INTER-AGENCY CONTINGENCY PLANNING GUIDELINES FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Recommendations to the IASC
November 15, 2001

A recurring theme of [UN] evaluations is the need for strong contingency planning, strengthened national disaster management capacity and disaster response coordination mechanisms, which include information management as well as regional cooperation.
2001 Report of the Secretary-General to ECOSOC (Para 33)

Prepared by the
Inter-Agency Standing Committee
Reference Group on Contingency Planning and Preparedness

Table of Contents

Preface

All countries periodically face emergencies so acute that international humanitarian assistance is required. Such emergencies arise from natural hazards such as earthquakes, epidemics, cyclones, droughts and floods or from any number of man-made threats – food or water shortages, environmental and technological disasters, acute economic distress, civil unrest, and armed conflict. Refugee outflows and internal displacements are at the same time both consequences of and humanitarian emergencies in their own right.

Preventing crises, mitigating their destructive effects and ensuring the provision of humanitarian assistance to those in need are national responsibilities, as well as universal concerns. Effective prevention of and response to emergency situations is a contributing element to global peace, fulfilment of basic human rights and simple respect for humanity.

Thus, the United Nations Resident Coordinators and Humanitarian Coordinators are responsible for ensuring the development and maintenance of contingency plans for humanitarian emergencies in their areas of assignment.

For humanitarian response to be effective, co-ordinated, dependable and timely emergency preparedness is a prerequisite. Within the broader field of preparedness, contingency planning is recognised as an essential management tool. The need for making inter-agency contingency planning a standard practice is clear, as reaffirmed by the UN Secretary General:

> "…[T]here is a critical need for the development of a common inter-agency methodology for contingency planning which would provide a basis of common planning parameters (e.g., projected number and location of persons in need of assistance), scenarios, and preparedness measures".
> *1997 Report of the Secretary-General to ECOSOC: 'Strengthening of Co-ordination of Humanitarian Assistance' (Para. 85).*

These guidelines were developed to address this need in a collaborative effort within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) by the Reference Group on Contingency Planning and Preparedness chaired by UNICEF and WFP. The guidelines build on agency-specific contingency planning approaches, experiences and lessons learned. It is envisaged that these guidelines will evolve as UN country teams around the world continue inter-agency contingency planning.

Contingency planning is a management tool used to ensure adequate arrangements are made in anticipation of a crisis. This is achieved primarily through the participation in the contingency planning process itself, as well as through follow-up actions and subsequent revisions of plans.

Experience from previous emergencies clearly indicates that effective response to humanitarian needs at the onset of a crisis depends on the level of preparedness and planning of agencies in the field, as well as the capacities and resources available to them.

The overall objective of the Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines is to assist UN Country Teams and partners in planning how to respond to potential emergencies with appropriate humanitarian assistance and protection.

These guidelines provide recommendations on how to engage in the contingency planning process, in order to develop common strategies and approaches to potential emergencies, and how to record the deliberations and results of this process in contingency plans.

Inter-agency contingency planning does not supersede nor replace the need for the contingency planning and preparedness measures of individual agencies. Rather the inter-agency contingency planning process builds upon and brings together individual agency planning, in order to facilitate common understanding, to avoid duplication of activities and gaps in humanitarian response. Inter-Agency contingency planning acts as an umbrella that consolidates agency or sector-specific plans in a coherent framework. Box 1 illustrates the relationship between sectoral or agency planning and inter-agency planning.

Box 1: Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Framework

Agency or Sector Planning

Inter-Agency Planning

Agency or Sector Planning
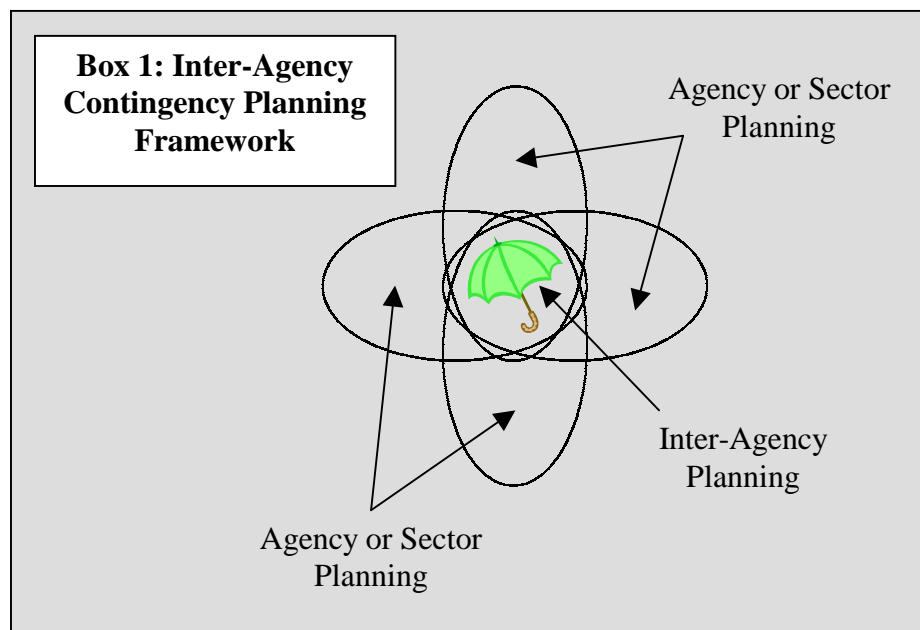
What is contingency planning?
In general, contingency planning is the process of:

(a) Analysing potential emergencies and their humanitarian impact;
(b) Prioritising potential emergencies;
(c) Developing appropriate plans, including establishing clear goals, setting objectives, policies and procedures to deal with prioritised potential emergencies; and
(d) Ensuring necessary preparedness measures and follow-up actions are taken.

