Australian Agency for International Development

Humanitarian Action Policy

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Contents

Humanitarian Action Policy

Goal of Australia's aid program

The fundamental purpose of Australia's aid program is to help people overcome poverty.

This also serves Australia's national interests by promoting stability and prosperity both in our region and beyond. We focus our effort in areas where Australia can make a difference and where our resources can most effectively and efficiently be deployed.

Two strategic goals of the aid program are to save lives and better prepare for, and respond to, disasters and humanitarian crises.

Humanitarian Action Policy goal

To save lives, alleviate suffering and enhance human dignity during and in the aftermath of conflict, natural disasters and other humanitarian crises, as well as to strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations.

Core policy outcome

Appropriate and effective humanitarian action

1. Meets the needs of and is accountable to affected populations	2. Supports partner governments and local capacities, including with disaster preparedness
3. Protects the safety, dignity and rights of affected populations	4. Is timely and coordinated
5. Integrates recovery as part of humanitarian action to support longer-term development	

Key strategies

1. Australia delivers appropriate and effective humanitarian action	2. Australia advocates for and supports effective international humanitarian action

Enabling outcomes

1. Australia has increased capacity to deliver humanitarian action	2. Australia's humanitarian action is accountable	3. Australia integrates learning into future humanitarian action

- *Respect and promote humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence in humanitarian action.*

- *Support the primary responsibility of states for affected populations within their borders in times of crisis, and help build partner states' capacity to do this.*

- *Promote respect for international humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights law in the provision of humanitarian action and the protection of populations affected by humanitarian crises.*

- *Practice Good Humanitarian Donorship, including by providing predictable and flexible humanitarian funding.1*

Overview

Australia commits to:

1. *respond within 48 hours of a developing country's request for assistance*

2. *respond effectively to simultaneous disasters*

3. *provide life-saving assistance to more than 30 million people in crisis situations by 2016, through effective disaster risk reduction, mine action, conflict prevention and humanitarian action2*

4. *participate in more than 20 exercises and simulations with regional partners by 2016.*

Crises, whether caused by natural hazards or human-induced—such as armed violence—can inflict untold suffering and hardship. Humanitarian crises displace millions, kill hundreds of thousands of people each year and keep many more living in poverty. The World Bank found that, on average, countries that experienced major violence had a poverty rate 21 per cent higher than more stable developing countries.3 The poor and vulnerable are disproportionately affected; more than 95 per cent of those killed by natural disasters are from developing countries.4 Within developing countries it is also the poorest of the poor who suffer most from the effects of crises. As good global citizens, Australians have a long history of helping people affected by humanitarian crises.

The Australian Government's aid policy—*An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference*—Delivering real results, outlines the purpose of the

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[1]   Included at Appendix A.
[2]   Revised from 25 million following the 2012–13 Aid Budget Statement.

[3]   World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development,* <http://wdr2011.worldbank.org/fulltext>, accessed 23 June 2011.

[4]   World Bank, 'Helping Indonesia Prepare for Disasters', 2009, <http://go.worldbank.org/Q3AGFGGRE0>, accessed 23 June 2011.

Australian aid program, to help people overcome poverty. The policy identifies saving lives and humanitarian and emergency response as two of the five strategic goals of the aid program. Humanitarian action saves lives and helps people get back to leading productive lives more quickly. Appropriate, effective response to humanitarian crises in developing countries is also critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and helps our partner countries protect people and restore hard-won development gains.

Australia has experienced many natural disasters and we have the resources, systems and people to help partners better prepare for and respond to disasters. Australia's *2011 Independent Review of Aid Effectiveness* affirmed that we have a good international reputation for responding quickly and generously to international requests for humanitarian assistance, and working closely with regional and international partners to ensure timely, coordinated responses. In 2010, 11 per cent of Australia's aid program was allocated to humanitarian action. The Australian Government has committed to increase the budget allocated to humanitarian assistance.

The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) leads the Australian Government response to humanitarian crises in developing countries. This *Humanitarian Action Policy* outlines the strategic framework that guides Australia's humanitarian action.

The *Humanitarian Action Policy* supports the fundamental **purpose of Australia's aid program**:

To help people overcome poverty. This also serves Australia's national interests by promoting stability and prosperity both in our region and beyond. We focus our effort in areas where Australia can make a difference and where our resources can most effectively and efficiently be deployed.

The ***Humanitarian Action Policy* goal** is:

To save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of conflict, natural disasters and other humanitarian crises, as well as to strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations.

Australia's **core policy outcome** for humanitarian action is:

Appropriate and effective humanitarian action. Australia defines this as:

1. *Meeting the needs of and being accountable to affected populations. Australia's humanitarian action is based on the rights and needs of those affected by crises, recognising that the best people to determine what is effective and appropriate are the affected people themselves.*

2. *Supporting partner governments and local capacities, including with disaster preparedness. Australia supports humanitarian action that builds on and further develops existing skills and local capacities. The ultimate aim is for governments to manage humanitarian action without requiring international assistance.*

3. *Protecting the safety, dignity and rights of affected populations. Australia's humanitarian action has, at its core, protecting the safety, dignity and rights of*

the most vulnerable. Without safety and security, the provision of assistance, such as food, water and shelter, is less effective in saving lives, alleviating suffering and enhancing human dignity.

4. *Ensuring our support is timely and coordinated. Australia is committed to effective humanitarian action that is delivered in a timely manner and is well-coordinated to minimise gaps or overlaps. We provide funding in line with the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship.*

5. *Integrating recovery as part of humanitarian action to support longer-term development. Australia's humanitarian action takes a holistic approach to longer-term recovery and building resilience. This is reflected in our focus on working through and supporting national governments and national capacities where possible.*

Australia works to achieve its core Humanitarian Action Policy outcome through these **key strategies**:

1. *Delivering appropriate and effective humanitarian action. Australia responds to humanitarian crises by funding trusted partners, deploying experts and providing relief supplies. We prepare ourselves to respond to crises and work with developing countries and implementing partners to support their preparation. We also support developing countries to recover from crises in line with broader development goals.*

2. *Advocating for and supporting effective international humanitarian action. Australia is a strong supporter of global efforts to provide effective humanitarian action to people affected by crises. We advocate for and support the improvement of international humanitarian action through global and regional humanitarian organisations and forums.*

The *Humanitarian Action Policy* has three **enabling outcomes** that build Australia's ability to improve our humanitarian action:

1. *Australia has increased capacity to deliver humanitarian action.*

2. *Australia's humanitarian action is accountable.*

3. *Australia integrates learning into future humanitarian action.*

The *Humanitarian Action Policy* is underpinned by these **four guiding principles**:

1. Respect and promote humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence in humanitarian action. *Australia provides humanitarian action on the basis of need and respects the independence, impartiality and neutrality of our humanitarian partners.*

2. Support the primary responsibility of states for affected populations within their borders in times of crisis, and help build partner states' capacity to do this. *When international assistance is requested, Australia supports coordinated humanitarian action that complements the efforts of partner governments aiming to protect and help their citizens. Where a government lacks the capacity and/or the political will to support affected populations Australia may work with partners to meet the affected population's needs.*

3. Promote respect for international humanitarian law, refugee law and human rights law in the provision of humanitarian action and the protection of populations affected by humanitarian crises. *Australia works with governments and our humanitarian partners to advocate for the rights and protection of affected populations.*

4. Practice Good Humanitarian Donorship, including by providing predictable and flexible humanitarian funding. *Australia is committed to international standards of being a good donor, with a focus on predictable and flexible funding.*

Scope of the Humanitarian Action Policy

The *Humanitarian Action Policy* supports the purpose of Australia's aid program—*to help people overcome poverty*. This also serves Australia's national interests by promoting stability and prosperity in our region and beyond. We focus our efforts in areas where Australia can make a difference and where our resources can most effectively and efficiently be deployed.

The *Humanitarian Action Policy* is a strategic-level framework that guides the Australian Government's commitment to deliver effective and appropriate humanitarian action as part of our aid program.

The policy applies to all overseas humanitarian action delivered by AusAID, the lead agency in delivering this assistance in partnership with developing nations in times of crisis.

Australian whole-of-government partners play an essential role in delivering humanitarian action. As a result, an important aim of this policy is effective coordination and policy coherence between AusAID and whole-of-government partners.

This supports the Australian Government's aid policy—*An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference*—Delivering real results, and its commitment to develop a strategy that covers the development assistance efforts of all Australian Government agencies under one coherent plan.

The delivery of the *Humanitarian Action Policy* will be coordinated with other relevant Australian Government policies. This policy focuses on preparation for, response to and recovery from humanitarian crises. Prevention and mitigation of crises is addressed in two separate documents which complement the *Humanitarian Action Policy*:

- *Investing in a Safer Future: a Disaster Risk Reduction policy for the Australian aid program (2009), which covers Australia's commitment and approach to the prevention and mitigation of disaster risk*
- *AusAID's Framework for Working in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (2011), which outlines Australia's commitment and approach to peacebuilding and preventing violent conflict.*

In addition, the *Humanitarian Action Policy* will be implemented in accordance with:

- Mine Action Strategy for the Australian aid program: Towards a world free from landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war (2010–2014)
- Development for All: Towards a disability-inclusive Australian aid program *(2009)*
- Promoting opportunities for all—Gender equality and women's empowerment *(2011)*
- Intensifying the response: Halting the spread of HIV (2009)
- Pandemics and Emerging Infectious Diseases Framework (2010–2015)
- Sustainable economic development—Improving food security (2011)
- Child Protection Policy (2009).

Disaster risk reduction

Investing in a Safer Future: a Disaster Risk Reduction policy for the Australian aid program (2009) outlines Australia's commitment to reduce the risk of natural disasters in developing countries. It reflects our prominent support for, and role in, the international community's efforts to implement the global blueprint for disaster risk reduction, the *Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015.*

The Hyogo Framework was adopted by 168 countries, including Australia, in January 2005. Consistent with the framework, Australia integrates disaster risk reduction into both humanitarian and development programs and coordinates risk reduction programming with our climate change adaptation interventions. In implementing Australia's disaster risk reduction policy we help partner countries to reduce their vulnerability and build resilience to natural disasters.

One such partner country is Indonesia, which faces a multitude of natural hazards, including being located in one of the most seismically active regions in the world. We partner closely with Indonesia on disaster risk reduction and support the inclusion of risk reduction principles into post-disaster recovery.

