team. ISARAG guidelines endorsed by the UN General Assembly.

2002

2001

2003

UNDAC completes its 100th mission — the Cyclone Zoe response in the Solomon Islands.

UNDAC Field Handbook is available as phone application for mobile devices for the first time.

2014

2011

Second UNDAC review to analyse its readiness, effectiveness, efficiency and impact.

2018

UNDAC celebrates 25 years with the publication of the 7th UNDAC Field Handbook.
Methodology

The UNDAC methodology is based on best practices from more than 285 missions to over 100 countries since UNDAC’s inception in 1993. It can adapt to a wide range of emergency situations and challenges.

The UNDAC Handbook and trainings clarify UNDAC’s roles and responsibilities in a typical mission cycle.

CORE VALUES

Equal
Committed
Competent
Flexible
Inclusive
Operational
Supportive

BUILT ON FOUR CORNERSTONES

underpinning the system and providing the basis for how individual members and deployed teams approach UNDAC mission objectives.

HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

The principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence are fundamental in the UNDAC system.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

UNDAC is rooted in disaster management but influenced by humanitarian coordination. The system bridges these two approaches.

LEADERSHIP

UNDAC supports and provides leadership at operational and tactical levels while supporting leadership at strategic levels.
Membership

UNDAC members usually work in disaster management at the national level or in international humanitarian response. **Member governments** are self-financing countries that hold UNDAC mission accounts with OCHA/ERSB, through which funds are deposited to cover the deployment costs of their national UNDAC staff. Participating countries are sponsored members of the UNDAC system.

To become a member country, the national authority of the interested country should contact the Chief of ERSB.

Contact details are available at: https://www.unocha.org/our-work/coordination/un-disaster-assessment-and-coordination-undac/undac-contacts
Training

UNDAC trainings ensure all active UNDAC members remain ready to deploy for response-and-preparedness missions. As experienced disaster managers and humanitarians, all UNDAC members must attend an induction training, which gives them the basic tools for deployment.

UNDAC members are expected to regularly attend refresher courses in specific areas of expertise, such as civil-military coordination, environmental emergencies and on-site coordination. Trainings are held in all regions and conducted in cooperation with Member States and operational partners.
Partnerships

OCHA works with a range of partners to enable UNDAC teams to carry out their activities on the ground. UNDAC operational partners are essential members of the UNDAC system and include governments, NGOs, private sector and UN. From logistics support and ICT support to assessment & analysis, remote sensing and mapping to technical expertise (environment, health, etc.). Their support extends to all UNDAC associated members organisations such as the UN and governmental agencies, Cluster Lead Agencies and other humanitarian actors collaborating with UNDAC.

**UNDAC operational partners** include the following (in alphabetical order), and a **strategic partnership** is also established with the European Commission - Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection (ECHO) to support UNDAC response and preparedness activities.

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Emergency Preparedness

UNDAC teams directly contribute to OCHA’s key preparedness objectives: to strengthen the capacity of national authorities and regional organizations to access and coordinate international humanitarian assistance effectively, and to become self-reliant in coordinating national humanitarian assistance in emergency response.

The UNDAC system brings together experienced national disaster management experts and international humanitarian professionals who undertake specific disaster response preparedness missions at the request of interested Governments, and with the buy-in and support of the respective UN Resident Coordinator and UN Country Team.

UNDAC teams also contribute to preparedness through capacity-building activities during response missions, and by participating as associates in the capacity-assessment missions of other institutions.

Team members also act as international observers, advisers or exercise controllers of emergency response simulation exercises.

Many team members help to prepare and host training courses for UNDAC teams, and for other regional and international humanitarian response organizations, such as the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and the ASEAN Emergency Rapid Assessment Team.
Looking to the Future

“UNDAC will be judged on the basis of the speed of getting people on the ground, the ability to facilitate coordination and the knowledge and technical capacity that we bring.”

“Assistance to people in need will never be static, and we are constantly required to adjust our approach. With increased access to communication, demands to provide real-time information have only increased. Facilitating information flow has now become a core task of an UNDAC team. A growing number of diverse partners are now involved in emergency response operations, and it is UNDAC’s role to find ways to embrace individuals, networks and organizations, in order to optimize the totality of individual inputs. There is no other mechanism able to combine local knowledge with international experience in the first phase of response as the UNDAC system can, but we fully acknowledge that we need to adjust and keep changing to stay relevant.”

Jesper Lund
UNDAC Chief & 20 year member
Donors

UNDAC would not be possible without the generous support of the contributing **UNDAC Member States** listed below:

These donors provide funding to **UNDAC mission** accounts with OCHA.

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The UNDAC system is managed by the Emergency Response Support Branch (ERSB) of OCHA in Geneva.

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For more information about OCHA, visit
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