



Concern's approach to emergencies

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Section 1: Concern and emergencies

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Purpose of paper

The aim of this paper is to review the work already completed on internal preparedness for emergency programming, place that work within an organisational context, and address the issues set out in the discussion paper *Analysis of emergency interventions* in order to present a suggested model for Concern's approach to emergencies.

1.1.2 Concern's Vision statement

Concern believes in a world where people no longer live in extreme poverty, fear or oppression; a world where every person has access to a decent standard of living and the opportunities and choices basic to enjoying a long, healthy and creative life; a world where every person is treated with dignity and respect; a world where there is peace and solidarity among people.

1.1.3 Concern's Mission statement

Our mission is to enable absolutely poor people to achieve major improvements in their lifestyles which are sustainable without ongoing support from Concern.

To this end we will work with the poor themselves and with local and international partners who share our vision to create just and peaceful societies where the poor can exercise their fundamental rights.

To achieve our mission the organisation:

- responds to people in a caring and personalised manner that emphasises their human and cultural dignity;
- is prepared to work effectively in the most difficult of circumstances with poor people;
- forms alliances and working arrangements with other organisations and government bodies;
- balances enthusiasm and necessary risk-taking with prudent judgement and a professional approach;
- uses creativity and pragmatism in the face of obstacles to its work;
- engages in long term development work, responds to emergency situations, and undertakes development education and advocacy on those aspects of world poverty which require national or international action.

At the heart of Concern's operations throughout the world is a spirit of enthusiasm and shared commitment on the part of all of its staff. This spirit is also given expression by the enthusiasm and dedication of volunteers and supporters both at home and overseas.

1.1.4 How we work

Concern has a three-fold approach to the elimination of poverty:

- *Emergency Response*
- *Development Work*
- *Development Education and Advocacy work*

Our programmes are financed and operated by Concern in partnership with beneficiaries, local bodies, international agencies and governments. Our work is guided by a set of principles and policies which have been developed from the experience that we have gained over the past thirty three years.

1.2 Concern's definition of an international emergency and the policy, strategy and principles for response

1.2.1 Definition of 'international emergency'

At the organisational level, Concern defines an international emergency as:

a natural or man-made disaster which causes such destruction and loss to people, and to their social and physical infrastructure, that tens of thousands of people do not have their basic needs of food, water, health and shelter met from local resources. It creates the need for external assistance which is immediate, appropriate, and limited to the time period required to enable affected people to at least return to their former lifestyle and then manage using their own resources in a way that makes them less vulnerable to the negative impacts of future disasters.

In determining the nature and scale of our response to emergencies, Concern programmes should be informed by the need to address *extreme poverty*.¹

Concern recognises that humanitarian disasters occur in a wide range of social and political contexts, and that an understanding of these contexts is essential in determining the nature of the response. Possible examples of the types of emergencies that might occur are attached as **Annex one**. The sections of this document dealing with monitoring and emergency preparedness include material designed to ensure that Concern develops an understanding of the context in which it is operating.

1.2.2 Policy

As stated in the current Concern Policy Document², *emergencies call for a rapid response. We value the importance of being able to respond quickly, effectively and creatively to people unable to meet their basic needs, especially in sudden onset emergencies.*

The Policy Document goes on to state that *our emergency programmes are primarily intended as measured responses to bring quick relief with dignity. We seek to utilise and enhance local capacities so as to maximise effectiveness and to ensure a rapid return to normality. Consideration is given to the causes of the emergency so that our activities can contribute to their elimination.*

In responding to emergencies, Concern has agreed to be bound by international codes of conduct and practice, including the *Code of Conduct of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*, the *Humanitarian Charter*, the *People in Aid Code of best practice in the management and support of aid personnel*, and the Sphere Project's *Minimum standards in disaster response*. (cf. the supporting documents appended to this paper for the text of these documents.) In addition, our interventions should be informed by international humanitarian law, refugee law and, particularly in conflict situations, the Geneva Conventions.

Concern's policy with regard to emergencies is based not only on its commitment to addressing the causes and effects of absolute poverty, but also on a recognition that acting alone, the organisation's ability to make a significant difference is less than it would be if working in concert with partners. As such, Concern will seek linkages with national and international partners, including Alliance 2015, and will ensure that we acknowledge and utilise the capacity of local communities to enhance our ability to make a difference.

¹ As stated in the organisation's Vision Statement. The World Bank's indicator of *absolute poverty* is people seeking to survive on one US dollar a day.

² The most recent draft of which is dated 27th August 2001.

