

FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CIVIL DEFENCE ASSISTANCE

The States Parties

Deeply concerned over the increase both in the number and the seriousness of disasters of all kinds throughout the world, whether from natural causes or man-made,

Recognising that it is, in the first instance, up to States to take the necessary measures in the face of potential disasters or other emergency situations which may arise,

Considering that national Civil Protection, Civil Defence, Civil Safety or Emergency Management structures, have a major part to play in the face of disasters, as much with regard to prevention and preparation as with regard to intervention, and that they are increasingly called upon to function as co-ordinating bodies for all entities brought in to respond to emergency situations, and that they are the appropriate body to guide the many and diverse operations for safeguarding life, property and the environment before, during and after disasters,

Considering that the risk of disasters and the consequences thereof are not containable by national frontiers,

Considering, however, that differences between States regarding the concept of Civil Defence may impede international co-operation in this field,

Considering the need for the development of international co-operation in the field of Civil Defence in terms of prevention, forecasting, preparedness, intervention and post-crisis management, both in the interests of disaster victims and in order to safeguard property and the environment,

Have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE 1: DEFINITIONS

- a) "States Parties" refers to all States having ratified, accepted, approved or acceded to the present Convention.
- b) "Civil Defence Service" means a structure or any other state entity established with the aim of preventing disasters and mitigating the effects of such disasters on persons, on property and the environment.
- c) "Disaster" is an exceptional situation in which life, property or the environment may be at risk.
- d) "Assistance" means any action undertaken by the Civil Defence Service of a State for the benefit of another State, with the objective of preventing, or mitigating the consequences of disasters. This includes all duties assigned to the Civil Defence Service of the Parties and accepted by the Beneficiary Parties, potentially with the assistance of any other partner.

e) "Beneficiary State" is a State Party whose territory is threatened or affected by a disaster and which requests or accepts external assistance.

f) "Supporting State" is a State Party providing assistance to a Beneficiary State at its request or with its acceptance.

g) "Civil Defence Unit" means relief personnel, equipment and goods belonging to the Civil Defence Service of the Supporting State. It is identifiable by the national or international emblem (blue equilateral triangle on an orange background) of Civil Defence.

ARTICLE 2: OBJECTIVES

Within the context of the present Convention the States Parties commit themselves to:

a) promoting co-operation between Civil Defence Services, as defined under Article 4, particularly with regard to training of personnel and exchange of information and expertise;

b) reducing obstacles to assistance and particularly delays in intervention.

ARTICLE 3: PRINCIPLES

The States Parties undertake to respect the following principles in terms of providing assistance when a State is threatened or affected by a disaster:

a) Only assistance requested by the Beneficiary State or proposed by the Supporting State and accepted by the Beneficiary State may take place.

b) All offers of assistance shall respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Beneficiary State as well as the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of this State and should be carried out with due respect for its ways and customs.

Such assistance should not be viewed as interference in the internal affairs of the Beneficiary State.

c) Assistance shall be provided without discrimination, particularly with regard to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, to national or social origin, to wealth, birth, or any other criterion.

d) Assistance shall be undertaken in a spirit of humanity, solidarity and impartiality.

e) Offers of, or requests for, assistance shall be examined and responded to by recipient States within the shortest possible time.

ARTICLE 4: FIELD OF APPLICATION

States Parties undertake to explore all possibilities for co-operation in the areas of prevention, forecasting, preparation, intervention and post-crisis management.

a) General conditions

In case of disaster or threat of disaster: