



NEW ZEALAND
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE
Aid Programme

Policy and Strategies for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Risk Reduction



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Context

The number and impact of disasters globally is increasing and developing countries are disproportionately affected. While the number of deaths as a result of these events has decreased over the past twenty years, the number of people affected and the size of the economic losses sustained have risen dramatically.

There is now compelling evidence that the impact of disasters can be significantly mitigated by building the resilience of nations and people, and by addressing the root causes of vulnerability. The right combination of humanitarian, development and political action can reduce unnecessary loss of life and suffering, reducing the need for humanitarian assistance in the long-term.

Pacific Island countries – our closest neighbours - are particularly vulnerable to an array of natural hazards. These hazards can result in disasters that devastate lives and livelihoods, destroy environmental assets, severely impact economies and wipe out years of hard-won development gains. Small areas of land separated by a vast ocean, together with climate change and increased urbanisation, exacerbate the risk.

Globally, armed conflicts and complex emergencies now see more civilians suffer than combatants. Each year, lives are lost and livelihoods destroyed.

Policy for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Risk Reduction

Introduction

This policy statement outlines the New Zealand Aid Programme's commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to, and supporting disaster risk reduction in, developing countries. The policy is underpinned by key international **agreements and guidelines to which New Zealand is committed**.

For the purposes of this policy:

Humanitarian assistance is effective needs-based response to, and recovery from, emergencies. Generally, humanitarian assistance is short-term and focuses on immediate relief and facilitating the early return to normal lives and livelihoods.

Disaster risk reduction is action taken to reduce the risks of disasters and natural hazards and improve preparedness for adverse events¹. Disaster risk reduction can be delivered as focused stand-alone initiatives or integrated into humanitarian and development actions.

Attached to this policy statement are separate strategies that will guide how humanitarian assistance and disaster risk reduction will be implemented across the New Zealand Aid Programme through to 2015.

Outcomes

The overarching outcomes that the New Zealand Aid Programme seeks to contribute to are:

- Effective needs-based response to, and recovery from, emergencies.
- Strengthened disaster and climate resilience and reduced risks.

Humanitarian assistance will contribute to saving lives, alleviating suffering, maintaining human dignity and supporting sustainable recovery from emergencies.

Our investments in *disaster risk reduction*, whether stand-alone activities or integrated within humanitarian or development programmes, will improve preparedness for disasters and mitigate the effects of natural disasters and climate change.

Comparative Advantage and Geographic Focus

Given New Zealand's strong cultural and political ties, and its geographic proximity, Pacific Island countries in south-west and central Pacific are the primary focus of our humanitarian assistance and investments in disaster risk reduction.

Beyond the Pacific, New Zealand will:

- Have a particular focus on investing in disaster risk reduction in ASEAN. This includes support for ASEAN-led initiatives where we can share knowledge and expertise in preparing for, and mitigating, risks.

¹ This is based on the United Nations-endorsed Hyogo Framework for Action, adopted in 2005. The expected outcome of the Hyogo Framework for Action is "the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries."

- Support the coordinated action of the international community in responding to emergencies.

Principles and Approach

In providing humanitarian assistance and implementing disaster risk reduction, the New Zealand Aid Programme is guided by the New Zealand Government's commitment to international humanitarian and human rights laws and international humanitarian and development principles and frameworks.

1. International Legal Framework

The New Zealand Aid Programme will adhere to international legal obligations governing humanitarian assistance, in particular international human rights law, international humanitarian law, refugee law and relevant Conventions to which New Zealand is a Party.

The New Zealand Aid Programme views commitments in international human rights conventions related to the rights of the child, refugees, internally displaced people, the promotion of gender equity, and rights of people with a disability, as integral to effective humanitarian assistance.

2. Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles

New Zealand is a signatory to the OECD Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship (GHD). The 23 principles and good practice commitments (see Annex 1) provide a framework to guide donor's humanitarian assistance and a mechanism for greater donor accountability.