1.2.3 Strategy

Concern was founded in 1968 to respond to the impact of civil war on the people of Biafra. Since that time, and despite having expanded to have programmes in twenty eight countries, and having established development and advocacy interventions, the organisation has maintained an explicit mandate to respond to emergencies.

Concern's current emergency interventions cover a broad spectrum from emergency preparedness and disaster mitigation, through conflict resolution, to response and rehabilitation.

The organisation recognises that there is a strong link between poverty and the impact of emergencies. Most disasters exacerbate inequity within a country, affecting the poorest to a greater degree in so far as they have fewer resources to aid their recovery from the impact of renewed crises. Disasters also impact differently on men and women, changing social and economic norms and increasing vulnerability, not least of all to HIV infection.

Increasing numbers of people are being marginalized – inter and intra-state conflict and the frequency of extreme climatic events are on the rise and, combined as they are with rapid economic, institutional change and declining donor budgets, this pattern of increasing marginalization seems set to continue.

While the scope of these problems is obviously beyond the capacity of a single organisation to address, there is a clear need for intervention and advocacy.

Concern's emergency activities are to be focussed on the following:

- *Preparedness*
 - *Organisational* – a series of activities is being undertaken to ensure that we have the internal structures, systems and knowledge to allow us to respond quickly and effectively to new emergencies. Among these are the establishment of the Emergency Unit, the Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU), and the Emergency Register, the revision of the emergency modules and the development of training packs to orient new staff in these modules.
 - *Programming* – different models of intervention are currently being undertaken to ensure that authorities and communities are better able to withstand and recover from new crises.³
 - *Planning* – the development of emergency contingency plans indicating how a country programme should respond to new emergencies and of action plans ensuring that the programme is able to meet these plans. Such planning exercises need to be conducted in all countries.
 - *Country profiling* – increasing the availability of in-depth knowledge of countries in which there would appear to be a strong possibility of there being an emergency.⁴
 - *Monitoring* – In order to make more informed decisions about whether or not to respond to new emergencies, Concern needs to strengthen its organisational capacity to monitor potential emergencies.

³ Emergency preparedness programmes are currently being implemented in Honduras, Lao and Bangladesh.

⁴ Work currently being undertaken on specific countries in South Asia (Nepal, Bhutan and Pakistan) and Central America (Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala) where Concern might consider interventions due to a country's HDI ranking or the frequency of natural disasters.

- *Programming*
The organisation's Strategic Plan for 2002 to 2005⁵ states that the principle areas of programme focus in emergencies should be primary health care, water and sanitation, nutrition, food security and shelter. Consistent with the organisational requirement to address extreme poverty, the emphasis in each of these areas of core competence will be on the delivery of the basic aspects of these services to those in greatest need.

In addition to these programmatic interventions, there are cross-cutting issues that have to be taken into consideration. As stated in the Strategic Plan, *the scale of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa is such that it must realistically be factored into everything we do*. The breakdown of social norms that tends to accompany large scale displacement or conflict has tended to accelerate the transmission of HIV, and in establishing responses in such contexts, we must ensure that we take this into consideration.

The Strategic Plan also states that the organisation aims *to promote equality, especially in relation to gender, in all Concern's work both home and overseas, believing that women's empowerment and equality between women and men are prerequisites to poverty elimination*. While a gender analysis should be a component of any assessment, we should seek to ensure that, in intervening, we do not re-enforce existing inequalities in society.

- *Advocacy*
The objective for the advocacy section of the new strategic plan states that we are seeking *to reposition Concern to be an organisation that undertakes emergency humanitarian relief, long-term development and which seeks, through advocacy, to improve the effectiveness of our programmes and to influence policy makers to remove the underlying causes of poverty*.

One way in which advocacy could be taken forward is through conflict resolution interventions, and we have undertaken detailed research in Sierra Leone and Burundi with a view to carrying out focused advocacy work with decision makers. Alternatively, we could advocate against policies being pursued by donors which we believe are contrary to the best interests of the most vulnerable.⁶

Advocacy issues relevant to emergency programming will be consistent with the key principles developed by the Advocacy Working Group.

1.2.4 Principles

As previously indicated, in responding to emergencies, Concern will be guided by the *Code of Conduct*, the *Humanitarian Charter*, the People in Aid Code and Sphere, and our interventions should be informed by international humanitarian law, refugee law and, particularly in conflict situations, the Geneva Conventions.

While recognising the debate about the politicisation and militarisation of aid, and the practical difficulties inherent in operating in emergencies, the following will be among the principles governing our work, irrespective of the type, speed of onset, or the duration of the emergency:

⁵ 'Concern Worldwide Strategic Plan, March 2002 to March 2005'.