Why plan?

Experience shows that inter-agency contingency planning enhances the effectiveness and timeliness of response to emergencies. Contingency planning helps ensure that response is co-ordinated, through clarification of goals, strategies, roles and responsibilities. It helps avoid problems by attempting to anticipate and overcome difficulties. Contingency planning is an effective way to create new relationships with agencies, organisations, NGOs, government and local actors, and to strengthen those that already exist. The relationships developed during the contingency planning process often prove invaluable in ensuring an effective emergency response.

When to plan?

Contingency planning should always be undertaken in the face of an imminent emergency. Agencies should also plan in the face of recurrent natural disasters; i.e. in anticipation of seasonal events (floods, droughts, etc.). Finally, contingency planning should be incorporated into all relevant regular planning processes.

Contingency plans must be updated regularly. During rapidly changing situations plans will need to be updated frequently, while in other cases less frequent updating may suffice.

What to plan for?

The Inter-Agency Contingency Planning guidelines are designed to assist with planning for all types of humanitarian emergency including: complex emergencies, natural and environmental disasters and other significant crises to which the UN Country Team and the international humanitarian community may be required to respond. Planning should be context specific taking into account the situation, government capacity, donor support, likelihood of occurrence, the population's vulnerability, etc.

Who to plan with?

Contingency planning is most effective when it is a participatory process, that ideally includes all the actors who will be required to work together in the event of an emergency. The level and extent of the involvement of national governments and regional authorities in the Inter-Agency contingency planning process depends primarily on the contextual situation and an assessment of the situation by the Country Team.

UN contingency plans are made in consideration of national and local plans, capacities and systems, guided by principles including transparency, neutrality and impartiality. While the UN seeks always to support and enhance the capacities of national efforts, in contingency planning and response as in other activities it seeks to do so in ways that do not compromise basic mandates and principles which guide it.

The specific mandate, operating principles and working methods of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) demand that it follows its own contingency planning process. The ICRC undertakes all efforts to coordinate with the UN, within the framework of the respective mandates, in order to achieve greater complementarily and thereby contribute towards rendering humanitarian action more effective.

In general, transparency and inclusiveness leads to a more effective response in the event of a crisis; however, in certain instances a more discrete approach may be required. Contingency planning should not be precluded because it is sensitive.

Who leads the inter-agency planning process?

The United Nations Country Team working with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the NGO community normally form a core group in the inter-

agency contingency planning process. The United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator or Resident Coordinator normally leads the inter-agency contingency planning working group, while individual UN agencies lead sectoral working groups. This core group interfaces with other entities, including national governments and national authorities, in order to involve them fully in the planning process.

Where to plan (geographical coverage)?
Contingency plans can be prepared with different geographical focuses, including at local, country, sub-regional and regional levels. Contingency plans can focus on specific areas in a country, for example a flood prone area. Most plans are prepared for countries alone. Plans can also be prepared for multiple countries or regions, where there are cross border issues, as is often the case with refugee emergencies or for natural hazards such as drought. In such instances, consultations between planners from the involved countries are critical in developing regional scenarios that can then inform country-based contingency planning.

SECTION 2: THE PLANNING PROCESS

The objective of inter-agency contingency planning is the development of a common understanding of potential emergencies faced and how the United Nations working with governments and partners will respond to these potential emergencies. It is the *process* of contingency planning that is important not the production of a document. The document prepared serves as a record of the agreements reached and the decisions made during the contingency planning process. The documents can be used as a basis for future contingency and operational planning, as well as a tool to communicate the results of the process to others.

This section of the Guidelines provides step-by-step guidance on how to engage in the contingency planning process. The main steps of the process are[1]:

▶ **Step 1: Co-ordination and preparing for the contingency planning process**

    ▶ **Step 2: Context analysis, scenario building and defining planning assumptions**

        ▶ **Step 3: Defining strategies and objectives**

            ▶ **Step 4: Defining management and coordination arrangements**

                ▶ **Step 5: Developing response plans**

                    ▶ **Step 6: Consolidating the process and follow-up actions**

Step 1: Co-ordination and preparing for the contingency planning process

Putting in place an effective planning process is essential to the success of inter-agency contingency planning. The following preparatory steps should be undertaken by the country team:

(a) Take stock of existing preparedness measures and systems including existing government, agency or other plans[2]. This will allow the Country Team to ensure that their plans are consistent with and build on previous efforts, avoiding duplication.

---

[1] A more detailed workflow is presented in Annex 3
[2] There are many different types of plans used to prepare for potential emergencies including emergency plans, preparedness plans, and contingency plans. All of these plans should be gathered and analysed.

(b) Define of the scope of participation in the process. Planning by the UN Country Team members is essential. In addition it is vital that key partners who would potentially work with the UNCT in the event of an emergency including ICRC, IFRC, NGOs and other organisations, are involved in the planning process. This core planning groups should interface with governments, national authorities and donors to ensure their participation in the planning.

The definition of the participants should take into account a number of factors including the sensitivity of the potential scenarios under discussion and the numbers participants and manageability of the planning process.

Participation should be formalised through the formation of an inter-agency contingency planning working group[3] and required sectoral working groups.

(c) Define how the inter-agency contingency planning process will be structured, managed and undertaken. This should include the scheduling of planning meetings, the definition of roles among the UNCT and partners and the organisation of necessary support to the process.

> ## Constructive Participation and Facilitation….
>
> The *most constructive* planning processes are those which actively engage affiliated agencies, encourage real inter-agency planning and problem solving, and result in plans that are useful and "owned."
>
> *The least useful planning* is that undertaken in isolated, independent exercises with little or no involvement of staff or agencies responsible for implementation, for example by having an external consultant or an individual staff member do the planning for the group.
>
> However, *expert facilitation of the planning process is often helpful*, especially for country teams unfamiliar with the contingency planning process. Various options exist for facilitation support including contingency planning specialists from UN agencies, a member of the Country Team, OCHA trained staff, and external facilitators familiar with inter-agency contingency planning process.

Step 2: *Context analysis, scenario building and defining planning assumptions*

With the preparation of the contingency planning process completed, the Country Team through the Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Working Group should engage in an analysis of the potential emergencies faced by the country and region. This analysis is used to define scenarios for planning purposes.

(a) Undertake an analysis of the risks of potential emergencies. The breadth of this analysis will depend on time and resources available. In most cases a broad analysis or profiling exercise of all of the hazards faced by the country and region is recommended as a first step. This will give the Country Team an overall picture of the situation and assist in focusing the planning process. However, in cases where an imminent threat prompts the contingency planning process (i.e. a sharp deterioration in the stability of a country), the analysis (and the contingency planning process) should focus on this threat.

This analysis will also provide a basis for the selection of early warning indicators that can be monitored to alert planners to the realisation of a given scenario.

---

[3] A sample Terms of Reference for an Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Working Group is presented in Part 2, Annex 5.

(b) Given that contingency planning involves the preparation of plans for specific situations, it is difficult and ineffective to prepare contingency plans for every eventuality. Therefore, it is necessary to *prioritise* the planning process. It is recommended that the Country Team select for further consideration and scenario building those situations they deem most relevant based on their analysis of risks.

(c) Build scenario(s). *Scenario building* is the process of presuming the likely consequences of a hazard and establishing planning assumptions. Planning assumptions can be drawn up at different levels, including general contextual assumptions such as humanitarian consequences and more specific assumptions such as likely humanitarian needs, assistance required by the humanitarian community, and the identification of potential constraints and gaps.

The planning assumptions developed during this step of the inter-agency contingency planning process provide a basis from which the country team agrees to plan. Planning assumptions should be clearly stated in the plan. Agreement on projected planning figures (e.g. number of beneficiaries) is particularly important[4]. Examples of planning assumptions are given in Box 1.

Box 1: Examples of Planning Assumptions
- Floods likely to displace 100,000 people for 2 weeks, of which 50,000 are expected to need UN assistance.
- Expansion of conflict likely to prevent access to affected populations.
- 300,000 IDPs expected to require assistance.
- Government will immediately provide assistance.
- Sale of household assets is a likely coping strategy for affected populations.

Step 3 Defining strategies and objectives

Strategies and objectives must be established to guide the inter-agency response to the situations described in the scenarios.

(a) First, define the overarching *principles and strategies* that will guide the inter-agency response under each scenario.

(b) Second, define the *operational objectives*, which will result in the realisation of the principles and strategies that have been defined.

(c) Finally, consider *exit strategies* for each scenario.

Step 4: Defining management and co-ordination arrangements

One of the principle objectives of the planning process is to facilitate the establishment of effective management and co-ordination during an emergency situation. To achieve this:

(a) Define operational roles, functions, responsibilities and accountability, as this facilitates effective management and co-ordination. This includes the definition of sectoral arrangements[5]. Obviously, this step is inter-linked with step five **DEVELOPING RESPONSE**

---

[4] While it is important to establish common planning numbers during scenario building, sectoral groups will need to derive from the common figures sectoral levels of affectation and need.

[5] Normally, a UN agency will take the lead in coordinating the sectors related to its mandate, in close collaboration with other organizations working in that sector.

PLANS.   However, experience shows that focusing on these issues specifically can improve management and co-ordination during an actual emergency response.

(b) In addition to the definition of internal UN management and co-ordination mechanisms, clearly define external co-ordination arrangements. This will include how the UNCT will work with government, civil society, NGOs and the press, amongst others.

Step 5: *Developing operational response plans*

Once the strategies and objectives have been agreed, it is important to plan the response to these scenarios. Planning at the inter-agency level should focus on three main areas:

(a) Define *sectoral objectives and activities* based on projected needs identified during scenario building.

(b) S*ectoral management and co-ordination mechanisms* should then be developed.

