

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

These definitions come from the UNDHA/UNDP and OFDA. Other authors and organizations have sometimes used variations of these definitions..

AFTERSHOCK

A smaller earthquake that follows the main shock and originates close to its focus. Aftershocks that follow the main shock have to be considered as the same event as the main earthquake.

ALARM

The warning or signal given of the actual or imminent presence of a dangerous event so that specific instructions for emergencies can be followed.

ALERT

The warning or signal given of the actual or imminent presence of a dangerous event so that specific instructions for emergencies can be followed.

BUDGET

A statement of resources (people, time and money) allocated to particular activities with a specific time frame. A statement of plans and expected results in numerical terms.

CONTINGENCY PLAN

A plan for possible future situations which are not expected to occur but which may occur. Commonly called a “What if.” Plan.

COORDINATION

The process of integrating the objectives and activities of separate work units or functional areas in order to realize the organization’s goals effectively.

DAMAGE

Unwanted changes or losses resulting from hazard impacts.

DECLARATION OF A DISASTER

Official declaration by the authorities of a political-management jurisdiction due to the need for extraordinary action.

DEVELOPMENT

The cumulative and lasting increase, tied to social changes, in the quantity and quality of a community’s goods, services and resources, with the purpose of maintaining and improving the security and quality of human life.

DISASTER

A natural or man-caused event which causes intense negative impacts on people, goods, services and/or the environment, exceeding the affected community's capability to respond.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

A collective term encompassing all aspects of planning for and responding to disaster, including both pre and post-disaster activities. It refers to both the risk and consequences of a disaster.

DISASTER WARNING SYSTEM

Methods to alert the community in case of a disaster.

EARTHQUAKE

Sudden break within the upper layers of the earth, sometimes breaking the surface, resulting in the vibration of the ground, when strong enough will cause the collapse of buildings and destruction of life and property. There are two scales for measuring the impact of an earthquake; the Richter scale and the Mercalli scale.

EMERGENCY PLAN

A definition of the policies, organization and procedures for confronting disasters in all phases.

EMERGENCY

situation generated by real or imminent occurrence of an event, requiring immediate attention.

EXPOSED POPULATION

The total population potentially susceptible to the effects of a hazard.

FLOOD

A significant rise of water level in a stream, lake, reservoir or a coastal region, a flood is harmful inundation of property and land utilized by man and may be of two types.

Slow flood – An increase in the volume of water produced by rain in rivers and lakes over a long period, days or weeks, mainly affecting property such as houses and cattle, and displacing the inhabitants from their usual dwelling places.

Flash flood – A sudden and extreme volume of water that flows rapidly causing deaths, injuries and violent destruction of property and inundation, and because of its nature is difficult to forecast.

HAZARD

The potential for a natural or man-caused event to occur with negative consequences.

HAZARD ASSESSMENT

Determining the nature, severity and frequency of a hazard; the area likely to be affected; and the time and duration of impact.

HAZARD MAPPING

The process of establishing geographically where certain phenomena are likely to pose a threat to elements at risk.

HURRICANE/CYCLONE

A large-scale closed circulation system in the atmosphere with low barometric pressure and strong winds that rotate counter clockwise in the southern hemisphere. Hurricanes are large atmospheric vortices with winds of more than 74 m.p.h; they develop in the Doldrums of the tropics and move in an often-erratic way towards higher latitudes.

INJURED

People with physical injuries/trauma/illness requiring medical treatment (therapeutic feeding included) as a direct result of a disaster. Comments: This category will include the severely malnourished as well as victims of radiation exposure and chemical intoxication. The injured are always part of the primary affected population.

MITIGATION

Measures taken to reduce the loss of life, livelihood and property by disasters, either by reducing vulnerability or by modifying the hazard, where possible.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Events of natural causes that result in a disaster. Examples are: hurricanes, tropical storms, floods, erosion, landslides, earthquakes, tidal surges/tsunami and volcanoes.

OPERATIONAL MANUALS

Describes duties, authorities, responsibilities, policies, rules, regulations, operational procedures and any other information that will guide employees in the performance of their tasks.

POPULATION AT RISK

Population whose life, property and livelihood are directly threatened by a hazard.

PREVENTION

Measures taken for the purpose of preventing natural or an-caused phenomena from causing or giving rise to disasters or other emergency situations.

RECONSTRUCTION

The medium and long-term repair of physical, social and economic damage and the return of affected structures to a condition equal to or better than before the disaster.

RECOVERY

The medium and long-term repair of physical, social and economic damage and the return of affected structures to a condition equal to or better than before the disaster.

REHABILITATION (Community)

The restoration of basic services and the beginning of the repair of physical, social and economic damages.

REHABILITATION (Individuals)

The process of restoring victims to normal life through education, therapy and assistance.

RESPONSE

Actions carried out in a disaster situation with the objective to save lives, alleviate suffering and reduce economic losses.

RETROFIT

Major repairs to a structure for the purpose of changing or modifying the construction to withstand the effects of a potential hazard.

RISK ASSESSEMENT

Determining the probability that a disaster will occur.

RISK MAP

A graphic representation of the distribution of the types of intensity of effects a particular event may cause in relation to the degree of vulnerability.

RISK

The probability that a disaster will occur given the hazard and vulnerability.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES SOP's

Guidelines for operating procedures in an emergency - equipment processes and methods.

SHELTER

A facility set up to provide temporary housing for persons unable to continue their living arrangement in separate family units. LONG TERM – used for a longer period of time as temporary housing; SHORT TERM – occupied for no more than 72 hours.

SHELTER MANAGER

A staff manager assigned overall responsibility for managing a shelter utilizing available resources.

SHELTEREE

A person, who as a result of an emergency situation, requires temporary shelter.

SIMULATION EXERCISE

A representation of reality with information and activities designed to train or test individuals or groups on processes and actions.

STORM SURGE

A sudden rise of sea as a result of high winds and low atmospheric pressure; sometimes called a storm tide, storm wave or tidal wave (this name indicates waves caused by the tidal action of the moon and the sun in the same way as regular ocean tides. It is often erroneously given to tsunamis). Generally affects only coastal areas but may intrude some distance inland.

STAGING AREA

Temporary location where personnel and equipment may be assigned.

TARGET

The groups of people to whom relief services and supplies are provided.

TSUNAMI/TIDAL WAVE

Series of large sea waves generated by sudden displacement of sea water (caused by earthquake, volcanic eruption or submarine landslide); capable of propagation over large distance.

VICTIM

A person who has suffered great harm to his/her physical or psychic integrity, goods and/or individual and collective services.

VULNERABILITY ANALYSIS

The process through which the values at risk and/or the susceptibility level of elements exposed to specific hazards is determined.

VULNERABILITY

The extent to which a community's structure, services or environment is likely to be damaged or disrupted by the impact of a hazard.

WORKING GROUP

A group which has tasks and activities related to common goals and objectives and which is in frequent and regular contact and communication.