Australia supported the response to the magnitude 7.6 earthquake which hit off the coast of West Sumatra on 30 September 2009. The results were devastating—more than 1100 people were killed, more than 115 000 buildings destroyed and another 150 000 buildings damaged. Losses were estimated at more than US$2.2 billion.

Australia worked with Indonesia through the Australia – Indonesia Facility for Disaster Reduction, which funded a team of more than 70 Indonesian and international engineers to look at why so many buildings were destroyed while others stayed standing. The team surveyed more than 4000 buildings and found that many of the ones destroyed had not followed basic earthquake-safe building practices. As a result, Australia and Indonesia joined forces to better prepare the people of West Sumatra for earthquakes, including by building safer houses. A public awareness campaign used radio, television, billboards and village-based training to spread the message that during reconstruction people should build houses better able to withstand earthquakes to protect their families.

Building on this work, a Resilient Villages Program is trialling incentives, such as subsidised micro-financing, to encourage communities to use this knowledge to construct houses that are earthquake safe.

What is humanitarian action?

The objective of humanitarian action is to save lives, alleviate suffering and enhance human dignity during and in the aftermath of natural disasters and human-induced crises. Importantly it includes helping developing countries prepare for, respond to and recover from humanitarian crises.

Humanitarian action is guided by internationally agreed humanitarian principles.[5] Australia promotes and respects these principles which specify that humanitarian action should:

- *address human suffering wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable (humanity)*

- *be allocated on the basis of need and without discrimination (impartiality)*

- *not favour any side in a political dispute (neutrality)*

- *be delivered in accordance with objectives that are autonomous from political, economic or other objectives (independence).[6]*

The two main categories of crises addressed by humanitarian action are:

Natural disasters[7]	losses triggered by natural hazards such as floods, droughts,

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[5] These core principles are contained within the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and were reaffirmed by the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions 46/182 (1991) and 58/114 (2003). Australia has reinforced its commitment to humanitarian principles by endorsing the Principles and Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship on 17 June 2003. Refer to Appendix A for more information.

[6] Principles and Practice of Good Humanitarian Donorship, <www.goodhumanitariandonorship.org/>, accessed 22 June 2011.

[7] The use of the term natural disaster in this policy refers to disasters caused by the interaction of a natural hazard with local vulnerabilities, which may be exacerbated or caused by human actions. Refer to the glossary for a full definition.

	cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides, pandemics and volcanic eruptions
Human-induced crises	includes conflict[8], armed violence, complex emergencies, fragile states and technological disasters

Some crises can arise suddenly, such as an earthquake or tsunami, while others unfold more slowly, such as droughts or famine. No matter what type of crisis, humanitarian action aims to minimise the impact on people by helping them:

Prepare to respond to a disaster, for example through early warning systems that alert communities to imminent floods or cyclones.

Respond to a disaster, for example through life-saving support such as food, protection and shelter.

Recover from a disaster, for example through assistance to rebuild livelihoods and infrastructure.

These activities may occur at the same time and must support development objectives. For example, six months after the earthquake hit Haiti in January 2010, temporary shelter was being provided to families (response), local people were paid to help clear rubble and support reconstruction (recovery) and contingency planning was underway ahead of the next hurricane season, including stockpiling essential supplies such as food (preparedness).

Gender equality

Women, girls, boys and men experience crises differently: they have different needs, responsibilities and capabilities. In conflict situations, women and children make up the majority of displaced populations, often more than 80 per cent.[9] In such circumstances, women and girls increasingly become the primary protectors and providers for dependent family members. Men who lose their wives may struggle to care for their children while still earning an income to provide for their family, while boys and girls may need protection from recruitment to become child soldiers.

When humanitarian action does not take into account the differences between women, girls, boys and men, it can result in unequal access to humanitarian support, lack of protection against gender-based violence and inadequate engagement of women in decision making. This could further undermine the ability of women and girls to exercise their rights and to be active partners in humanitarian action.

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[8]   In this policy, the term conflict means armed conflict.

[9]   UN Women, 'Post-conflict and Humanitarian Planning',
      < www.unifem.org/gender_issues/women_war_peace/post_conflict_humanitarian_planning.php> , accessed 23 September 2011.

Australia is committed to gender equality in humanitarian action. We support the active participation of women, girls, boys and men, and increased disaggregation of data by sex so we can better plan for and understand the impacts of humanitarian action.

We are a long-time supporter of United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security (1325, 1889, 1820 and 1888). Australia will further expand our international work to end violence against women, and build on the strategic partnerships formed with government, United Nations agencies and civil society to prevent and respond to sexual violence in conflict, post-conflict and other humanitarian settings.

Why Australia supports humanitarian action

Australia supports humanitarian action for three main reasons:

- *there is need and it is increasing*
- *Australians want to help*
- *Australia is well positioned to respond, and it is in our national interest to do so.*

There is need and it is increasing

Natural disasters

In 2010, 385 natural disasters killed more than 297 000 people worldwide, affected more than 217 million others and caused US$123.9 billion in economic damages.[10] The Asia–Pacific region is especially vulnerable, suffering disproportionate impacts of natural disasters. The region accounted for a staggering 85 per cent of the world's deaths and 38 per cent of economic losses during 1980–2009 due to natural disasters, despite being home to 61 per cent of the world's population and generating just one quarter of its gross domestic product.[11]

Natural disasters are increasing in frequency, scale and impact, throwing additional communities into crisis across the globe. Climate change is likely to increase the frequency and severity of weather-related disasters, which accounted for more than 76 per cent of natural disasters over the last two decades.[12] It is estimated that from 1970 to 2010 the number of people exposed to the risk of floods and cyclones has

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[10]   *Annual Disaster Statistical Review 2010*, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, Université catholique de Louvain, 2011, <www.cred.be/sites/default/files/ADSR_2010.pdf>, accessed 23 June 2011.

[11]   UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, *Asia Pacific Disaster Report 2010—Protecting Development Gains*, <www.unescap.org/idd/pubs/Asia‑Pacific‑Disaster‑Report%20‑2010.pdf>, accessed 23 June 2011.

[12]   Over the period 1998–2007, 76 per cent of disasters were hydrological, meteorological or climatological in nature; these accounted for 45 per cent of the deaths and 79 per cent of the economic losses caused by natural disasters. The likelihood of increased weather extremes due to climate change therefore raises concern that the number or scale of weather‑related disasters will also increase. See UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, *Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction, briefing note 1*, 2008, <www.unisdr.org/files/4146_ClimateChangeDRR.pdf>, accessed 23 June 2011.

more than doubled and tripled respectively.[13] These disasters disproportionately affect the poor. More than 95 per cent of people killed by natural disasters are from developing countries.[14]

Population growth, unplanned urbanisation, environmental degradation and poor land-use planning are increasing people's exposure to these types of hazards. For the first time in history, more than half of the world's population is concentrated in cities and towns.[15]

The impact of small-scale natural disasters

Beyond the mega-disasters that generate such high levels of public and media attention, small-scale but more frequent events can have a greater cumulative effect on poor households. The accumulated losses from recurrent, often seasonal, hazards—such as annual flooding in South Asia—push people further into poverty and disproportionately affect those living in developing countries. AusAID responded to 30 disasters in 2010, many of them small-scale.

Small island developing states, such as Pacific Island countries, are particularly vulnerable to these more frequent small-scale disasters. Such disasters have the capacity to wind back years of hard-won progress in health, education, infrastructure and many other sectors. They can also significantly impact economies. Damage caused by the 2007 earthquake and tsunami in Solomon Islands, for example, was valued at around 80 per cent of its national budget.[16] In just three years, from 2009 to 2011, Vanuatu experienced cyclones, drought, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruption.

Human-induced crises

Human-induced crises include conflict and armed violence. A total of 1.5 billion people live in areas affected by state fragility, conflict or large-scale organised criminal violence.[17] Conflict and persecution left some 43.7 million people displaced at the end of 2010, the highest number in more than 15 years.[18] This includes 27.5 million internally displaced persons—people who have fled their homes yet remain in their own country—up from 17 million in 1997.[19] Conflict and state fragility

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13 UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, *2011 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction*, <www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2011/en/home/index.html>, accessed 7 September 2011.

14 World Bank, 'Helping Indonesia Prepare for Disasters', 2009, <http://go.worldbank.org/Q3AGFGGRE0>, accessed 23 June 2011.

15 International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *World Disasters Report 2010: Focus on Urban Risk*, <www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/WDR/WDR2010‑full.pdf>, accessed 23 June 2011.

16 Asian Development Bank, *Regional Partnerships for Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Preparedness*, October 2008, <www.adb.org/Documents/TARs/REG/41187‑REG‑TAR.pdf>, accessed 23 June 2011.

17 World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development*, <http://wdr2011.worldbank.org/fulltext>, accessed 23 June 2011.

18 UNHCR, *Global Trends Report*, 2010, <www.unhcr.org/4dfa11499.html>, accessed 23 June 2011.

19 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre of the Norwegian Refugee Council, *Internal Displacement: Global Overview of Trends and Developments in 2010*, March 2011, <www.internal‑displacement.org/publications/global‑overview‑2010>, accessed 23 June 2011.

severely impact a country's ability to develop. Very few low-income fragile or conflict-affected countries have achieved a single Millennium Development Goal.

While the number of inter-state conflicts is decreasing, armed violence is increasing and is often used to terrify and control civilians. Situations of armed conflict and armed violence can become protracted, affecting people for years.[20] More than 63 000 people died as a direct result of conflict in 2007. It is estimated that at least 200 000 more died as indirect victims during, and in the immediate aftermath of, conflicts. Most, including women, children and the elderly, died of largely preventable illnesses and communicable diseases caused by the breakdown in basic services, such as health care.[21] Still beyond these figures lie the untold numbers of people injured and psychologically harmed as a result of violence.

Conflict may intensify in the coming decades as the world's population continues to rise and the demand for limited natural resources continues to grow. Climate change may cause additional stress on water availability, food security, prevalence of disease and coastal boundaries, further adding to tensions.[22] Although environmental factors are rarely, if ever, the sole cause of violent conflict, their potential to aggravate existing tensions and generate new conflicts cannot be ignored.

Armed violence

Armed violence is a significant issue in more than three quarters of the developing countries where Australia delivers aid, and in many countries where we deliver humanitarian action.