Inter-agency contingency plans should include summaries, by sector, of how sectoral needs and functions will be dealt with, including specifically allocation of roles and responsibilities.

Sectoral planning summaries do not replace individual agency or detailed sectoral plans; rather they should summarise existing plans, putting them in the context of the country team response. Special attention should be paid to the management of sectoral co-ordination mechanisms. When individual sector or agency plans do not exist, the Inter-Agency response plans can act a first step in the development of more detailed sectoral plans.

(c) Through the development of response plans, it may become apparent that the joint operational and support services will be required or make the country team response more cost-effective and efficient.   For example, common communications, logistics and transport, information management and GIS, and security are common joint activities. Where joint operational and support services are appropriate, planning for them should be undertaken.

(d) In addition, assessment and initial response should be considered during this step.

Step 6: Consolidating the process, follow-up actions and activation

Consolidating the planning process, taking follow-up actions and activation of plans are activities, which convert intentions to practise.

(a) As an important part of the consolidation process, country teams are encouraged to periodically bring all parties involved in the planning process together to ensure full understanding and agreement with all aspects of the contingency plans.

(b) Follow up actions identified during the planning process should be undertaken. At each regular review of contingency plans, suggested below, progress made in implementing preparedness actions should be assessed and reviewed in the context of any change to the situation and resultant change to contingency plans.

(c) The contingency planning process does not end with the production of a plan. The process must be continued and plans *updated and reviewed* on a regular basis. If this does not

occur, the contingency plan may even be counter productive and dangerous, lulling the country team into a false sense of security. A schedule for review and updating should be made and adhered to.

(d) If the contingency being planned for does occur, then the contingency plan must be *activated*. In most cases this will mean the conversion of the contingency plan into an operational plan. The assumptions made during planning must be checked with an actual assessment of the situation, and the plan adjusted accordingly. This implies that contingency planning must not be a theoretical exercise, but a planning process rooted in reality and comprised of actual elements of operational planning.

SECTION 3: THE PLAN

This short section highlights the characteristics of a good contingency plan and offers some practical advice on how to develop, circulate, and maintain a contingency plan. These guidelines stress that the **plan is simply a product of the process** and as such is constantly changing and requiring update.

Content
- The content of inter-agency contingency plans should accurately reflect the understandings and relationships among agencies involved in the planning and implementation.

- The inter-agency contingency plan acts as an umbrella for sectoral and agency plans which ideally should be attached to it. The relationship between the inter-agency plan and sectoral and agency plans should be dynamic.

- Contingency plans should not be too long or too complex, otherwise the user risks becoming lost in the detail. Considering that agency and sector plans will be attached the inter-agency plan should not exceed 10 – 15 pages.

- Where plans need to include operational details, these are best provided in annex with a brief summary and reference in the main body of the plan.

> **Box 2: Qualities of a good contingency plan.**
>
> *A Good Contingency Plan should*:
> - Be comprehensive, but not too detailed
> - Find a balance between flexibility and concrete plans
> - Provide guidance and direction on the intention of agencies and how to proceed
> - Be well-structured, easy to read, and easy to update
> - Serve as layout of what will be done, by whom, and by when

The Outline
In the best case, an inter-agency plan pulls together various elements from the planning process into a coherent form and concisely describes how the various parts of the plan relate to one another and the overall 'master plan'. The following box contains a suggested outline for an Inter-Agency Contingency Plan. **Planners can find an expanded outline in Annex 1, with content checklists to assist in the planning process.**

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Inter-Agency Contingency Plan        │
│              Suggested Outline                │
│                                               │
│   1. Executive Summary                        │
│   2. Context Analysis and Risk Assessment     │
│   3. Scenario(s)                              │
│   4. Overall Management and Co-ordination     │
│   5. Strategies and Objectives                │
│   6. Sector and Agency Response Plans         │
│   7. Preparedness and Maintenance Actions     │
│   8. Annexes                                  │
│                                               │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Sharing the Plan

As management tools, Inter-Agency contingency plans are meant to be shared, although there may be circumstances in which for reasons of political sensitivity that it will be advisable to restrict circulation of the plan. Managers and planners should carefully assess their strategy for circulation of the contingency plan.

Maintenance

> *Once contingency plans have been prepared, the process of planning does not end.*

As conditions change, plans must be updated with new information. In virtually all cases, ongoing work is required to refine plans, policies, and procedures, especially as situations continue to evolve and change. Ongoing maintenance usually includes review of early warning indicators, updates on actions taken by agencies, and inclusion of important amendments and additions.

Part 2: Annexes

The annexes to the Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Guidelines for Humanitarian Assistance provide useful tools and information to assist planners. All the checklists and tools presented in the annexes are meant to be used flexibly by planners, who should adapt them to suit their requirements. They include:

Annex 1: Comprehensive Contingency Plan Checklist
This annex provides a comprehensive guide to planners on the possible content of an inter-agency contingency plan.

Annex 2 Contingency Planning Brainstorming Guide
This annex provides some key questions aimed at focusing working group and brainstorming sessions.

Annex 3: Comprehensive Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Workflow
This annex provides a detailed step-by-step workflow for the inter-agency contingency planning process

Annex 4: Sample TOR for an Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Working Group
This annex provides a sample Terms of Reference for an Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Working Group.