⁶ The minutes of a meeting facilitated recently by International Alert suggested that while "Organisations are loathe to loose financial support from donors over an issue that cannot be won... Maybe this needs to be discussed... to seek to establish a rule that NGOs can be critical of donors position even while using their money." – 'Conflict and Aid: Operationalising lessons learned', February 2002.

- The *humanitarian imperative* to save lives and reduce suffering comes first and will be given precedence. However, we must also recognise that the organisation's primary objective is the *elimination of extreme poverty*, and that this may require the adoption of a robust interpretation of humanitarianism based on human rights, and designed to enhance the protection of civilian populations. This means that we have to make greater efforts to identify and challenge the underlying causes of poverty – including the causes of conflict - with *advocacy* becoming an increasingly important tool in this struggle. However, we need to ensure that the benefits of an advocacy strategy are balanced against the potential impact in our ability to deliver an appropriate programme response. Programmatically, the focus on *saving lives* has to be expanded to include the wider objective of *protecting livelihoods*.
- *Impartiality* - aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone and our responses should be *proportional* to the level of need.
- *Accountability* to the programmes' intended beneficiaries, counterparts and the donors, whether governmental or public.
- *Independence* from political, military or religious agendas.
- *Recognition of the capacity of affected communities and of the need for beneficiaries, both men and women, to be engaged in the management of aid to their communities.*
- *Targeting* - Whether in response to an emergency, or in establishing a longer-term development programme, Concern programmes will work with those who need us most, rather than with those who can benefit most from our intervention.
- *Transparency* – Concern's programmes will be transparent in their dealings with all stakeholders, including beneficiaries, partner organisations and donors.

1.3 Criteria for intervention

1.3.1 Why we intervene

Concern's mandate is to respond to extreme poverty whether it has arisen due to a disaster or long-term economic and social factors.

1.3.2 Where we intervene

Long-term engagement in low HDI countries

The criterion for country selection remains focused on the extremity of poverty, and uses the United Nations' Human Development Index as its indicator of poverty. Concern is committed to establishing long-term development programmes in the bottom forty countries ranked on this index, and in those countries that have fallen outside of the HDI ranking, but which would be in the bottom forty if the necessary information were available for them.

Emergency work in low HDI countries

The impact of emergencies on low HDI countries and communities, and the extent to which emergencies can exacerbate underlying social and economic vulnerabilities, is well documented. If Concern is to have a genuine impact on global poverty, then we must address emergencies in our work through the establishment of interventions that encompass preparedness, disaster mitigation, response, advocacy, conflict resolution and, in the longer term, recovery. To this end, in those countries susceptible to disaster, mitigation interventions should be integrated into development activities so as to strengthen people's capacity to deal with future disasters.

In recognising the importance of an emergency response capacity, the Strategic Plan states that the organisation values *the importance of being able to respond quickly, effectively and creatively to people unable to meet their basic needs, especially in sudden onset emergencies.*

Essentially, our emergency interventions are intended to save lives, to return the most vulnerable of the affected population to the conditions they lived in prior to the emergency,

and to assist in the development of interventions that will reduce vulnerability to future disasters.

Emergency work in higher HDI countries

The 'criteria for intervention' paper of August 2000, '*How Concern targets countries for poverty elimination*', states that Concern may engage in response to any disaster that meets the organisation's definition of an 'emergency', regardless of that country's HDI ranking. However, no commitment of more than six months may be made to programmes established in countries outside of the bottom forty on the HDI ranking, and ongoing engagement will be reviewed against the criteria of addressing extreme poverty, with no commitment being made beyond one year at a time.

In responding to a disaster in a country that is outside of the bottom forty on the HDI, Concern should only intervene if a sizeable number of people are living in conditions whereby the provision of a basic need has deteriorated to the level encountered by the poorest half of the population in a bottom forty country. In terms of the income, this may be measured by the basics bought with one dollar per person per day, or in a family of five, it is the quality of household life bought on a wage of US\$5 per day.

It is important to note that these criteria do not *require* the organisation to establish programmes. Rather, they provide a framework that allows for the coherent and consistent identification of potential new interventions.

1.3.3 Why we stay

The expanding of the criteria for emergency response to allow for interventions in countries outside of the bottom forty has resulted, in recent years, in Concern responding to disasters in countries as diverse as Kosovo, Serbia, Honduras, El Salvador, East Timor, Turkey and Venezuela. This has not diminished our commitment to respond to emergencies in bottom forty countries, and there have been recent emergency responses in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Sudan – among other countries.