Armed violence undermines the stability of societies and the right of people to live in safety and with dignity. It impedes the ability of governments to provide basic services, such as security, justice and health care, to citizens. It can also lead to people being displaced from their homes and communities.

The use of sexual violence against women and girls as a tactic of war adds to the trauma and impact of armed violence. Situations of armed violence undermine humanitarian and development programs and diminish aid effectiveness. This can last for years and even decades and it makes it extremely difficult for affected countries to progress towards the Millennium Development Goals.

In addition, armed violence can jeopardise the safety of international and local humanitarian relief personnel who deliver humanitarian action. When humanitarian relief personnel are not safe, humanitarian action is delayed, restricted or even stopped, further devastating affected communities.

Increasingly, humanitarian emergencies are a complex interplay of natural hazards, human-induced crises and existing community vulnerabilities. This can lead to

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20 Ibid.

21 Geneva Declaration Secretariat, *Global Burden of Armed Violence*, September 2008, <www.genevadeclaration.org/.../global‑burden‑of‑armed‑violence.html>, accessed 23 June 2011.

22 UN Environment Programme, 2009, *From Conflict to Peacebuilding: the role of natural resources and the environment*, <http://www.unep.org/pdf/pcdmb_policy_01.pdf>, accessed 7 July 2011.

protracted crises, affecting the lives and security of populations for a long time, sometimes for decades. Repeated displacement drastically reduces the ability of communities to cope with existing and future emergencies.

People can be affected by multiple crises

The Horn of Africa crisis in 2011 demonstrates the devastating effects of simultaneous crises—conflict and insecurity, food price increases and severe drought. The combination of these events led to a humanitarian crisis affecting more than 13 million people across Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia and Djibouti.

The rainy season of 2011 was one of the driest on record since 1950 and followed two consecutive years of below-average rainfall in the region. This exacerbated existing food insecurity and increased food prices in the region—the price of grains in Kenya rose up to 80 per cent above five-year averages, with Ethiopia recording an increase of 41 per cent on 2010 prices. These factors further increased displacement of the Somali population—a country plagued by conflict and insecurity. It is estimated that almost a quarter of Somalia's population were forced to flee their homes as a result of conflict and food insecurity.

Australians want to help

Humanitarian crises have devastating consequences for individuals and communities, and profoundly impact people's way of life. Sudden-onset natural disasters can destroy in a few short hours what has taken many decades to build. As a good global citizen, Australia has a long tradition of extending support to those facing humanitarian crises overseas, through both government and private contributions. The Australian community makes important contributions to humanitarian action, providing valuable expertise, time and money. Australians privately contribute $100 million annually to people affected by crises in developing countries.[23]

Australia is committed to support our near neighbours in the Pacific and Asia to prepare for and respond to crises. For example, when a tsunami hit Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga in September 2009, Australia deployed medical and rescue personnel to assist. We also sent pre-positioned emergency supplies, such as tarpaulins and water containers, to affected areas. Additional funding was provided to our non-government partners to support longer-term recovery.

Humanitarian action is an important part of our overall aid program. It meets global needs, extending the reach and impact of our assistance to Africa, the Middle East and beyond. In 2010, 11 per cent of Australia's total aid program was allocated to humanitarian action, which is comparable with the contributions of other international donors. Humanitarian aid has averaged 8.7 per cent of global development assistance since 2000.[24] Australia is committed to increasing humanitarian aid.

Australia is well positioned to respond, and it is in our national interest to do so

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[23] Australian Council for International Development 2010 Member Survey.

[24] *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2011*, <www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/gha‑report‑2011>, accessed 6 September 2011.

Australia's location in the Asia-Pacific, the most disaster prone region in the world, provides us with a unique perspective on humanitarian action. We are aware of, and act to promote, the importance of investing in preparedness. We partner with affected countries to strengthen their ability to manage crises. These priorities guide Australia's response to disasters and how we work with our humanitarian partners.

Humanitarian action is fundamental to the purpose of Australia's broader development program—helping people overcome poverty. Our funding for humanitarian action has increased substantially over the previous decade and will continue to do so.

Australians also recognise the benefits of humanitarian action for security and stability, particularly in fragile states. The direct and indirect impacts of international humanitarian crises spread over borders can have implications for regional and national security.

How humanitarian action helps

Humanitarian action can mean the difference between life and death for many thousands of people each year. It helps people get back to leading productive lives more quickly, particularly when recovery is integrated into the response. Following Cyclone Nargis in Burma in 2008, for example, Australia provided funding to help people restart their livelihoods. Rice seeds, power tillers and water pumps helped farmers return to cultivating rice, and nets and boat repair allowed those who fish to earn income and support their families again.

Humanitarian action also helps to protect and rebuild hard-won development gains. Meeting the needs of populations affected by humanitarian crises has positive social, political, economic and security outcomes. It reduces the follow-on effects of crises, such as political and social instability, prevalence of preventable injuries and impairment, and the displacement of affected populations.

Humanitarian action supports the Millennium Development Goals by addressing factors that prevent their achievement. Crises can force the displacement of populations and destroy the infrastructure and human capital needed to ensure access to basic services such as health and education. [25]

Key challenges in humanitarian action

Providing appropriate and effective humanitarian action will always be challenging. Increasing natural hazards, climate change, rapid population growth, political instability, unplanned urbanisation and tension over scarce resources all contribute to the growing vulnerability to humanitarian crises.

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[25] Geneva Declaration Secretariat, *Armed Violence Prevention and Reduction— A Challenge for Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, 2007, <www.genevadeclaration.org/.../Geneva-Declaration-Millennium-Development-Goals.pdf>, accessed 23 June 2011.

International humanitarian coordination challenges and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Humanitarian response is complex, varied and not without confusion. It involves a plethora of actors, international and national, large and small, organisations with complex global mandates and organisations that serve a community or a neighbourhood. Coordinating the actions of so many actors to support affected countries and communities remains a challenge. There is also overlap between humanitarian aid, investments in disaster preparedness, recovery programming and long-term development spending.[26] This overlap is pronounced in situations of state fragility or protracted crises and can be further complicated by the actions undertaken by militaries and other armed actors.

The United Nations agency mandated to coordinate international humanitarian action is the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). OCHA is responsible for mobilising and coordinating effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors. It also plays the lead role in strengthening the United Nations response to humanitarian crises through policy development and advocacy while being the driving force behind the humanitarian reform agenda. OCHA advocates for adherence to the international humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. In 2010 alone OCHA responded to more than 250 natural disasters and ongoing humanitarian crises affecting 71 million people.

OCHA is a key partner in delivering Australia's humanitarian program. Australia works with OCHA in advocating for and supporting more effective and efficient international humanitarian preparedness and response, and the continued reform and accountability of the international humanitarian system.

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[26] Global Humanitarian Assistance, *GHA Report 2010*, <www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/gha-report-2010>, accessed 23 June 2011.

Delivering international humanitarian action is complex. The sheer numbers and diversity of people and organisations responding to crises is a challenge for coordination. Continuing attacks on humanitarian relief personnel[27] affects access to populations in need. There are rising demands for accountability of international humanitarian action from affected governments and populations—and rightly so. New donors are emerging, adding financial resources and challenging existing practices, while protracted crises often go underfunded. International humanitarian action needs to respond better to sudden-onset and slow-onset disasters. Slow-onset disasters, such as drought and chronic food shortages, can be predicted and their impact mitigated for in advance. They require coordinated, sustained long-term responses.

The Asia-Pacific region faces unique challenges. Small island developing states in the Pacific are quickly overwhelmed by large disasters and pose particular logistics challenges in rapid response. In Asia the preference of some nations to use their military for disaster response requires principled yet flexible international humanitarian action.

Fundamental humanitarian challenges include:

- *improving the effectiveness and timeliness of international humanitarian action*

- *protecting people*

- *involving affected people and delivering inclusive humanitarian action*

- *integrating international assistance to support national priorities, local capacities and longer-term development*

- *strengthening understanding between civil and military actors in humanitarian response.*

To meet these existing and emerging challenges—globally and in the Asia-Pacific—it is critical that the international community continues to work together to improve the humanitarian system.

Improving the effectiveness and timeliness of international humanitarian action

While global funding for international humanitarian action varies each year, it increased from US$6.9 billion in 2000 to an estimated US$15.6 billion in 2010.[28] This was in response to the increasing number of crises and the growing responsiveness of traditional and non-traditional donors. Humanitarian organisations are getting better at quantifying needs and taking a more comprehensive approach spanning immediate emergency response, recovery efforts and the creation of the conditions needed for long-term sustainable development. While humanitarian funding is increasing, it is

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[27] *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian action of the United Nations,* Report of the Secretary General, General Assembly sixty‑fifth session, Economic and Social Council Substantive session of 2010.

[28] *Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian action of the United Nations,* Report of the Secretary General, General Assembly sixty-fifth session, Economic and Social Council Substantive session of 2010.

still not enough to meet the needs of everyone in developing countries affected by crisis.

Efforts to reform the international humanitarian system

The international humanitarian reform process, which began in 2005, seeks to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response by ensuring greater predictability, accountability and partnership. This is achieved through:

1. *improving the cluster approach—the system used to coordinate international humanitarian action*

2. *the availability and timely disbursement of predictable, accountable financing, using joint funding mechanisms such as the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and Emergency Response Funds (ERFs)*

3. *effective humanitarian leadership by United Nations resident and humanitarian coordinators*

4. *expanding and strengthening partnerships between humanitarian actors, recognising that no agency can fulfil all humanitarian needs.*

Australia supports the ongoing international humanitarian reform agenda and efforts to continually improve the international humanitarian system.

The performance of international humanitarian action remains uneven. No single agency can meet all humanitarian needs. Further work is required to extend reform of the international humanitarian system, ensure responses are coordinated and build developing countries' own capacities to prepare for, respond to and recover from crises.

This is especially the case in large-scale natural disasters that severely test the United Nations and other international humanitarian organisations. Assessments of performance in response to such disasters underline the need for more effective leadership and coordination, especially in the early days following a crisis.

Australia's partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme

Australia understands that its implementing partners need flexible and predictable funding to deliver the most effective humanitarian assistance. One of our important humanitarian partners is the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency fighting global hunger, which affects more than one billion people.