Annex 5: Matrix of Allocations of Responsibility by Sector and Function
This annex provides a sample table to be filled out by planners to show who will work in and lead each sector or activity.

Annex 6: Contingency Planning Reference
This annex presents a concise list of other reference material related to contingency planning.

Annex 7: Selected Glossary
The glossary provides definitions for some key contingency planning terms.

Annex 1: Comprehensive Contingency Plan Checklist

This annex presents a comprehensive checklist aimed at providing detailed assistance to planners for each section of the suggested outline of an Inter-Agency Contingency Plan. Under each heading the function of the section is explained. This is followed by an expanded version of the checklists presented in Annex 1: Quick Plan Checklist.

As with the quick checklist in annex 1 this checklist is not meant to restrict planning. Nor is it not intended that planners include a section in their plans for each point included in the checklist. Rather the checklist is intended to provide planners with ideas on what might be considered and included in their plans. Planners must use the checklist in a flexible manner, using only what they find useful and relevant.

Remember that the best plans are simple, concise and uncomplicated.

Remember too that the inter-agency plan is only intended as the overarching framework for individual agency and sector plans. To the extent feasible, agency and sector plans should be shared along with the inter-agency plan.

Cover Page

The cover page provides key information about the plan.

- ☑ Country (or the region) covered
- ☑ Date the plan was produced
- ☑ Date the plan was last updated
- ☑ Period covered
- ☑ Version number
- ☑ A list of the participants in inter-agency contingency planning process
- ☑ Level of confidentiality
- ☑ An brief 1 – 2 paragraph introductions to the planning process including relevant background information.

1. Executive Summary

The executive summary should **summarise** the key point listed below in order to present executive decision-makers with a basic understanding of the most important points presented in the plan. **The executive summary should be no more than one page.**

- ☑ Summary of the country situation / crisis
- ☑ Background for the contingency plan
- ☑ Summary of contingency (s) and scenario (s)
- ☑ Intervention strategy and plan summary
- ☑ Summary of the management and co-ordination arrangements

2. Context Analysis and Risk Assessment

This section of the document provides a brief background on the country (or region) and on the current situation and introduces the different contingencies. For each contingency, the scenarios should describe the events that may occur, the magnitude of the potential emergency, potential humanitarian consequences, and their likelihood to occur, in other words a risk assessment. An analysis of the current situation, trends and underlying factors should help users understand the context in which planning is being initiated and help identify strategic issues.

☑ Country information and context analysis
☑ Summary of contingencies
☑ Brief summary of planning scenario (s) for each contingency
☑ Risk assessment of the different scenarios

3. Scenario(s)

This section elaborates the scenario(**s**) for a particular contingency. It should describe the potential emergency(s) that populations face. This section contains the main planning assumptions.

☑ Outline of the scenario
    ➢ Main elements / factors
    ➢ Constraining factors
☑ Main actors
    ➢ Governmental institutional capacity to respond
    ➢ Other type of relief assistance immediately available (NGOs, UN, Donors…)
☑ Description of the main humanitarian consequences
    ➢ Consequences on the population and on basic services
    ➢ Coping mechanisms of the population
☑ Planning Early Warning Indicators and Monitoring Arrangements
    ➢ Early warning indications and likely triggers
    ➢ Monitoring arrangements
☑ Gaps and constraints
    ➢ Major gaps in the provision of vital humanitarian assistance
    ➢ Major obstacles to the provision of humanitarian assistance
☑ Main Planning Assumptions
    ➢ Potential caseloads

4. Overall Management and Co-ordination

Based on the planning assumptions developed in the scenario (Section 3), this section of the plan details how the participating agencies intend to work together and should particularly focus on assigning roles and responsibilities, common services and co-ordination arrangements.

☑ Operational roles, functions and accountability
☑ Internal and external management and co-ordination arrangements
☑ UN System Common Operational and Support Services
☑ Immediate responses mechanisms
☑ Resources mobilisation
☑ Media strategy
☑ Information Management
☑ Safety and Security

5. Strategies and Objectives

In this section the planners need to present their common objectives and the direction of the overall (UN) response. Links with past and future interventions (bridging relief and development) should also be presented.

☑ Intervention – Entry/Exit Strategy
    ➢ Role of the UN humanitarian assistance
    ➢ Overall objectives to be accomplished during the intervention
    ➢ Links with development objectives and exit strategy
    ➢ Links to humanitarian principles and humanitarian law

- ☑ Operational Objectives
    - ➢ Operational objectives by sector (Note: S.M.A.R.T.)
    - ➢ Agencies contribution to the operational objectives

- ☑ Levels of preparedness required (E.g. 20,000 blankets to be stockpiled)
    - ➢ Preparedness targets
    - ➢ Stockpile levels
    - ➢ Equipment needed
    - ➢ Resources (Human, Cash, Material) on stand-by

Note: SMART Objectives are : Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.

6. Sector and Agency Response Plans

This section of the plan presents the humanitarian response that is likely to be organised in the event the scenario occurs. It focuses on the immediate critical reaction, outlines the sectoral responses and describes how the various needs (and potential gaps) will be filled over time.