In the cases of Turkey, Venezuela and El Salvador, we responded to the emergency by conducting assessments, identifying appropriate local partners, giving them a limited amount of money, and then monitoring the implementation of their interventions without actually setting up a Concern presence in the country.

In the other countries – Honduras, Kosovo and Serbia – our emergency responses have resulted in the establishment of medium term programmes. The reasons for this have tended to be based around the fact that vulnerable populations have not been able to re-establish livelihoods quickly to pre-disaster levels. Our current policy accepts this as long as we only make commitments of one year at a time.

However, if we are to focus on meeting basic needs, then we need to be clear about our exit strategies for pulling out of those countries which do not fall within the bottom forty as soon as basic needs have been provided, or in which there are not compelling reasons for sustaining a presence for an interim period.

Section 2: Emergency preparedness

2.1 Identification of new emergency interventions

Although the *criteria for intervention* paper offers a framework for the selection of new countries, the focus is primarily on the establishment of long-term development programmes rather than of emergency interventions.

There are countries that do not yet meet either the long term or emergency mandates set out above, but which are either in decline to such an extent that it seems inevitable that they will fall within the bottom forty countries on the HDI, or they are facing a degree of disaster that will soon bring them within our mandate to respond.

While recognising that it may be appropriate to establish a monitoring and emergency preparedness function in such countries, the criteria for intervention paper does not spell out how this might happen.

If we are to enhance our capacity to respond quickly and effectively, we must be able to monitor, assess and respond to emergent needs so as to ensure that we will be in a position to respond more quickly and develop programmes based on prior knowledge of the situation. This will allow for the establishment of more effective interventions and pre-empt donor concerns that we were not present before the crisis began. This approach could be piloted in Central America, where the Honduras programme could be given a watching brief over El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala. A similar approach could also be considered for Eastern Europe, with Kosovo serving as the focal point.

2.2 Monitoring and assessment of countries prior to the onset of a new emergency

2.2.1 Pre-emergency monitoring

Monitoring is a key aspect of our understanding of what is going on in the world and of our readiness to respond to new emergencies. In order to ensure that we have effective monitoring procedures we need to:

- Improve our emergency planning approaches in existing country programmes.
- Improve monitoring mechanisms in areas in which we are not currently working and/or build links with other organisations engaged in the same kinds of work.
- Establish pre-emergency assessments to identify potential partners and to develop an understanding of the context, including an assessment of gender relations, and the prevalence of and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS.
- Improve the degree to which we gather information from and share information with other organisations, including donors and governments.

It is generally accepted that the organisation needs to invest more time and capacity in emergency monitoring and assessment. If we are to be able to identify areas of potential emergency, we need to establish mechanisms for monitoring and responding to events. The best-case scenario would be that we would be able to spot breaking disasters early and then be able to influence donors to ensure that targeted interventions are made sufficiently early that an emergency is either avoided or mitigated.

Although convincing donors of the need to intervene early has traditionally been a difficult task, a good monitoring system should be developed as part of a system that would enable us to become operational quickly and with a level of background knowledge that would heighten

the efficiency of the intervention at the critical early stages. It is also possible that effective monitoring documents could be used to convince donors of the need for an early intervention.

A proposed breakdown of geographical responsibility for monitoring is annexed as **Annex 4**.

In existing disaster-prone country programmes, the monitoring of potential emergencies should be one component of an approach that includes the strengthening of local capacities in disaster preparedness and response in those areas identified as poor and high risk.

2.2.2 Monitoring in existing country programmes

The monitoring of developing situations in existing country programmes is relatively straightforward – the knowledge of the working environment developed as a result of working in a country means that Country Directors and Desk Officers have an understanding of what is happening within the country as a matter of course.

This understanding has been enhanced in some countries through contingency planning exercises, but planning needs to be on-going as the impact of one-off exercises is questionable. Monitoring and contingency planning should be extended to all existing country programmes.

2.2.3 Monitoring in countries where we do not have a presence

In those countries in which we do not currently have a presence, if we are to identify situations earlier, clarify the underlying causes of the situation and then respond more quickly and effectively, we need to establish mechanisms that take us beyond reacting to reports on the Alert Net or Relief Web.