Access to food and maintenance of adequate nutrition are primary concerns in any humanitarian crisis. Cash contributions to WFP are the most efficient way to support major food assistance operations. This allows WFP maximum flexibility to buy and deliver food as close as possible to where it is needed to avoid wasting money and time on expensive transport costs. Buying locally also means food assistance will more likely be socially and culturally appropriate for those in need. It also helps farmers in developing countries increase their income; reinforcing the positive impact of food assistance.

In 2009 Australia entered into a Strategic Partnership Agreement with WFP to provide $180 million over four years (2009 to 2013) to support WFP's global food assistance

operations. In addition to this guaranteed funding, Australia funds WFP emergency operations on a case-by-case basis and supports WFP to build regional emergency response capacity in Africa and the Asia-Pacific. In 2011 AusAID provided $10.9 million for WFP disaster preparedness activities in these regions, including conducting emergency response training with national government partners and pre-positioning humanitarian supplies.

Protecting people

Protecting people from serious harm during natural and human-induced disasters is both a challenge and a core responsibility for all humanitarian actors. Australia has a long-standing commitment to the protection of people affected by conflict or natural disasters.

People caught in armed violence face the risk of violent attack, injury, forced displacement, family separation, detention, persecution, forced recruitment, sexual violence and death. Populations affected by natural disasters also face serious risks as the breakdown of existing protection mechanisms makes people more vulnerable to threats to their safety, dignity and rights.

While states bear the primary responsibility for protecting people within their borders, the methods people use to protect themselves are extremely important. International protection efforts need to acknowledge and support the ability of affected individuals, families and communities to protect themselves.

Protection includes all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of all individuals in accordance with international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law.[29] Protection work can involve specialised programs aimed at preventing and responding to specific types of violations and patterns of abuse. It must be incorporated into all humanitarian activities to make sure they do not inadvertently expose people to further risks.

Importantly, protection entails much more than just physical protection from violent attacks. Serious harm can also occur when people are denied access to basic assistance or when control over access to resources is used to coerce and exploit them.

Australia's support for refugees and internally displaced persons

The world has 43.7 million people who have been forced to flee their homes due to conflict and persecution.[30] Those who remain in their country of origin are referred to as internally displaced persons, while those who live in other countries are called refugees. Protecting populations displaced by conflict, persecution or natural disaster, and the host communities that receive them, is difficult. Australia supports mandated protection agencies, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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[29]   This definition of protection, developed by the ICRC and non-government organisations during a series of ICRC protection workshops in the late 1990s, has become the most widely recognised definition of protection and has since been endorsed by the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee. See *Strengthening Protection in War*, ICRC, 2001.

[30]   UNHCR, Global Trends Report, 2010, www.unhcr.org/4dfa11499.html, accessed 23 June 2011.

(UNHCR), to protect and assist displaced people. UNHCR also seeks to find permanent homes for refugees.

People who seek shelter in refugee and internal displacement camps often have to cope with overcrowding, insecurity and inadequate humanitarian assistance. This can make them more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, particularly women and girls. The loss of livelihoods and property rights while in exile creates challenges for displaced people on their return home, even when it is safe for them to do so. However, the majority of displaced people do not live in refugee or internally displaced camps—they are scattered and dispersed throughout host populations. This compounds the challenges to providing support as displaced populations are harder to identify and may remain intentionally hidden as a protection strategy.

Host communities that take in displaced populations are also affected. These communities are often least able to afford to support additional people—80 per cent of the world's refugees are hosted by developing countries.[31] Host communities experience pressure on their resources and services and, in situations of armed violence, face a greater risk of harm. When these situations become protracted they can undermine the safety, dignity and rights of people for generations.

Involving affected people and delivering inclusive humanitarian action

Affected communities are always the first to respond to a humanitarian crisis. Humanitarian action must support the efforts of these communities and involve them in designing, implementing and evaluating humanitarian action to ensure it is appropriate and effective.

Crises can rob people of the power they have over their own lives—where they can live, what they eat, whether they can work or go to school. Not involving people in humanitarian action can compound their suffering by reinforcing feelings of helplessness and diminishing dignity. Worse, it means humanitarian action may not be appropriate and may potentially do harm.

The challenge for humanitarian action is to ensure it is inclusive and recognises the rights and specific needs of women, girls, boys and men, and of vulnerable people such as those living with a disability. It must also acknowledge and use the capacities of these groups and build on existing community resilience. If humanitarian action fails to recognise diversity it will inevitably exclude large sections of the affected population.

Involving affected communities is not easy. It takes time, requires knowledge of the local language and customs and, most challenging of all, trust. To save lives, alleviate suffering and enhance dignity there must be a balance between delivering humanitarian action quickly and delivering it appropriately.

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[31] Ibid

Integrating international assistance to support national priorities, local capacities and longer-term development

Often national responders to crises—local communities, civil society and government—can be marginalised by international organisations arriving with their own staff, systems and priorities. The growing proliferation of non-government and private sector organisations in larger emergencies adds to the complexity. For example, Haiti's Ministry of Planning placed the number of non-government organisations operating in Haiti following the January 2010 earthquake as high as 10 000.[32] It is extremely difficult for affected countries to effectively coordinate this number of actors in a crisis, even with international assistance.

International help is most effective when it supports national response priorities and reinforces the capacities of government and civil society at all levels of the affected country, rather than displacing or undermining them. Local government and civil society are often best placed to assess community needs and design suitable responses. Greater efforts are needed to ensure international humanitarian action supports partner government disaster preparedness and response priorities. Many governments are selective when seeking international assistance to fill gaps in, and build, their own capacity. Where a government lacks the capacity and/or the political will to support affected populations Australia will work with partners to meet the affected population's needs.

Part of the challenge is also to link humanitarian action to development programs while the response is ongoing, through action often referred to as early recovery. Early recovery that supports national priorities and local capacities establishes the foundation for long-term benefits after the response.

Strengthening understanding between civil and military actors in humanitarian response

The military of disaster-affected countries often form part of the national response to natural disasters. Countries providing assistance may also use their military. Australia is no exception. Military assistance, such as for the rapid deployment of material goods or provision of unique transport or logistics solutions, may play a vital role in supporting civilian-led humanitarian efforts.

Police can also be an important component of the civilian response. The police play a vital role in restoring law and order, peacekeeping and strengthening the rule of law.

Interaction between civil and military actors in humanitarian response is often challenging. Differing organisational cultures, command structures and mandates can create barriers to effective interaction.

Situations of armed conflict, including responding to natural disasters in conflict environments, makes the interaction between humanitarian, police and military

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[32]   World Bank, *World Development Report 2011: Conflict, Security and Development*, <http://wdr2011.worldbank.org/fulltext>, accessed 23 June 2011.

actors considerably more complex. In these situations the military can be very useful, providing logistics and protection to facilitate civilian-led assistance to dangerous areas. However, military involvement can compromise actual or perceived neutrality of humanitarian organisations and the security of their staff, potentially for a long time after immediate humanitarian action is delivered. When humanitarian workers are not safe, humanitarian action cannot reach those in need.

What we will do

Australia's Humanitarian Action Policy has two key strategies:

- *delivering appropriate and effective humanitarian action*
- *advocating for and supporting effective international humanitarian action.*

Implementation will be informed by the policy's guiding principles. We will build our capacity to implement through three enabling outcomes:

- *increasing the Australian Government's capacity to deliver humanitarian action*
- *ensuring Australian's humanitarian action is accountable*
- *integrating learning into future humanitarian action.*

Key strategies

Key strategy 1—Australia delivers appropriate and effective humanitarian action

AusAID is responsible for leading and coordinating the Australian Government's response to humanitarian crises in developing countries. Australia responds to humanitarian crises by:

- ***contributing funds to trusted implementing partners*** *who have local capability and specialist knowledge*
- ***deploying experts*** *and specialist teams with required skills, for example doctors to provide life-saving medical support or advisers with expertise on the rights and safety of affected populations*
- ***providing appropriate and cost-effective relief supplies****, such as generators, tarpaulins, family tents and water containers.*

Appropriate and effective humanitarian action can only be achieved by working with our humanitarian partners—the affected community, the affected country, regional organisations, the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, non-government organisations, other donors, countries and the private sector. How we work with each humanitarian partner depends on the context and the partner's mandate.

Table 1. Australia's partners in humanitarian action

Partner	Role in humanitarian action
Local communities	Local communities are the first to respond to a humanitarian crisis, often providing the most immediate, effective and sustainable assistance to save lives and begin recovery. Australia supports local communities through our implementing partners who deliver humanitarian action in support of these communities.
The affected country and regional organisations	The government of the affected country holds primary responsibility for helping and protecting all people within their borders during crises. When a government's capacity is overwhelmed, it can request international humanitarian assistance. Australia works with affected governments and regional bodies to build local capacities. We support national leadership of a crisis response or, where a government cannot lead, we support its priorities. Where the government is weak or non-responsive to need, Australia may work with our other humanitarian partners to determine priorities that guide our assistance.
United Nations	The collective resources, global reach, expertise and internationally agreed mandates of a range of United Nations humanitarian organisations make them important partners in a crisis. Australia promotes and supports the leadership, coordination (both through the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the cluster system) and delivery role of the United Nations through a range of its agencies such as the World Food Programme, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Population Fund and World Health Organization.
International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement	The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement) comprises the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) and national societies in 186 countries. The Movement is valued for its neutrality, impartiality and independence, its commitment to international humanitarian law and its unparalleled access during times of conflict and other situations of violence. Each component of the Movement plays a distinctive role. Based on its international mandate, the ICRC protects and assists those affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence, leading the Movement's components at times of conflict and violence. The Federation regularly leads the Movement's relief response in situations of natural disasters occurring outside of conflicts and strengthens national society capacity. National societies, such as the Australian Red Cross, are independent national relief organisations that can act as auxiliaries to the public authorities in humanitarian action. Australia supports the work of the Movement to assist and protect those affected by natural disaster, conflict and other situations of violence.

Partner	Role in humanitarian action
Non-government organisations	Non-government organisations play a key role in delivering humanitarian action and in mobilising public support and voluntary contributions for emergency assistance. These organisations, especially local ones, often have strong links with community groups in developing countries. Working directly in-country or with national and international partners, they are a vital source of technical advice, material assistance and personnel, and an effective channel for rapid support to crisis-affected populations. Australia works closely with pre-selected non-government organisations as key partners in our humanitarian action program.
Donors and other countries	Donors play a vital role in influencing humanitarian action through funding decisions and policy dialogue. Australia works with donors and other countries to influence the international humanitarian agenda, for example through the United Nations General Assembly Resolutions. We also work with other donors to coordinate our humanitarian action to reduce duplication and gaps.
Private sector	The private sector is increasingly involved in providing humanitarian assistance, offering innovative solutions to humanitarian problems. Australia may contract the private sector as a supplier in humanitarian response, often for logistics and procurement services.