It is important not to duplicate agency or sector plans in this section, rather key points should be noted and agency and sector plans attached to the Inter-Agency Contingency Plan for reference.

- ☑ Immediate Response
    - ➢ Action to be taken as an immediate response to the situation
    - ➢ Resources required to support the actions (Staff and commodity needs)
    - ➢ Arrangements with implementing partners
    - ➢ Information needs
- ☑ Emergency Needs Assessment (ENA) and monitoring arrangements
    - ➢ Types of ENA likely to be required and participants
    - ➢ Reporting/monitoring format and structure in place / required
- ☑ Summary of sectoral responses
    - ➢ Co-ordination arrangement for the critical sectors
    - ➢ Objectives, standards and operational benchmarks to achieve by sector
    - ➢ Resources required to support the actions (Staff and commodity needs)
    - ➢ Arrangements with implementing partners
    - ➢ Timelines / Work Flows

7. Preparedness and Maintenance Actions

This section proposes a list of actions to be taken to strengthen agencies' capacity to respond and describes the provisions for updating and maintaining the plan.

- ☑ Review and update of plan
- ☑ Preparedness actions to be taken
    - ➢ Identification and monitoring of early warning indicators
    - ➢ Need for baseline assessment / field visits
    - ➢ Training of staff
    - ➢ Stand by agreements to be prepared
- ☑ Agency state of preparedness
    - ➢ Current activities / Future capabilities
    - ➢ Resources inventory / staff required by scenario
    - ➢ Focal points for specific activities / responsibilities

8. Annexes

The contingency plan itself must be as concise as possible. Useful information that is not essential in the main document should be attached as annexes.

- ☑ Agency or sectoral contingency plans
- ☑ Contact details / Emergency Directory
- ☑ MOUs and LOUs
- ☑ Training requirement for staff
- ☑ Maps
- ☑ Communications information (frequencies, call signs, phone numbers, etc.)
- ☑ TOR Resident / Humanitarian Coordinator (see OCHA Handbook)
- ☑ Other useful information

Annex 2: Contingency Planning Brainstorming Guide

Planning a response to an emergency is best done working in groups. There are many things to consider during the planning process. This annex provides a number of questions aimed at facilitating the planning process. The questions are intended to spark ideas or catalyse ideas during brainstorming or working group meetings. 6 – 10 questions are provided for each topic. The topics include sections of the suggested inter-agency contingency plan outline and selected joint activities. While by no means comprehensive, it is hoped that this annex will help planners focus planning sessions.

Context Analysis and Risk Assessment
- ✓ What are the socio-economic and political trends?
- ✓ Consider recent assessment / reviews / baseline studies / analytical exercises as sources of information.
- ✓ What is the country's recent record with regards to particular hazards such as drought, floods, earthquake, epidemics violence or security threats, population movements, resources constraints, human rights abuses, demographic / land issues (etc.)?

Scenario(s)
- ✓ What is the area affected and the geographical extent of the damage / crisis?
- ✓ Numbers and percentage of population affected; population profile and demographics?
- ✓ Gender considerations; specific vulnerable groups; and target beneficiaries?
- ✓ What will be the impact on livelihoods? What will the specific sectoral impacts be?
- ✓ How long are emergency conditions likely to last under this scenario?
- ✓ Does the government / local authorities have prior experience in responding to the situation?
- ✓ What other organizations are likely to respond to the emergency and in what way?
- ✓ What are likely to be the major constraints to an emergency response?
- ✓ What are the various factors (negative or mitigating) influencing the situation?
- ✓ What events could trigger this scenario?

Strategies and Objectives
- ✓ What is the overall strategy that various agencies will employ to address the events?
- ✓ How is the implementation strategy linked to the realisation of the objectives?
- ✓ How individual Agencies' projects will contribute to the overall objectives?
- ✓ How long will the assistance be required for?
- ✓ Who are the target beneficiaries?
- ✓ Are the levels and the types of assistance to be provided to the different beneficiaries agreed on?

Overall Management and Co-ordination

External Relations
- ✓ How does the Government coordination body work?
- ✓ What are the coordination arrangements between the Government, the UN, other international bodies and NGOs, Donors, civil society, private sector and beneficiaries?

Coordination
- ✓ What is the inter-agency humanitarian coordination structure?
- ✓ How will strategic vs. operational coordination (sectoral) arrangements be managed?
- ✓ What are (will be) the Agencies roles and functions?
- ✓ Who leads what in which sector and/or geographical zone?
- ✓ What will be the reporting procedures?

- ✓ Should standard formats be established for: reporting, assessing, project proposals…?
- ✓ What joint activities will be undertaken: Assessment, monitoring, programming?
- ✓ Is there a need for MOUs or LOUs?

Information Management
- ✓ How will information/data be collected?
- ✓ Who will be responsible to write daily/weekly/monthly reports? How will these be revised and disseminated?
- ✓ How will information flow between agencies and the various levels (local, national, regional and HQ) and vice-versa?
- ✓ How basic statistics on caseloads, beneficiaries and assistance needed be agreed upon?
- ✓ What report formats will be used?
- ✓ What GIS and mapping capacity will be needed?