In line with the GHD principles, humanitarian assistance under the New Zealand Aid Programme will be based on the humanitarian principles of:

- *Humanity* – To save lives and alleviate suffering with priority given to the most vulnerable.
- *Impartiality* – Based on need and without discrimination.
- *Neutrality* – Does not favour any side in an armed or other dispute.
- *Independence* – Is autonomous from political, economic, military or other objectives.

These principles are important to facilitate humanitarian access to politically-charged contexts, and to protect the safety of humanitarian workers.

3. Hyogo Framework for Action

New Zealand is a signatory to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015. The Framework identifies global action on disaster risk reduction (DRR) and provides guidance on how those actions might be implemented. Its outcome is "the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives as well as the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries" and it lays out a set of strategic goals to achieve this by 2015.

4. Other codes, guidelines and standards

In addition, the New Zealand Aid Programme respects and is guided by internationally recognised codes, guidelines and standards that underpin humanitarian assistance and disaster risk reduction including: International Disaster Response Law Guidelines; Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes; Principles agreed under the Busan Aid Effectiveness Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation; The Sphere Project Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response; Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil

Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies and the Oslo Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief.

In providing *humanitarian assistance*, the New Zealand Aid Programme will:

- Respect national government authority.²
- Respond to requests for humanitarian assistance based on assessed needs, availability of resources, security of access to affected populations and the ability to determine New Zealand's effectiveness and impact.
- Focus on vulnerable people.
- Apply a whole of government approach to ensure the coherent and consistent delivery of humanitarian assistance.

For both *humanitarian assistance* and *disaster risk reduction* activities, the New Zealand Aid Programme will:

- Coordinate closely with national governments, the United Nations (UN) system, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, New Zealand non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and across the New Zealand Government.
- Select implementing partners based on their commitment to humanitarian principles, standards and/or aid effectiveness principles as relevant, and their ability to deliver relevant, effective, efficient assistance that has impact and promotes sustainability where relevant.
- Integrate the cross-cutting issues of human rights, gender and the environment. Human rights will be protected and promoted. Women and girls are often disproportionately affected by natural disasters and conflict. The distinct needs, experiences, vulnerabilities and roles of women, men, girls and boys will be recognised in responses. Sustainable environmental management and climate change adaptation will be central to New Zealand's approach to Disaster Risk Reduction and building community resilience.
- Respect local communities and promote local participation and ownership.
- Be accountable and transparent by making information about our assistance publicly available, conducting monitoring and evaluation in line with organisational policy and processes, and promoting the engagement of affected communities in planning and evaluation.
- Take a continuous learning approach by sharing expertise, engaging, contributing and advocating for innovative solutions at the regional and global level. This also includes facilitating engagement between nations in the Pacific and between ASEAN members.

Policy Dialogue

The New Zealand Aid Programme will draw on New Zealand's considerable domestic and Pacific experience to inform our engagement with other countries and international organisations in global policy dialogue on humanitarian action and disaster risk reduction, and to share lessons and expertise that will contribute to strengthening policy, practice and programming.

² Where the national government declares an emergency and requests international assistance

Humanitarian Assistance Strategy (2012 – 2015)

Objective	To provide an effective needs-based response to, and recovery from, emergencies.
Expected outcomes	Contribute to saving lives, alleviating suffering, maintaining human dignity and supporting sustainable recovery from emergencies.
Priorities	Coordination and delivery of relevant, effective and efficient relief and recovery assistance in the central and south-west Pacific in accordance with the principles and appraisal considerations outlined in this policy statement. Relevant, effective and efficient humanitarian assistance in the ASEAN region and elsewhere, according to the principles and appraisal considerations outlined in this policy statement.

Key Interventions

1. Relief and Recovery Assistance: Pacific

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) will coordinate New Zealand's emergency relief and recovery efforts in the Pacific through a whole of New Zealand Government Emergency Task Force (ETF). The ETF is chaired by a Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and sits under the Official's Domestic and External Security Committee (ODESC).

New Zealand's approach to emergency assistance in the Pacific is delivered according to the New Zealand Government's *Guidelines for Responding to Natural Disasters in the Pacific* and associated Standard Operating Procedures.