Partnering with Australian non-government organisations and the Australian Red Cross

AusAID maintains standing agreements, called Humanitarian Partnership Agreements, with Australian non-government organisations so we are prepared to quickly fund humanitarian response activities. AusAID also maintains a partnership agreement with the Australian Red Cross, recognising its unique role in humanitarian action. These agreements reflect shared values and proven ability to deliver humanitarian action in line with the *Humanitarian Action Policy*. This pre-approval process allows funding to be disbursed quickly and gives Australia confidence that funds will be well-managed to deliver effective and appropriate humanitarian action. The Humanitarian Partnership agencies (2011–14) are CARE Australia, Caritas Australia, Oxfam Australia, Plan International Australia, Save the Children Australia and World Vision Australia.

How Australia prepares for response

Building capacity of partner governments, regional organisations and the international community to respond to crises

First and foremost, Australia is committed to helping partner governments manage crisis response themselves. We do this through building the capacity of the national government and civil society to be able to respond to disaster. This may include focused work with the partner government departments responsible for disaster management, including police and other emergency services, to improve national plans and develop the skills and knowledge of staff to respond. It also means working to support government systems and communities to prepare for, respond to and recover from crisis.

Regional organisations are becoming more active in disaster preparedness, and can provide useful links between international humanitarian action and national governments. Australia supports the disaster preparedness of regional organisations such as the East Asia Summit, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community. We recognise the important role these organisations can play in the international humanitarian system. We also work through FRANZ, an arrangement between France, Australia and New Zealand supporting international response to natural disasters in the South Pacific.

The preparedness of our international humanitarian partners to coordinate and deliver effective international humanitarian action is also key. Australia works closely with our partners to build their capacity to prepare for international response.

Australia will support:

- *partner governments and regional bodies to better prepare for and manage humanitarian crises*

- *trusted implementing partners to prepare for these crises.*

Building the capacity of the Australian Government to respond to crises

To ensure Australia's humanitarian response is timely, we have stand-by arrangements in place so our funds, experts and relief supplies reach affected people quickly—using contract arrangements which reflect good processes and accountability. This includes standing agreements with Australian non-government organisations and the Australian Red Cross to quickly release humanitarian funding in a rapid-onset emergency. Australia has also streamlined practices for supporting multilateral organisations in an emergency, including the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Australia makes sure the right relief workers and supplies are rapidly deployed in a crisis. Many Australians have valuable specialist expertise to contribute, such as in emergency health, logistics and search and rescue. Our stand-by arrangements enable us to rapidly deploy our experts where they are most needed.

Table 2. List of Australian stand-by personnel for humanitarian response

Roster/source	Staffed by	Purpose	Managed by
Rapid Response Team	AusAID	Provides surge support to AusAID which leads a coordinated, whole-of-government emergency response operation.	AusAID
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Provides diplomatic and consular services and may help evacuate Australians from the affected country.	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
International Deployment Group	Australian Federal Police	Provides disaster victim identification and other policing services.	Australian Federal Police
Australian Civilian Corps	Australian specialists	Deploys specialists to countries experiencing or emerging from natural disaster or armed conflict in the stabilisation, recovery and development planning phases.	AusAID

Roster/source	Staffed by	Purpose	Managed by
States and territories	State and territory government specialists	Provides technical support including medical, engineering, search and rescue and information communication technology.	Emergency Management Australia and the Department of Health and Ageing (medical assistance), with states and territories
Australian Defence Force	Australian Defence Force	Deploys military capabilities, including personnel, logistics, medical capability and transport.	Australian Defence Force
Australian Red Cross Delegates Program	Humanitarian specialists	Deploys specialists and/or relief equipment and supplies globally to assist in disaster response and recovery, and in complex emergencies.	Australian Red Cross
Non-government organisations	Humanitarian specialists	Deploys specialists globally to assist in response and recovery phases.	Non-government organisations
United Nations registers	Australian disaster response specialists	Australian members of the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team can be deployed to support the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in crisis response. Sectoral specific registers such as the Protection Standby Capacity (ProCap) and Gender Standby Capacity (GenCap) can provide experts on short notice. RedR Australia deploys specialists to support United Nations partner agencies.	AusAID in conjunction with OCHA and RedR Australia

Australia has stores of relief items in Australia and overseas. Where an emergency response requires items that we do not have in store, we fast-track procurement so the right type of relief is provided quickly, while still ensuring value-for-money. Australia maintains a standing agreement with a logistics company to provide logistics, procurement, shipping and personnel services. The Australian Defence Force also has unique logistics capability which the Australian Government can draw on for major regional crises to meet critical humanitarian needs.

- *maintain stand-by mechanisms to enable timely response to crises*

- *continually improve our own humanitarian action procedures*

- *continue to participate in disaster response simulations and exercises with humanitarian partners and the Australian Defence Force.*

How Australia responds

The majority of Australia's humanitarian action is channelled through our trusted implementing partners, such as United Nations agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-government organisations. These partners often have long-term relationships with communities affected by crises and can deliver professional and effective responses quickly. They can provide life-saving assistance, including shelter, protection, water and food.

Australia responds to rapid-onset, slow-onset and protracted crises. We recognise the need to fund slow-onset crises early to mitigate the worst impact of the disaster, and to provide multi-year funding to protracted crises.

Australia also contributes to joint humanitarian funds managed by the United Nations. These funds allow for faster response to humanitarian needs and coordination of humanitarian action. They also help balance humanitarian funding globally by allocating money to the most under-funded crises.

Where Australia has capacity and where there is a request from the affected government, we may directly respond to a crisis. We will respond in an appropriate and effective way. This includes coordinating funding and support with other donors and humanitarian partners, including local actors, to prevent duplication, minimise gaps and maximise the impact of available assistance.

AusAID will:

- *lead Australian Government humanitarian response in developing countries to ensure our activities provide appropriate and effective relief*

- *respond in support of partner government and community priorities*

- *coordinate Australia's humanitarian response with key humanitarian actors, including the national government, civil society and international humanitarian partners*

- *provide funding appropriate to crises: contribute responsibly to well-managed joint funds, fund slow-onset crises early and support multi-year funding to protracted crises*

- *provide flexible, predictable and coordinated funding to our trusted partners*

- *support humanitarian action that builds on the existing skills and capacities of the affected community and involves them in planning, delivering and evaluating humanitarian action*

- *stipulate that our partners deliver appropriate, effective, coordinated and accountable humanitarian action.*

Central Emergency Response Fund

One way Australia responds to humanitarian crises is by contributing to jointly-managed humanitarian funds. One of these, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), was established by the United Nations to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian action. It rapidly disburses funds to sudden onset emergencies. It also provides much needed funding to 'forgotten crises'—those that do not receive major media or political attention or, even more importantly, sufficient funding to meet the needs of affected populations.

In 2010, for example, CERF provided US$6 million to the Central African Republic, reaching some 830 000 people, mainly women and children. At the time, the joint appeal for funding to respond to needs in the Central African Republic was only 38 per cent funded. The money contributed by CERF represented 9 per cent of all funding received that year, making CERF the third-largest contributor to the appeal, meeting critical rapid response needs and supporting priority underfunded sectors.

Overall, CERF supported relief efforts in 46 crisis-affected countries in 2010 with $415 million in funding. Since 2006, CERF has reached 84 countries and territories with $2.1 billion in funding (as at August 2011).

By November 2011, more than 120 governments had pledged or contributed $2.3 billion to CERF. Australia is among CERF's top donors. In December 2009 we committed $60 million to CERF over four years to 2013, which will bring our total contributions to approximately $94 million.

Australia's whole-of-government response in Pakistan

In 2010 Pakistan's monsoonal rains caused widespread flooding in one of the worst humanitarian disasters in the past 50 years. More than 20 million people were affected. Vast areas of land were under water; homes, schools, hospitals, roads and bridges were washed away.

The Australian Government sent a 180-strong civilian and military medical and emergency response team from AusAID, the Australian Defence Force and state and territory health agencies. This response team treated more than 11 000 patients, working in a temporary health centre in central Punjab province.

Australian families and businesses also gave $16 million to emergency appeals and the Australian Government gave $75 million to trusted partners working on the ground supplying food, shelter, clean water and sanitation.

Responding to the need for humanitarian protection

Australia has a long-standing commitment to protecting people affected by conflict and natural disasters. Humanitarian protection covers activities by humanitarian organisations aimed at preventing and responding to serious violations of human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law in humanitarian crises. Examples include attacks on civilians by armed forces, sexual violence, child abuse, disappearances and forced displacement.

A person may be vulnerable in more ways than one, so each context needs to be carefully understood. It is also important to understand the capacity and resilience of affected individuals and communities for their own self-protection. This should be reinforced, along with the efforts of local and national actors, to ensure protection efforts are effective and sustainable.

Australia has a particular focus on strengthening the protection of women, children and people living with a disability. We work closely with a wide range of trusted partners to support humanitarian protection.

Australia will:

- *prioritise the safety and dignity of affected populations*

- *continue to support mandated protection agencies, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and increase engagement with non-government organisations to improve protection*

- *earmark funding to strengthen protection in crises where this priority is substantially underfunded*

- *support initiatives addressing gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health in humanitarian crises*

- *support protection activities that align with internationally accepted guidelines[33]*

- *develop a protection framework, in cooperation with partners, to guide Australia's protection work.*

Integrating early recovery in to response

Australia expects early recovery to be integrated as part of humanitarian action, in support of longer-term development. Early recovery refers to assistance that begins in a humanitarian setting but is firmly guided by development principles. It aims to:

- *supplement emergency assistance to ensure resources become assets for long-term development*

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[33] Such as: 'Protection Principles' in *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, 2011, The Sphere Project; *Professional Standards for Protection Work*, 2009, The International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent; *Minimum Agency Standards for Incorporating Protection into Humanitarian Response*, 2008, Caritas Australia, CARE Australia, Oxfam Australia, World Vision Australia

- *promote recovery initiatives led by affected communities and that involve vulnerable groups*

- *support and strengthen existing community resilience*

- *establish the foundations for longer-term recovery.*

Early recovery activities can include restoring basic services, livelihoods, transitional shelter, governance, security and rule of law, and reintegrating displaced populations.[34] It is not a separate stage in a sequence between relief and development. Rather, early recovery occurs as part of humanitarian response and provides a platform upon which sustainable development can continue. Countries in protracted crises may fluctuate in and out of crisis, recovery and stabilisation over many years. Australia supports early recovery activities though advocacy, funding and programming.

Australia also supports social protection measures, such as school feeding and food-for-work programs, as they alleviate short-term suffering and support early recovery. Social protection programs also help build community resilience to crises, and help vulnerable families avoid having to make choices that push them further into poverty. We similarly work to ensure disaster risk reduction informs decision making in recovery efforts to improve a country's resilience to future disasters. This includes integrating the 'build back better' principle into reconstruction projects through, for example, constructing more disaster-resilient and accessible buildings, and raising public awareness about the dangers of unsafe buildings.

The Australian Government also manages the Australian Civilian Corps, a roster of specialists ready to be deployed to support early recovery, stabilisation and development planning activities.

The Australian Civilian Corps

The Australian Civilian Corps is a register of trained specialists that Australia deploys to countries affected by natural disaster or conflict. The civilian corps supports recovery, stabilisation and development planning, acting as a bridge between humanitarian action and long-term development programs.

Jed Abad was deployed with the Australian Civilian Corps to Haiti in 2011. He worked as a donor liaison officer with the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission, established in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake. Jed brought a wealth of experience to the role, including experience in the fields of human rights and international criminal law in Cambodia, Kosovo and Timor-Leste. His role was to facilitate a coordinated response by the Commission, donors and the Government of Haiti. Jed said he found the experience 'exciting, challenging and rewarding.'

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[34] Cluster Working Groups on Early Recovery: *Early Recovery Guidance Note*, <www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Portals/1/cluster%20approach%20page/clusters%20pages/Early%20R/ER_Internet.pdf>, accessed 23 June 2011.

How Australia determines its response

In determining Australia's humanitarian response to a crisis, we consider:

- *needs of the affected population*

- *scale of the disaster and affected government response capacities, circumstances and preferences, including whether a request for assistance has been made*

- *funding and plans of other donors*

- *capacity and activities of humanitarian partners on the ground*

- *Australia's national interest, including where our resources will be most efficient and effective*

- *geographic location—Australia is committed to support our near neighbours, while continuing to be responsive to humanitarian requests globally*

- *Good Humanitarian Donorship, including predictable, flexible, diversified and longer-term funding arrangements with limited earmarking.*

Within this framework, appropriateness, effectiveness, timeliness, efficiency and accountability are our prime considerations in determining how to respond.

Public donations

One lesson the international community continues to learn is that the best donation in an emergency is usually cash—provided to reputable and experienced responding organisations with on-the-ground presence in the disaster-affected country. Cash can be spent quickly on buying the most urgently needed items locally, saving transport costs, stimulating the local economy and better matching the cultural needs of the affected community. It is not usually helpful to donate second-hand clothing or items that have not been requested. Many clothes sent in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, for example, were inappropriate to the climate or to the culture of the affected countries.

Donations of goods that cannot be used adds further to the burden of affected countries—they are forced to pay to store and dispose of goods they did not request.

If donors or others must provide goods rather than cash, they should first ask the following questions: Are the goods appropriate for the local climate, culture and religion? Does the affected population actually need the goods? Could the goods be purchased locally? Is the cost of transport good value for money? Will the people receiving the goods be able to afford to fix or replace the donated item? If the answer to any of these questions is 'no', or if there is a risk that an influx of donated goods will clog ports and logistics channels, then the donor would be better providing cash to a credible humanitarian actor.[34]

When directly delivering humanitarian action Australia considers:[35]

- *required capabilities for the response—where Australia can add value*
- *ability to deploy in a timely manner*
- *likely impact of our assistance.*

When working with the military, Australia's response is informed by international guidelines on humanitarian civil-military interaction.[36] We use the unique logistical capabilities of the Australian Defence Force when this is the best response to the challenge.

When funding humanitarian partners to deliver humanitarian action on behalf of the Australian Government, we consider:

- *pre-existing partnerships*
- *on-the-ground experience and capability*
- *expertise and experience in the type of response required*
- *ability to deliver appropriate, effective, timely, efficient and accountable response.*

International standards for response

Many different standards inform international humanitarian action. All are important in helping Australia and our humanitarian partners continually improve. Australia promotes the following standards to guide our own and our partners' humanitarian response:

- *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Government Organisations in Disaster Relief*
- *Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response*
- *Humanitarian Accountability Partnership Standard in Accountability and Quality Management*
- *Principle of Do No Harm: seeking to foster peace and stability through humanitarian action while ensuring that aid interventions do not inadvertently contribute to instability and violence.*

Nationally, Australian non-government organisations are guided by the Code of Conduct of the Australian Council for International Development, which helps to maintain accountability and transparency across activities, including humanitarian response.

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[35] Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Towards Better Humanitarian Donorship: Twelve Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews, 2011 (draft).

[36] These include: *Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief* (the Oslo Guidelines), November 2007 (revision 1.1), OCHA. The *Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support United Nations Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies* (the MCDA Guidelines), 2003 (revised 2006), OCHA; Draft *Asia‑Pacific Regional Guidelines for the Use of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response Operations*, 2011, OCHA.

Key strategy 2—Australia advocates for and supports effective international humanitarian action

Australia is one of many players in the global effort to provide effective humanitarian response to people affected by crises. In 2009, 107 countries provided funding for humanitarian action.[37] Many more private donors and a plethora of implementing agencies are also involved. These players must work better together for international humanitarian action to be effective.

Australia's commitment to multilateral action, our strong bilateral and regional partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region and our practical approach to humanitarian action mean we are well placed to play a constructive role in international humanitarian action.

In engaging with the international community on improved humanitarian action, Australia will prioritise:

- *further improvement of international humanitarian action*

- *an increased focus on protection*

- *promoting accountable and inclusive humanitarian action*

- *increased involvement of all nations in international dialogue, and a greater focus on regional organisations in humanitarian action*

- *strengthened understanding between civilian and military actors in humanitarian response.*

Further improvement of international humanitarian action

While international humanitarian action has improved, much still needs to be done. Australia continues to engage with our humanitarian partners to improve delivery and performance. We are committed to improved humanitarian leadership, coordination, funding mechanisms, communication of results and partnerships. We support action that responds to the priorities of partner governments and encourage local ownership by those increasingly able to manage and lead their own response.

Australia will:

- *advocate at international forums and donor support group meetings for continuous improvement and accountability of the humanitarian system*

- *continue to support humanitarian reform efforts to improve the cluster system, leadership, financing and partnerships*

- *support research into innovative approaches to strengthen humanitarian action.*

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[37] *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2011*, <www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/report/gha‑report‑2011>, accessed 6 September 2011.

An increased focus on protection

Protection is a broad field that includes a range of agendas. Australia's *Humanitarian Action Policy* focuses on three of these—protection of civilians, the responsibility to protect and humanitarian protection. Australia uses advocacy to promote protection of civilians and responsibility to protect in support of effective international humanitarian action. We integrate humanitarian protection into Australia's humanitarian action as outlined in Key strategy 1.

Protection of civilians

Under international law, civilians and all people not taking part in armed conflict must be protected. Protection of civilian activities can range from ensuring that armed groups comply with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law to avoid civilian casualties, to long-term priorities of promoting the rule of law and security within a country.

Protection of civilians is often included within a United Nations Security Council Mandate delineating the role, responsibility and extent of action that may be taken by peacekeeping forces to protect civilians from violence. The Australian Government, led by the Department of Defence, works closely with organisations such as the United Nations and African Union to protect civilians through peacekeeping operations.

Responsibility to protect

Responsibility to protect is an international concept conveying the responsibility of individual states to protect their populations from mass atrocity crimes, namely genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The principle outlines the primary responsibility of states to protect their own populations from mass atrocity crimes, and the responsibility of the international community to support states in this respect. As a last resort, responsibility to protect encourages the international community to provide protection when states fail to do so.

Australia is a supporter of the responsibility to protect concept, with a focus on helping states to protect their populations from mass atrocity crimes. We engage in international discussion and fund key programs that promote its implementation.

Australia will:

- *promote respect for international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law*
- *continue to be a strong advocate for protection internationally.*

Sexual and reproductive health in times of crisis

Problems related to sexual and reproductive health are the leading cause of death and ill health globally for women of childbearing age.[38] In a crisis, this vulnerability often increases at the same time as access to services decreases. It is estimated that tens of thousands of women and girls are subjected to sexual violence in situations of armed conflict each year around the world.[39] In 2009, for example, more than 15 000 rape cases were registered in the Democratic Republic of Congo alone.[40]

Since 2007 Australia has funded the Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme in Crisis and Post Crisis Situations (SPRINT) initiative, a joint program between the Australian Reproductive Health Alliance, the International Planned Parenthood Federation, the United Nations Population Fund and the University of New South Wales.

SPRINT works in the Pacific, Asia, Africa and the Middle East to increase access to sexual and reproductive health services for people in crisis and post-crisis situations. In 2011, for example, SPRINT funded a project with the Mae Tao Clinic on the Thai – Burma border to provide intensive training on emergency obstetric care, sexual violence and procure life-saving medical supplies. SPRINT also supported the provision of basic reproductive health services for the 25 000 people internally displaced in the western part of the Ivory Coast.

Promoting accountable and inclusive humanitarian action

Australia supports the involvement of affected people in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian action. We recognise that the best people to determine what is needed are the affected people themselves. Implementing agencies need to provide sufficient information, use participatory methods and offer opportunities for affected people to have their complaints heard and resolved safely.

The ways in which humanitarian action is delivered must be accessible to the most vulnerable. We understand that, in each context, vulnerabilities differ, with different impacts on peoples' needs and their ability to access assistance. Australia advocates for the differing needs of women, girls, boys and men and their equal right to have access to, and benefit from, humanitarian action. Australia also promotes the need for access and inclusion of people living with a disability in humanitarian action.

Disaggregating data by sex and age is important to help understand how crises differently affect women, girls, boys and men, the young and the elderly. It also helps us understand how their access to humanitarian assistance differs. Data will be

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[38] UNFPA, 'Improving Reproductive Health', <www.unfpa.org/rh/>, accessed 1 July 2011.