Safety and Security
- ✓ Who is responsible for staff security and safety?
- ✓ What are the security coordination arrangements at the local, national, regional levels (i.e. SMT, information-sharing meetings)? Is there a need for additional arrangements/ resources?
- ✓ Are there specific security training needs?
- ✓ What are the security contingency and evacuation plans? Who is responsible for them?
- ✓ Who maintains a central list of names and locations of all international and local staff?

Resources Mobilisation
- ✓ What are the potential sources/donors? Will up front resources (e.g.CERF) be needed?
- ✓ Is there a need for a specific appeal for this operation? Should there be a CAP?
- ✓ Should a Donor consultation be organised? Are other sources available locally?

Common Services
- ✓ What services should be common: Transport and logistics, media and information, TC/IT, resources mobilisation, security, premises, storage, mapping, banking, procurement…?
- ✓ Can staff and material be shared?
- ✓ How will shared resources be paid for? Who will own them? To whom will personnel report?

Media Strategy
- ✓ What will be the public information strategy?
- ✓ Can the current staff handle the influx of journalists and information requests or should a Public Information personnel be recruited?
- ✓ How should media relations be coordinated or routed to individual agencies?
- ✓ What will be the information strategy for the target population?

Sectoral and Agency Response Plans
- ✓ What are the provisions in place for immediate response
- ✓ What assessment arrangements are needed?
- ✓ What actions will be taken as an immediate response to the situation? Who does what and when?
- ✓ What is required to support the immediate response (logistic/transport, TC-IT, commodities, staff…)?
- ✓ Who will participate in the Emergency Needs Assessment (ENA)?
- ✓ Which sectors are most likely to be critical / should be prioritised?
- ✓ Are all the sector needs identified covered in sectoral or agency plans?

Preparedness and Maintenance Actions

- ✓ Who is responsible for the update and maintenance of the contingency planning document?
- ✓ When and how will the plan be updated?
- ✓ How prepared are different agencies?
- ✓ What follow up actions are required?
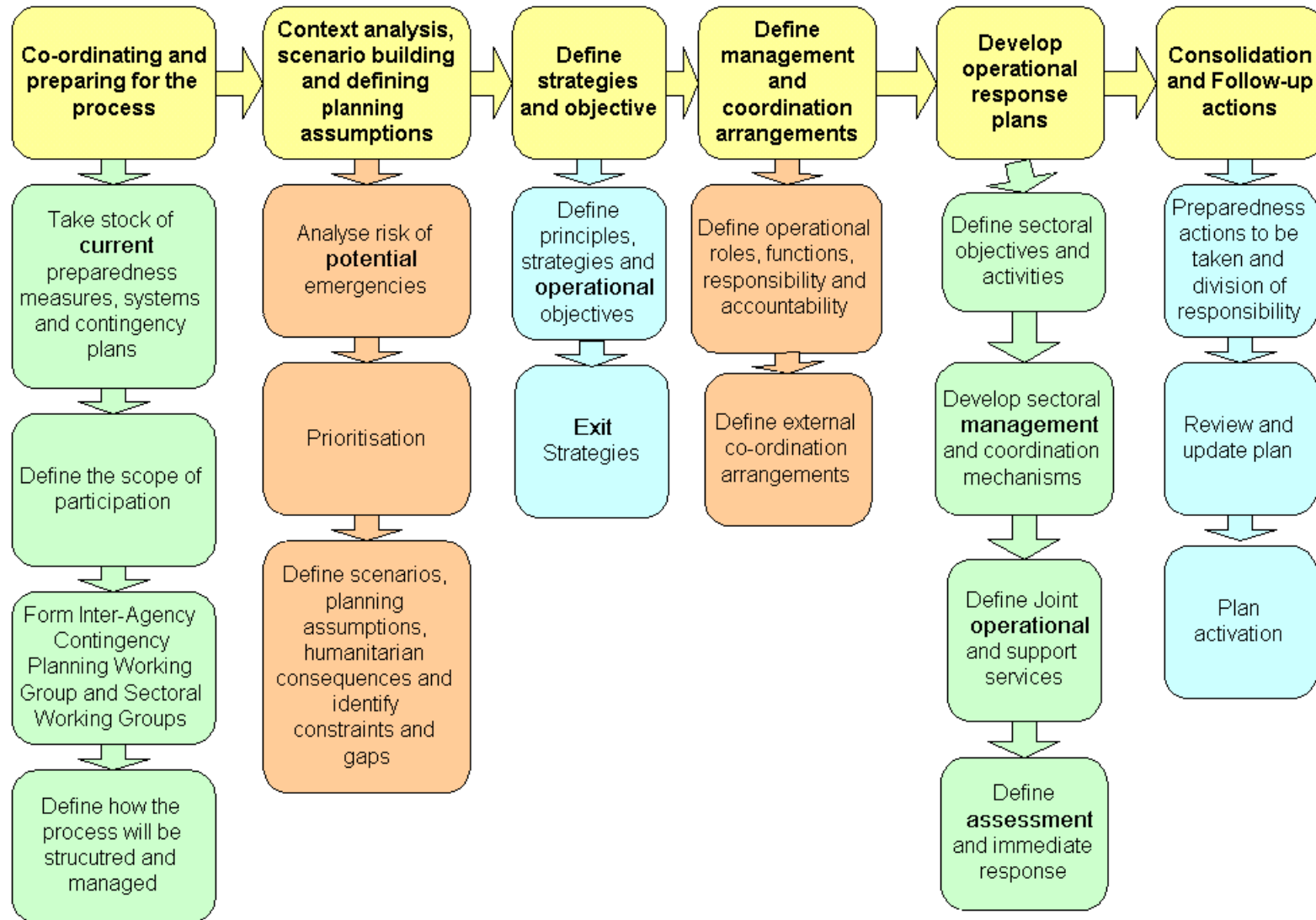
Annex 4: Sample TOR for an Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Working Group