The New Zealand Aid Programme's relief and initial recovery assistance will be funded and managed under the Humanitarian and Disaster Management Programme, and coordinated closely with relevant bilateral programmes and staff in Wellington and at Post. This approach will help to ensure an effective transition through to longer term recovery and development.

The New Zealand Aid Programme will work in partnership and coordination with:

- Pacific governments
- FRANZ³ partners (France and Australia) as well as other key donors in the Pacific where our objectives align
- The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- NZ NGOs, including through the ETF and under the New Zealand Disaster Response Partnership (NZDRP)
- United Nations humanitarian organisations.

³ Trilateral disaster relief arrangements signed in 1992 in the Pacific (FRANZ), between France, Australia and New Zealand.

Longer-term recovery will be managed under the New Zealand Aid Programme bilateral programmes.

2. Relief and Recovery Assistance: ASEAN and other Global Regions

Taking into account our geographic location, resource base and good humanitarian donorship the New Zealand Aid Programme contributes to the coordinated relief efforts of priority international organisations. On the basis of a periodic assessment, these partners may include United Nations humanitarian organisations and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The New Zealand Aid Programme also contributes to well-coordinated international civil society responses through NZ NGOs under the New Zealand Disaster Response Partnership.

In addition to the principles outlined in the policy statement on page four, the New Zealand Aid Programme will base responses on the following considerations:

- The issuance of an international humanitarian appeal that demonstrates coordinated action by humanitarian agencies and affected Governments.
- The scale of humanitarian need as demonstrated by the number of affected people and their level of vulnerability compared with the level of response mobilised.
- The nature of the crisis with a priority focus on rapid onset crises and situations characterised by a rapid and significant deterioration in conditions.

Other considerations are:

- Existing relationship with a country and partnerships, and possibility to build on bilateral and regional programmes.
- The possibility of applying a whole of government approach.
- Relevant knowledge of crises, appropriate response mechanisms, and capability to respond.

3. Other Assistance

The New Zealand Aid Programme is contributing to the coordinated efforts of the international humanitarian system to meet priority needs, including underfunded protracted crises, through the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy (2012 – 2015)

Objective	Disaster and climate resilience strengthened and risks reduced
Expected outcome	Improved preparedness for disasters. Improved resilience to the adverse impacts of disaster risk, climate vulnerability and climate change.
Priorities	Strengthen capacity of partner countries (Pacific and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations ASEAN) to reduce disaster risks and to be better prepared for disasters. Integrate DRR into development programmes and its humanitarian assistance interventions where relevant.

Key Interventions

1. Disaster Risk Reduction in the Pacific

Disaster risk reduction is a focal area of the Humanitarian and Disaster Management Programme, as well as the contestable New Zealand Partnerships for International Development Fund.

Disaster risk reduction will be integrated into development programmes and humanitarian assistance, where relevant, in order to mitigate risk and/or help countries and communities to be better prepared to effectively respond to disasters, such as major infrastructure activities.

The New Zealand Aid Programme will also:

- Support actions that develop and strengthen multi-hazard early-warning systems and effective public awareness programmes, with a particular focus on Polynesia.
- Support regional and multilateral approaches that strengthen disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and raise levels of resilience.
- Support actions that address disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation as well as the integration of disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development where relevant.
- Align New Zealand Aid Programme's disaster risk reduction activities with international, partner country and New Zealand policy on disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation.
- Advocate for disaster risk reduction to be a national priority backed up by appropriately resourced structures, policies and procedures.
- Actively engage with key donor partners including Australia, Japan, France, the United States and the European Union on strengthening disaster risk reduction coordination.

Disaster Risk Reduction in ASEAN

The New Zealand Aid Programme will:

- At the regional level, support the ASEAN-related processes such as the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Risk Management and Emergency response (AADMER), ASEAN Regional Forum and East Asia Summit.
- Provide support at the national level to build capabilities that assist with management of disaster response and reduction of vulnerability, with initial emphasis on Indonesia, the Philippines and Vietnam.
- Draw on New Zealand's national expertise and stakeholders where appropriate.
- Disaster risk reduction will be considered through development programmes where relevant in order to mitigate risk and/or help countries and communities to be better prepared to effectively respond to disasters.