Each Regional Director should take responsibility for monitoring countries related to his or her region, and that responsibility for the monitoring of specific countries is devolved to Desk Officers, with support in this being provided by the Emergency Unit. This being the case, monitoring may take the following form:

1. Desk Officers and the Emergency Unit should regularly check sites such as the Relief Web, Alert Net and IRIN as well as news websites and other reliable sources for possible impending emergencies in those countries allocated to them.
2. Country Directors in regions where emergencies are occurring or seem likely to occur in neighbouring countries should be encouraged to keep a watching brief on neighbouring countries in which there are indicators of a potential disaster (for example Kosovo monitoring Macedonia, or Mozambique monitoring Zimbabwe).
3. If a possible emergency is identified, then a desk study should be carried out to profile the country. This will be carried out by the Emergency Unit and a suggested model for this is attached as **Annex 5**.
In countries with ongoing or recurrent emergencies, these profiles should be kept up to date.
4. Monitoring could also include networking with other aid agencies, particularly those within Alliance 2015.
5. In the event of a programme response being established, responsibility for establishing and managing this response will rest with the relevant regional team.

2.2.4 Country profiling

The completion of *country profiles* before an emergency breaks allows for the development of a body of knowledge about countries in which we might intervene. Such profiling has been completed for three countries in South Asia – Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan and is underway for four further countries in Central America – Nicaragua, Guatemala and El Salvador and Honduras. Further profiling should be informed by the country's position on the HDI, with

particular attention being paid to those countries lower most on the index in which we are not currently operational.

The following is a suggested framework for such profiling exercises:

- *Political background*
- *Profile of conflict (if present)*
- *Analysis of the capacity of civil society and the host government*
- *Economic context*
- *Human rights situation and implications*
- *Profile of poverty*
- *Basic needs profile*
- *Profile of disasters*
- *Nature of humanitarian activities*
- *Analysis of donor interests*
- *Possible programme responses*
- *A gender analysis*
- *An analysis of the HIV/AIDS prevalence rate*

Further details on these issues, along with other, more operational, issues that may be considered when developing a country profile are included as **Annex 6**.

Information on some of the issues identified above may be obtained through the country-specific Economist Intelligence Unit reports, and the web sites of the World Bank, IRIN, Unicef, UNDP, WHO, and UNAIDS.

In effect, these country profiling exercises represent the establishment of pre-emergency assessments. They are an attempt to get away from the purely reactive approach of conducting assessments after an emergency has broken.

However, as suggested in the criteria for intervention paper, there needs to be greater coherence in the selection of countries and recognition of the increasing linkages between countries within a region in terms of issues such as political destabilisation, and the underlying causes of poverty.

There has to be a more explicit and coherent link made between the on-going monitoring of countries in which we are not currently operating, and the decision to conduct assessments with a view to establishing interventions.

Section 3: Emergency Response

3.1 Intervening

3.1.1 Should we intervene?

Concern should consider responding to disasters in countries outside of our current fields of operation if any one of the following minimum thresholds has been reached:

- Hundreds of people have been killed by a disaster/event
- Tens of thousands of people have been deprived of their basic needs by a disaster/event
- A national government issues an appeal for international assistance in the wake of a disaster/event
- A state of emergency is declared by a national government

In instances where the monitoring mechanisms outlined in section two have been effective in identifying a deteriorating situation, we should respond before an emergency eventuates, if the conditions identified following an assessment of the context determine that this would be appropriate.

3.1.2 Can we intervene?

Once the issue of whether we *could* intervene has been determined, the issue of whether or not it is practical for us to intervene may be considered. The criteria for intervention paper suggests that such a decision should be based on answering the following questions:

- Is security adequate for ourselves or for local NGOs to operate ?
- Can we access those people whose basic needs are not being met ?
- Can we access suitable skills ?
- What effect will an intervention have on our other work in other places ?
- Can we add value to what would be done without us ?
- Do we have the financial resources to allow us to complete the intervention ?

A short written statement should be prepared by the relevant Regional Director which incorporates an analysis under each heading. This will serve as a baseline against which to review policy as circumstances change.

3.1.3 Funding an initial response

While the development of project proposals for submission to donors, and the raising of money from public donations is essential to the implementation of programmes, the Chief Executive's Contingency Fund allows for the immediate establishment of responses in the period when external funding is being sought. The €300,000 in the Contingency Fund is derived from non-earmarked general donations and is budgeted in the accounts each year. It can be released on the approval of the Chief Executive, so avoiding the time consuming process of having to go the Council for approval. Any expenditure of more than €300,000 has to be agreed by the Officers of the Council, and the money in the fund is replenished with money raised on the back of an appeal, or from project money raised from donors.

A similar mechanism is in place in Bangladesh, where the high frequency of disasters has led to the establishment of an emergency budget fund of €65,000 which can be expended without the Country Director having to generate budget revisions. This money may be used piecemeal to respond to small emergencies, or to trigger the response for larger responses, but must be replenished with any money raised for the emergency response.