Under the guidance of the United Nations Resident Coordinator or Humanitarian Coordinator, the United Nations Country Team working with its partners is responsible for the effective and efficient implementation of inter-agency contingency planning activities in the country. In order to fulfil this task, an inter-agency contingency planning working group has been formed.

The membership of this group includes:
- UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (Chair)
- Relevant UN Agencies
- NGO Representation
- IFRC
- ICRC (Observer)

Note: This is a sample membership for an inter-agency contingency planning working group. Country teams should consider seriously the inclusion of all relevant entities, while ensuring the group can operate at a working level. Information sharing meetings can be organised on a regular basis with all actors, so as to ensure their participation.

The Inter-Agency Contingency Planning Working Group will perform the following main tasks:

- Undertake and coordinate inter-agency contingency planning activities, including;
  - **Co-ordination and preparing for the contingency planning process**
  - **Context analysis, scenario building and defining planning assumptions**
  - **Defining strategies and objectives**
  - **Defining management and coordination arrangements**
  - **Developing response plans**
  - **Consolidating the process and follow-up actions**

- Organising the necessary technical support and assessments required in support of contingency planning activities;

- Co-ordinate with government and implementing partners any relevant action and measures required to enhance preparedness and capacity to respond;

- Explore ways to further enhance preparedness by establishing viable networks at the national and regional level;

- Facilitate coordination at the sub-regional basis, if so required by the country context and planning process;

- Facilitate the mainstreaming of contingency planning within development and disaster mitigation programming activities across the UN system;

- Review contingency plans on a regular basis;

- Act as a repository of knowledge and experience, as well as a transparent accountability mechanism, by ensuring that all relevant contingency planning materials and by-products emerging from the process are recorded and accessible to all partners; and

- Ensure that contingency plans are activated in the face of an emergency situation.

Annex 5: Matrix of Allocations of Responsibility by Sector and Function

This matrix provides a tool for allocating sectoral and activity responsibilities and leadership. All actors involved in a potential emergency response should be included in the table and a check(s) (✓) placed each row corresponding to a sector or activity that the organization will work in. A cross (✗) should be placed in each row under the organisation who will take the lead in that sector or activity. Any gaps in coverage of sectors or ativities will become apparent during the elaboration of the matrix and appropriate action should be taken to ensure the gap is filled.

	UNDP	UNICEF	WFP	FAO	WHO	HCR	OCHA	IFRC	NGOs	Beneficiaries	Donors	Government
SECTORS/ISSUES												
Nutrition												
Food												
Non-food Items												
Shelter												
Infrastructure												
Water-sanitation												
Health												
Education												
Agriculture / Fisheries												
Community services												
Income generation												
Registration												
Reintegration												
Humanitarian Law												
Humanitarian Access												
Mine Awareness/De-mining												
Protection												
MANAGEMENT												
Co-ordination												
Resources / CAP												
Assessment/Monitoring												
Logistic / Transport												
TC / IT												
Media/ Information Mgt.												
Safety & Security												

The following list of references is a selection of key references on contingency planning for humanitarian crises:

"Contingency Planning, A Practical Guide for Field Staff," United Nations High Commission for Refugees, August 1996

"Contingency Planning Guidelines," United Nations World Food Programme, 2001

"Preparedness Planning Guidelines (draft)," United Nations Children's Fund, 2001

"Contingency Planning," World Health Organisation, Addis Ababa, 1997

"Disaster Assessment," United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme, 1994

"Disaster Preparedness," United Nations Disaster Management Training Programme, 1994

Annex 7: Selected Glossary

This annex provides a condensed glossary of key terms relevant to these guidelines.

Contingency planning   The process of establishing programme objectives, approaches and procedures to respond to situations or events that are likely to occur, including identifying those events and developing likely scenarios and appropriate plans to prepare and respond to them in an effective manner

Emergency preparedness   Actions taken in anticipation of an emergency to facilitate rapid, effective and appropriate response to the situation

Hazard   A possible threat or source of exposure to injury, harm or loss, e.g. conflict, natural phenomena

Planning assumptions   The key elements of a scenario that form the basis for developing a contingency plan (for example, projected caseloads, ???????)

Risk   An evaluation of the probability of occurrence and the magnitude of the consequences of any given hazard, i.e. how likely is a hazard and what consequences will it have?

Scenario   An account or synopsis of a possible course of events that could occur, which forms the basis for planning assumptions (for example, a river floods, covering a nearby town and wiping out the local population's crop)

Scenario-building   The process of developing hypothetical scenarios in the context of a contingency planning exercise