This strategy should be read in conjunction with the New Zealand Aid Programme Climate Change Operational Policy.

ANNEX 1: PRINCIPLES AND GOOD PRACTICE OF HUMANITARIAN DONORSHIP

Objectives and definition of humanitarian action

1. The objectives of humanitarian action are to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations.
2. Humanitarian action should be guided by the humanitarian principles of *humanity*, meaning the centrality of saving human lives and alleviating suffering wherever it is found; *impartiality*, meaning the implementation of actions solely on the basis of need, without discrimination between or within affected populations; *neutrality*, meaning that humanitarian action must not favour any side in an armed conflict or other dispute where such action is carried out; and *independence*, meaning the autonomy of humanitarian objectives from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.
3. Humanitarian action includes the protection of civilians and those no longer taking part in hostilities, and the provision of food, water and sanitation, shelter, health services and other items of assistance, undertaken for the benefit of affected people and to facilitate the return to normal lives and livelihoods.

General principles

4. Respect and promote the implementation of international humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights.
5. While reaffirming the primary responsibility of states for the victims of humanitarian emergencies within their own borders, strive to ensure flexible and timely funding, on the basis of the collective obligation of striving to meet humanitarian needs.
6. Allocate humanitarian funding in proportion to needs and on the basis of needs assessments.
7. Request implementing humanitarian organisations to ensure, to the greatest possible extent, adequate involvement of beneficiaries in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian response.
8. Strengthen the capacity of affected countries and local communities to prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond to humanitarian crises, with the goal of ensuring that governments and local communities are better able to meet their responsibilities and co-ordinate effectively with humanitarian partners.
9. Provide humanitarian assistance in ways that are supportive of recovery and long-term development, striving to ensure support, where appropriate, to the maintenance and return of sustainable livelihoods and transitions from humanitarian relief to recovery and development activities.
10. Support and promote the central and unique role of the United Nations in providing leadership and co-ordination of international humanitarian action, the special role of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the vital role of the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organisations in implementing humanitarian action.

Good practices in donor financing, management and accountability

(a) Funding

11. Strive to ensure that funding of humanitarian action in new crises does not adversely affect the meeting of needs in ongoing crises.
12. Recognising the necessity of dynamic and flexible response to changing needs in humanitarian crises, strive to ensure predictability and flexibility in funding to United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and to other key humanitarian organisations
13. While stressing the importance of transparent and strategic priority-setting and financial planning by implementing organisations, explore the possibility of reducing, or enhancing the flexibility of, earmarking, and of introducing longer-term funding arrangements.
14. Contribute responsibly, and on the basis of burden-sharing, to United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeals and to International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement appeals, and actively support the formulation of Common Humanitarian Action Plans (CHAP) as the primary instrument for strategic planning, prioritisation and co-ordination in complex emergencies.

(b) Promoting standards and enhancing implementation

15. Request that implementing humanitarian organisations fully adhere to good practice and are committed to promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in implementing humanitarian action.
16. Promote the use of Inter-Agency Standing Committee guidelines and principles on humanitarian activities, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and the 1994 Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief.
17. Maintain readiness to offer support to the implementation of humanitarian action, including the facilitation of safe humanitarian access.
18. Support mechanisms for contingency planning by humanitarian organisations, including, as appropriate, allocation of funding, to strengthen capacities for response.
19. Affirm the primary position of civilian organisations in implementing humanitarian action, particularly in areas affected by armed conflict. In situations where military capacity and assets are used to support the implementation of humanitarian action, ensure that such use is in conformity with international humanitarian law and humanitarian principles, and recognises the leading role of humanitarian organisations.
20. Support the implementation of the 1994 Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief and the 2003 Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies.

(c) Learning and accountability

21. Support learning and accountability initiatives for the effective and efficient implementation of humanitarian action.
22. Encourage regular evaluations of international responses to humanitarian crises, including assessments of donor performance.
23. Ensure a high degree of accuracy, timeliness, and transparency in donor reporting on official humanitarian assistance spending, and encourage the development of standardised formats for such reporting.





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