3.1.4 Process for determining a response

In a country where Concern has a presence:

1. The Country Director identifies an emergency.
2. The country programme prepares an initial assessment of the emergency based on the above criteria.
3. The evaluation is discussed with the Regional Director and the Head of the Emergency Unit.

Following this discussion, one of the following options will be chosen:

- A Concern response is not needed. The reasons for this decision are documented and the Country programme staff will continue to monitor the situation.
- An assessment is required and will be carried out by the country programme.
- An assessment and initial response is required and will be carried out by the country programme with assistance from the Emergency Unit, the RDU, etc if requested.

In a country in which Concern does not have a presence:

1. Through the monitoring system which is being put in place (cf. **Annex 4**), an emergency may be identified by an existing country programme or by the Overseas Division.
2. An initial, rapid assessment of the emergency should be called for by the Regional Director - in agreement with the Overseas Director and the Head of the Emergency Unit. The Emergency Unit or the RDU may be involved in this assessment.
3. A Senior Management Team meeting should be held to determine the nature of Concern's response. One of the following options is selected:
 - A Concern response is not needed. The reasons for this decision are documented and the situation will continue to be monitored by the Emergency Unit.
 - A further, more detailed assessment is required and will be organised the relevant Regional Director in conjunction with the Head of the Emergency Unit. Staff from the Emergency Unit or the RDU may be used.
 - An assessment and initial response is required and will be organised by the Regional Director in conjunction with the Head of the Emergency Unit. Staff from the Emergency Unit or the RDU staff may be used.

3.1.5 Roles and responsibilities

While the Emergency Unit has a clear role in monitoring and providing support to the various regions, all emergency programme responses are the responsibility of, and will be managed by, the relevant regional teams. As stated in the terms of reference for the Emergency Preparedness Task Force, *all Regional Directors are operationally responsible for monitoring and responding to any emergency in their regions.*⁷

This principle holds for those countries in which we are currently operating. **Annex 4** offers a geographical breakdown of emergency monitoring responsibilities in the bottom sixty countries on the HDI. However, should a disaster require the establishment of a Concern intervention in a new country of operation, the Overseas Director will allocate responsibility for the management of this programme response to the Regional Director best placed to do this.

The primary function of the Head of the Emergency Unit is to ensure that there is an appropriate and rapid emergency response system in place within the organisation, and that

⁷ The terms of reference for the Task Force were approved on 28th April 2000. The Task Force was established to facilitate the process of enhancing Emergency Preparedness throughout the organization and ensuring the organization was "accepting and discharging our responsibility to alleviate human suffering through a rapid and professional response to emergencies."

there are appropriate mechanisms in place to allow the organisation to learn from emergency responses.

3.1.6 Assessments in emergencies

In the event of a large-scale emergency occurring in a country about which we have not gathered prior information, the depth of initial assessments will depend on the level of need, with initial programming decisions possibly being based on limited analysis. A certain level of information can obviously be assimilated in Dublin prior to a decision being made to send out an assessment team, but it is essential that some form of assessment is conducted before a programme response is initiated.

At the very least, such assessments should seek to:

- develop an understanding of the context and causes of the emergency
- determine how many people have been affected, where and who they are. It is recommended that, as far as possible, data should be disaggregated by gender, age and other appropriate categories (e.g. ethnic group).
- identify those in greatest need, whether there are specific aspects of vulnerability, and what capacity they have to help themselves. It is important to remember that the needs of women and men differ, and that the impact of a disaster may vary, with the main burden of coping borne by women who are frequently more vulnerable and lacking in political influence and representation.
- develop an understanding of the current HIV positive prevalence rates, and an assessment of those most vulnerable to infection as a result of the disaster, as well as the capacity of local resources to prevent or to deal with increased rates of infection.
- determine the likely movements of those most affected, considering such factors as insecurity and the impact of limited access to resources
- determine whether programme responses would best be achieved through direct or indirect means
- identify potential local partners
- assess the capacity of civil society
- determine the host government's attitude towards a response by international agencies
- identify what Concern needs to have in place in order to be able to respond, including human, material and financial resources
- meet with donors and UN agencies to assess their funding plans

NB: The *Sphere Guidelines* handbook contains assessment indicators for each of the technical areas, along with guidelines on how to conduct an assessment or analysis.

Considerable work has already been done in outlining approaches to assessment and monitoring and can be found in the emergency module dealing with programme information. Specific sectoral information can be found in the emergency modules covering health and nutrition, food security, sanitation, water, etc.

A gender analysis should form an integral part of assessments and in the determination of the response. Such an analysis will provide important information about who does what; who has what; who makes decisions, and how those decisions are made; who gains and loses; and which men and women – the poor, rich, disabled, able-bodied, etc. - are involved in the process.