[39] WHO, 'Make every Mother and Child Count,' 2005 in WHO, Inter-agency *Field Manual on Reproductive Health in Humanitarian Settings*, 2010, www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/emergencies/field_manual_rh_humanitarian_settings.pdf, accessed 23 June 2011.

[40] United Nations Development Fund for Women and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2010, *Addressing Conflict-Related Sexual Violence—An Analytical Inventory of Peacekeeping Practice*, www.unifem.org/attachments/products/Analytical_Inventory_of_Peacekeeping_Practice_online.pdf, accessed 1 July 2011.

collected from implementing partners that articulates how assistance is provided by sex and age. This is important for improving the way we work with vulnerable groups.

Australia will:

- *support agencies that improve the accountability and inclusivity of humanitarian action*

- *promote humanitarian action that equally meets the needs of women, girls, boys and men and includes their active participation in its planning and implementation*

- *increase disaggregation of data by sex and age.*

Crises and people living with a disability

More than one billion people, or approximately 15 per cent of the world's population, are living with disabilities.[41] People with a disability living in crises-affected communities often require disability-specific initiatives to benefit from humanitarian action.

Australia advocates for the protection and inclusion of people living with a disability, including those with mental disorders, in line with our obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 32) and our commitments under our own 'Development for All' strategy and Human Rights Framework.

Estimates put the number of people with a disability living in Iraq, for example, between 725 200 and 1.94 million.[42] Yet people living with a disability in Iraq, as in other developing countries, are often excluded from humanitarian assistance because of mobility difficulties, discrimination or shame felt by their families. To address this, in 2009 and 2010 Australia funded Handicap International's work with a local organisation in Iraq to improve access to services for people living with a disability and their families. Work included providing, fitting and monitoring prostheses to enable independent mobility, referrals to physical rehabilitation services and community education initiatives to raise awareness of the abilities and needs of people with disabilities. These efforts also increased the inclusion of people living with a disability and their families in humanitarian efforts.

Increased involvement of all nations in international dialogue, and a greater focus on regional organisations in humanitarian action

Involving more countries in international dialogue on humanitarian action helps build trust, improve communication, share best practice and develop common understanding in advance of responding to a crisis. Broadened international

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[41] WHO and the World Bank, *World report on disability*, www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/en/index.html, accessed 20 September 2011.

[42] World Bank, *A Note on Disability Issues in the Middle East and North Africa*, June 2005, http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DISABILITY/Resources/Regions/MENA/MENADisabilities.doc, accessed 23 June 2011.

discussion strengthens partnerships for effective, well-coordinated international humanitarian action.

Regional organisations provide opportunities for constructive discussion between regional donors and affected countries on humanitarian issues. They can also help ensure international humanitarian action is more appropriate and tailored to the affected country.

Australia will:

- *encourage more countries to engage in international dialogue on humanitarian issues*

- *support our partners to work with a broader range of countries in dialogue on humanitarian policy and operational issues*

- *support Asian and Pacific regional organisations to shape, and where possible lead, improved international humanitarian action.*

Strengthened understanding between civilian and military actors in humanitarian response

Australia values the life-saving role militaries and police forces can play in international disaster response. The Australian Defence Force is often called on to support civilian-led international responses to natural disasters. AusAID's partnership with the Australian Defence Force is strong. AusAID and Defence personnel work closely to prepare for and respond to disasters.

In determining whether to use civilian or military capabilities in response, Australia assesses which will provide the best outcomes. This is a deliberate assessment which weighs the availability of civilian alternatives, the benefits of military and police support and the risk that their involvement could compromise the neutrality and safety of humanitarian personnel and affected communities. Australia's first preference is to respond using our purpose trained, dedicated civilian capability or to support humanitarian partners on the ground.

Appropriate and effective humanitarian response relies on effective interaction between humanitarian actors, the military and the police. Increased understanding between these actors is important for improved humanitarian action. This includes better understanding the differences in organisational cultures and management structures, as well as points held in common, such as a strong commitment to community service.

Australia will:

- *support initiatives that strengthen understanding between humanitarian organisations, the military and police, both in Australia and overseas*

- *advocate for strengthened civil-military understanding in regional and global forums*

- *engage in disaster preparedness exercises that include military and civilian representatives*

- *increase the participation of the Australian Government, including state and territory government agencies, in the delivery of humanitarian assistance.*

Enabling outcomes

The Humanitarian Action Policy has three enabling outcomes that build Australia's ability to deliver effective and accountable humanitarian action, as outlined here.

Enabling outcome 1—Australia has increased capacity to deliver humanitarian action

Under *An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference—Delivering real results*, coherent development strategies will guide the aid efforts of all Australian Government agencies. Implementing humanitarian action in line with the *Humanitarian Action Policy* and these development strategies will require increased capacity across the Australian Government.

Australia will:

- promote awareness and understanding of the *Humanitarian Action Policy* to improve coordination and policy coherence between AusAID and other Australian Government agencies

- build the capacity of AusAID staff to develop, deliver and monitor programs that prepare for, respond to and recover from crises in line with the *Humanitarian Action Policy*

- increase support provided to AusAID country programs in addressing humanitarian policy issues and promote understanding of linkages with other relevant AusAID policies and guidance.

AusAID's Crisis Centre

AusAID may establish a Crisis Centre to support coordinated Australian Government efforts in responding to international humanitarian crises, enabling all emergency responders to work together in one space. The centres established in response to the Samoa – Tonga tsunami (September 2009), the Padang earthquake (October 2009) and the Pakistan floods (July 2010) all proved critical in providing effective response.

Enabling outcome 2—Australia's humanitarian action is accountable

Australia is committed to ensuring our humanitarian action is accountable to the Australian public and affected populations. We will therefore publicly report on the results of our humanitarian action and the funding we provide. This is central to deepening public awareness and support for Australia's aid program, maintaining transparency on our use of public funds and enhancing our international reputation as a good global citizen.

An Effective Aid Program for Australia: Making a real difference—Delivering real results, commits us to report on the impact of our aid on the lives of poor people. Australia is rated as the best bilateral donor in terms of commitment to transparency

by the Brookings Institute and the Center for Global Development.[43] To further improve our accountability AusAID will issue a Transparency Charter to provide more accessible information on what we fund and the results we achieve.

An implementation plan will be developed for this Humanitarian Action Policy. We will measure implementation using the performance assessment framework outlined in this policy.

Australia will formally assess performance every two years, drawing on input from a range of partners and stakeholders, including humanitarian organisations, other donors, partner governments and affected populations.

The quality of Australia's humanitarian response to specific emergencies will also be assessed, through a humanitarian monitoring and evaluation framework. This framework will draw on information from a range of sources that may include field missions, feedback from partners and assessments of donor performance. Where possible, evaluations will be conducted jointly with humanitarian partners. Independent evaluations of Australia's humanitarian response will be considered for major disasters.

Australia will:

- *measure implementation of the* Humanitarian Action Policy *every two years and publish a summary report on AusAID's website*

- *evaluate Australia's humanitarian response, jointly where possible*

- *support efforts to improve accountability to affected populations.*

Enabling outcome 3—Australia integrates learning into future humanitarian action

Integrating learning into the way Australia operates is essential to delivering increasingly more effective and appropriate humanitarian action. Australia commits to using its performance reviews to continuously improve the way we deliver humanitarian action.

Australia will:

- *discuss the biennial summary report of Australia's humanitarian action with partners to inform improvement*

- *identify improvements and update the policy's implementation plan based on the summary report, discussions with partners and AusAID priorities*

- *share lessons with other donors and humanitarian partners.*

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[43] The Centre for Global Development and Brookings Institute Quality of Official Development Assistance, *Quality of Official Development Assistance*, 2010, < www.cgdev.org/content/publications/detail/1424481/>, accessed 9 September 2011.

How will the policy be implemented?

This policy is a strategic-level framework outlining Australia's overall approach to humanitarian action. An implementation plan will be developed, reviewed and updated annually.

The implementation plan will outline actions to be undertaken to achieve the policy's goal and priorities. Australia will take a phased approach to implementation, prioritising the most important activities and expanding over time. Research, analysis, lessons learned and innovation will inform implementation.

Key to effective implementation will be regular reviews and improvement of partnerships, strategies and processes that support Australia's humanitarian action.

Performance assessment framework

AusAID will use a performance assessment framework to measure progress towards the goal of the Humanitarian Action Policy.

The framework includes key evaluation questions that AusAID will answer as part of its performance assessment. It also lists the evidence that AusAID will use to answer these questions. The information collected will inform the annual review of the policy implementation plan, biennial policy review and end-of-policy evaluation.

Table 3 outlines the evaluation questions and evidence sources included in the performance assessment framework.

Table 3. Performance evaluation questions and evidence sources

Core outcomes	
1. To what extent was Australian supported humanitarian action effective and appropriate? 1.1 Did humanitarian action meet the needs of affected populations and involve them in planning, implementing and evaluating actions? 1.2 Did humanitarian response protect affected populations? 1.3 Were actions timely and coordinated? 1.4 Did humanitarian action build on local capacity and government priorities where appropriate? 1.5 Did humanitarian action support recovery and longer-term development? 1.6 Were the guiding principles applied in all humanitarian action?	A large amount of humanitarian response information is already collected by the Australian Government and the partner governments and organisations we work with in times of crisis. The priority is to synthesise all current information so judgments can be made against these questions. Sources of information include: AusAID's evaluations into individual humanitarian responses as well as thematic and whole-of-government evaluations; partner organisation evaluations; United Nations reports and partnership reviews; and inquiries with affected communities where possible, either directly or through partners. The appropriateness and effectiveness of significant humanitarian responses will also be addressed through targeted inquiry with key stakeholders and post-response evaluations commissioned by AusAID.

Key strategies

2. To what extent did the policy contribute to improved preparedness to respond to disasters in developing countries? 2.1 Has AusAID contributed to Australia being better prepared for response? 2.2 Has Australia contributed to non-government organisations and multilateral organisations being better prepared for response? 2.3 Has Australia contributed to partner governments and regional organisations being better prepared for response?	Information from tracking systems on money spent, people trained and deployed, and supplies held will be analysed to address these questions. Monitoring data will also be collected around whole-of-government emergency plans, contingency funds, early warning systems, participation in and support for regional fora, as well as exercises and drills held. This will be supplemented by detailed evaluations and external reviews of individual humanitarian responses and preparedness that will include questions on the extent to which affected populations and vulnerable groups were involved in planning.
3. How effective was Australia's response and recovery in achieving stated goals? 3.1 To what extent did the different modes of delivery achieve their stated goals? 3.2 How did Australia's partnerships contribute to improved humanitarian response and recovery?	Information on delivery methods will be collected from monitoring and evaluation tools, including the United Nations Financial Tracking System, agency-wide and whole-of-government evaluations as well as lessons learned exercises, non-government organisation and multilateral reporting. This will be supplemented by detailed evaluations of individual humanitarian responses, AusAID participation in multilateral assessment missions, partnership review processes and expert internal evaluations.
4. Did the policy contribute to Australia having a greater influence on international humanitarian action? 4.1 To what extent was there increased engagement with member states and regional organisations in humanitarian action? 4.2 To what extent has Australia positively influenced the international humanitarian reform agenda? 4.3 To what extent has Australia influenced protection issues? 4.4 To what extent has Australia contributed to strengthened understanding between civil and military actors in humanitarian action?	Information will be systematically collated and analysed from a range of sources, including cables, reports, briefings and meeting minutes, to capture significant instances of Australia's contribution to the international humanitarian agenda. Records of attendance and contribution at key fora and partner reports recognising Australia's work on key policy issues will be kept. So too will details on monitoring of funds contributed and research and training supported. Data will also be gathered around joint civil military planning and exercises. This body of evidence will be used to draw conclusions about the extent to which the issues and approaches identified in the policy increased influence in the humanitarian agenda.

Enabling outcomes	
5. To what extent were enabling outcomes achieved? 5.1 Has the Australian Government increased its capacity to deliver the *Humanitarian Action Policy*? 5.2 Is Australia's humanitarian action accountable? 5.3 How well does Australia integrate learning into future action?	Evidence will be collected around the extent to which the annual implementation plan reflects learning from reviews, the existence and quality of guidance notes, adherence to AusAID quality processes and the number of reports made publicly available. This will be completed by secondary analysis of partner and agency-wide evaluations. External expert reviews will also be commissioned to make judgments against these questions.
6. To what extent has the *Humanitarian Action Policy* been used to guide humanitarian action? 6.1 Did the choice of when, where and how to respond reflect the policy? 6.2 How relevant are policy issues to the changing context?	These questions will be addressed in detail in the final policy evaluation, but will also be commented on throughout the life of the policy through desktop reviews of courses of action and biennial policy reviews. Commentary from internal and external think tanks and academics on effectiveness will be reviewed and conclusions drawn around this at annual policy implementation plan reviews.

Glossary

All definitions are from the Reliefweb Glossary of Humanitarian Terms, August 2008, unless otherwise referenced.

Armed conflict: A dispute involving the use of armed violence between two or more parties. International humanitarian law distinguishes between international and non-international armed conflicts.

Armed violence: The use or threatened use of weapons to inflict injury, death or psychosocial harm which undermines development.[44]

Civilian populations: Groups of unarmed people, including women, children, the sick and elderly, refugees and internally displaced persons who are not directly engaged in the armed conflict.

Complex emergency: A multifaceted humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external armed conflict and which requires a multi-sectoral, international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing United Nations country program. Such emergencies have, in particular, a devastating effect on children and women, and call for a complex range of responses.

Disaster: A serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society causing widespread human, material, economic or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected community or society to cope using its own resources.[45]

Disaster risk reduction: Action taken to reduce the risk of disasters and the adverse impacts of natural hazards, through systematic efforts to analyse and manage the causes of disasters, including through avoidance of hazards, reduced social and economic vulnerability to hazards, and improved preparedness for adverse events.[46]

Displacement: Forcible or voluntary uprooting of persons from their homes by armed conflicts, gross violations of human rights and other traumatic events, or threats thereof.

Do No Harm: The Do No Harm analytical framework provides a tool for mapping the interaction between development assistance and armed conflict. It can be used to plan, monitor and evaluate aid interventions and to assist in identifying opportunities to foster peace and stability—ensuring that aid interventions do not unwittingly contribute to instability and further violence.[47]

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[44] OECD's International Network on Conflict and Fragility, March 2009, *Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development*, <www.oecd.org/document/21/0,3343,en_2649_33693550_42281877_1_1_1_1,00.html>, accessed 7 July 2011.

[45] United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), 2009, *UNISDR 2009 Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction*, <www.unisdr.org/eng/terminology/UNISDR‑terminology‑2009‑eng.pdf>, accessed 7 July 2011.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Collaborative for Development Action, *Do No Harm Handbook: The Framework for Analysing the Impact of Assistance on Conflict*, November 2004.

Early recovery: This is a multidimensional process of recovery that begins in a humanitarian setting. It is guided by development principles that seek to build on humanitarian programs and to catalyse sustainable development opportunities. It aims to generate self sustaining, nationally owned, resilient processes for post crisis recovery. It encompasses the restoration of basic services, livelihoods, shelter, governance, security and rule of law, environment and social dimensions, including the reintegration of displaced populations.[48]

Understanding the complexity of early recovery acknowledges that it is not an identifiable stage in a sequential 'continuum', between relief and recovery. There is overlap with a range of other activities including stabilisation. In a humanitarian setting, the needs and opportunities for early recovery evolve over time and are subject to rapid change.

Fragile states: Fragile states have weak capacity to carry out basic functions of governing a population and its territory and lack the ability to develop mutually constructive and reinforcing relations with society. As a consequence, trust and mutual obligations between the state and its citizens become weak.[49]

Gender-based violence: Violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender or sex. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental, or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, or other deprivations of liberty.

Good Humanitarian Donorship: This initiative was created by donor governments at a meeting in Stockholm in 2003 with the idea of working towards achieving efficient and principled humanitarian assistance. The initiative provides a forum for donors to discuss good practice in funding humanitarian assistance and other shared concerns. By defining principles and standards it provides both a framework to guide official humanitarian aid and a mechanism for encouraging greater donor accountability.[50]

Humanitarian protection: Protection covers all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of all individuals in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law.[51]

Hazard: Natural processes or phenomena or human activities that can cause the loss of life or injury, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation.[52]

Internally displaced persons: Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to leave their homes or habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in

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[48] Cluster Working Groups on Early Recovery: *Early Recovery Guidance Note* <www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform/Portals/1/cluster%20approach%20page/clusters%20pages/Early%20R/ER_Internet.pdf>, accessed 23 June 2011.

[49] OECD, International Network on Conflict and Fragility. March 2009, *Armed Violence Reduction: Enabling Development*, <www.oecd.org/document/21/0,3343,en_2649_33693550_42281877_1_1_1_1,00.html>, accessed 7 July 2011.

[50] See <www.goodhumanitariandonorship.org/>. Accessed 20 September 2011.

[51] ICRC and Red Crescent, *Professional Standards for Protection Work*, 2009, <www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/publication/p0999.htm>, accessed 23 June 2011.

[52] UNISDR, 2009, *UNISDR 2009 Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction*, <http://www.unisdr.org/eng/terminology/UNISDR-terminology-2009-eng.pdf>, accessed 7 July 2011.

order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognised state border.

International humanitarian law: A body of rules that seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects persons who are not, or are no longer, participating in the hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare by prohibiting weapons that make no distinction between combatants and civilians or weapons and methods of warfare which cause unnecessary injury, suffering and/or damage. The rules are to be observed not only by governments and their armed forces, but also by armed opposition groups and any other parties to an armed conflict.

Millennium Development Goals: The Millennium Development Goals are agreed targets set by the world's nations to reduce poverty by 2015. These include halving extreme poverty, getting all children into school, closing the gap on gender inequality, saving lives lost to disease and the lack of available health care, and protecting the environment.[53]

Natural disaster: Natural disasters are events brought about by natural hazards that seriously affect the society, economy and/or infrastructure of a region. Depending on population vulnerability and local response capacity, natural disasters will pose challenges and problems of a humanitarian nature.

The term 'natural disaster' is used for ease. It is important to understand, however, that the magnitude of the consequences of sudden natural hazards is a direct result of the way individuals and societies relate to threats originating from natural hazards. The magnitude of the consequences is, thus, determined by human action, or the lack thereof.[54]

Protection of civilians in armed conflict: Structures and policies developed by the United Nations, states and other humanitarian actors, and based in international humanitarian law, human rights and refugee law, to protect vulnerable populations from the effects of armed conflict, ranging from the most immediate priorities of minimising civilian casualties to more long-term priorities of promoting the rule of law and security, law and order within a state.

Protracted crisis: There is no universally agreed definition of 'protracted crisis'. Associated initially with long-duration armed conflict in countries such as Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan, the term has also been applied to situations of diplomatic and political crisis, such as the Israeli – Palestinian conflict. This policy uses protracted crises to mean environments in which a significant proportion of the population is acutely vulnerable to death, disease and disruption of their livelihoods over a prolonged period of time. The governance of these environments is usually very

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[53] For more information see: <www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>.

[54] Inter Agency Standing Committee, 2006, *Protecting Persons Affected by Natural Disasters*, <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/downloadDoc.aspx?docID=3429&type=pdf >, accessed 7 July 2011.

weak, with the state having a limited capacity or willingness to respond to or mitigate the threats to the population, or provide adequate levels of protection.[55]

Refugee: A person, who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, or for reasons owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of their country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave their place of habitual residence to seek refuge outside their country of origin or nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of their country of origin or nationality.

Resilience: The capacity of a system, community or society potentially exposed to hazards to resist, adapt, and recover from hazard events, and to restore an acceptable level of functioning and structure.[56]

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[55] Overseas Development Institute Humanitarian Policy Group, 2004, 'Beyond the continuum: The changing role of aid policy in protracted crises', <www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/236.pdf>, accessed 9 September 2011.
[56] UNISDR, 2009, *UNISDR 2009 Terminology on Disaster Risk Reduction*, <www.unisdr.org/eng/terminology/UNISDR‑terminology‑2009‑eng.pdf>, accessed 7 July 2011.

Appendix A—Principles and good practice of humanitarian donorship

Endorsed in Stockholm, 17 June 2003 by Germany, Australia, Belgium, Canada, the European Commission, Denmark, the United States, Finland, France, Ireland, Japan, Luxemburg, Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Switzerland.

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.*