As with the need to include an analysis of HIV prevalence both in initial assessments, and the subsequent design of interventions, the use of gender analysis techniques during emergencies is a challenge that has to be addressed. In seeking to address basic needs, gender analysis can allow us to respond to disasters in a manner that supports the different needs of women and men. Disasters impact on men and women in different ways, but displacement tends to increase the number of households headed by women, and it changes gender roles - often

quite significantly. Changes in the socio-economic roles and situations of men and women have to be analysed and understood in order to lessen the inequalities that might otherwise widen as a result of the changed social dynamics brought about by the crisis. See **Annex 9** for further information on gender analysis.

In the event of an emergency, the programme team has to be given the time to conduct an assessment to identify needs, although the depth of initial assessments may depend on the level of need and the requirement to address those needs. Similarly, the rapid changes that often occur in emergencies may mean that the aims of the intervention have to change within a relatively short period of time, but it is important that the programme team is clear as to what it is trying to achieve. As soon as possible after the onset of a disaster response programme, we should seek to ensure that a strategic planning exercise is undertaken to ensure maximum programmatic coherence and effectiveness.

3.2 Determination of a response

Essentially, emergency responses in countries in which Concern already has a presence fall into two categories – those which the existing country programme team can respond to with limited external support, and those which are on such a scale that they require significant external inputs. In each instance, the final decision as to the size and nature of the organisation’s response will rest with the Overseas Director in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team. The recommendations of the Regional and Country Directors will obviously be of primary importance.

A third category may be considered to cover countries in which we have not had a prior presence.

These categories may be summarised as follows:

	In existing country programmes		In new countries
	<i>In project areas</i>	<i>Outside project areas</i>	
Small-scale	A1	A2	A3
Widespread	B1	B2	B3

The ‘triggers’ for determining whether a response should be made and who is responsible for staffing and managing that response may be summarised as follows, using figures to indicate the number of families affected by the disaster, and the amount of money that is expended by the country programme in responding to it. Either of the following indicators may trigger a response:

	Scale	Staff	Management		
			<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Operations</i>	<i>Responsibility</i>
A1	1,000–10,000 people <€50,000	Project staff	Project Manager	Project Manager	Country Director
A2	1,000-10,000 people <€50,000	Programme staff	Country Director	Country Director	Country Director
A3	<i>Response unlikely</i>	-	-	-	-
B1	<i>Subsumed by B2</i>	-	-	-	-
B2	10,000+ people >€100,000	Programme staff. RDU if needed	Country Director	Country Director	CD with Regional Director
B3	10,000+ people >€100,000	RDU	Regional Director	Regional Director	RD with Overseas Director

3.3 Staffing an emergency response

Concern's dual emergency and development mandate has meant that the organisation has carried out a range of work in ongoing fields. When an emergency has occurred in a developmental programme, the onus has been on the field to respond to it. Only when the country programme's existing capacity has been insufficient to respond to the scale of the emergency have fields sought additional support.

In effect, there has been a policy of responding to some emergencies with staff from non-emergency programmes. There have been obvious advantages in terms of being able to access their local knowledge of the area and their assessment skills to ensure appropriate programming and the effective targeting of inputs. However, not all staff working on development programmes are well-suited to working in emergency programmes, and the impact on on-going programme activities can be marked if staff are taken away to respond to localised emergencies.

Similarly, there has been a tradition of staffing initial emergency responses in new countries with people from other country programmes. While this approach has worked relatively well in terms of the emergency response, and is the basis of the current planning for responding to emergencies, there are underlying tensions between emergency and ongoing work, particularly if the emergency response is only to one specific area of a country. These tensions have been associated with uncertainty about what is expected, lack of clarity about how ongoing programmes will be managed if key staff are deputed to emergency work, and uncertainty about return dates from emergency to ongoing work – tensions which can be overcome through the earlier and clearer development of terms of reference and agreed periods of deployment to the emergency response.

A further strain on the system has been introduced as a result of the fact that in the last five years, the increase in the number of Concern's country programmes has coincided with a contraction in our staffing base, and increasing demands and expectations being placed on programme staff.

The proposed framework for the staffing of emergency responses has been laid out in the September 2000 paper '*Concern's Emergency Preparedness and the RDU*'. This paper gave a history of the emergency preparedness activities undertaken within the organisation over the last six years and outlined the mechanisms for deploying additional staff to new emergencies.

The paper proposed that there would be five distinct categories of staff who could be called upon at the different stages of an emergency response:

- Dublin-based Emergency Unit
- Rapid Deployment Unit
- Emergency Register
- Long term staff
- External registers

In addition, it was suggested that there may also be opportunities to second staff to or from other Alliance 2015 organisations.

Full details of the function and composition of these categories of staff may be found attached as **Annex 8**, along with details of the mechanisms for deploying emergency staff from within the organisation, and the cost of so doing.

In staffing an emergency response, our human resources approach is informed by the People in Aid code, the seven basic principles of which are attached as **Supporting Document 3**. There are also several key issues which have emerged from recent evaluations which need to be borne in mind when conducting an emergency response:

- Experienced staff with a knowledge of Concern systems are essential to the establishment of effective programmes.
- The repeated deployment of senior programme staff on short-term contracts retards programme development, institutional memory and programme coherence. Once programmes have been established, it is important that the Country/Emergency Director and the Programme Managers are deployed for a sufficient period of time to allow continuity to develop.
- It is essential that staff needs are carefully managed so that people sent out to the field can meet the needs identified by the Country Director.
- All staff – whether assessment teams, RDU, longer-term staff or media – should be briefed and receive clear terms of reference before going out to the field.
- Accessing staff from external registers can be problematic – a lack of familiarity with Concern systems and ethos can result in differences of practice and approach.

3.4 Ways of working

While the Strategic Plan identifies working *through local partners as the option of preference*, it qualifies this by stating that this approach is *subject to the availability of partners with the capacity to absorb the resources necessary for the programme*.

The organisation's policy paper on Capacity Building further states that: *Where appropriate, Concern can work with or through partner organisations in responding to emergencies. **The criteria on which such a judgement would be based would be one of added-value, where significant advantages can be expected by working through partners.** However, if such added-value does not exist, Concern will intervene directly, still with a capacity building approach in mind when working with target populations.*

Ultimately, we have to balance between working through over-stretched local organisations and getting the job done using additional skilled international staff.

Although Concern must ensure that it makes maximum use of existing local capacities – identifying what exists and helping to develop it – the identification of local partners during an emergency is difficult and may not in fact be achieved in all circumstances. Similarly, the amount of capacity building which can really be achieved in an emergency is limited, and there may a trade off between the time spent in supporting national organisations to develop their capacity to respond, and the greater long term impact of this by not addressing the immediate problem ourselves.

Working with local organisations may be one way of accessing local knowledge, but it is no guarantee of enhanced emergency programming. National NGOs with whom we have worked on development programmes are not necessarily those who are best suited to responding to an emergency. With the exception of the national Red Cross, there might be few organisations that prioritise emergency response activities.

In emergency situations, particularly immediately after the onset of an emergency, local capacity to address the problems may be limited, and more effective organisations may soon become swamped with the additional demands placed on them by organisations wishing to work with or through them.

If we are to benefit from local capacity, then the best option is to identify potential local partners in advance. While this may not be possible in all circumstances, it will be in some, and it will allow us the opportunity to clarify respective roles.

Attached as **Annex 10** is the Concern Emergency Partner Selection Assessment Tool (CEPSAT) which is to be used as the basis for identifying local partners in emergency situations.

3.5 Targeting and delivery

In the targeting and delivery of interventions, we must be guided at all times by the organisation's central principle that *extreme poverty must be targeted*, and should ensure that the beneficiaries of any intervention are properly selected. As stated in the organisation's policy paper, *Concern's projects benefit a range of people reduced to extreme or absolute poverty by natural or manmade events. Such groups include disadvantaged women and children, families affected by HIV, urban poor, refugees, displaced people, the landless and poor farmers.*

The targeting of relief in emergencies, particularly conflict-based ones, is always contentious, with demand for relief items invariably exceeding supply. Each targeting methodology – and there are many, including targeting communities as a whole, households, women within households, vulnerable individuals, etc. – has its own advantages and disadvantages, with the decision as to the most appropriate targeting mechanism generally being determined by the specific context, the gender relations, and the nature of the programme intervention.

However, before the issue of beneficiary identification can be determined, there are generally other considerations that have to be made in relation to the *scale, level* and *mechanism* for the delivery of support:

- a. The *scale* of the intervention – a determination must be made as to how many beneficiaries the programme will seek to reach.
- b. The *level* of the intervention – i.e. whether the response will be prescribed by considerations such as geographic location or socio-economic group.
- c. The *mechanism* for determining the beneficiaries of the intervention– i.e. how to decide which individuals will be targeted. Common mechanisms have included a decision made by the programme team, recommendations of the local authorities, or self-selection by the potential beneficiaries themselves (assuming that this is the *level* of intervention).

In making these decisions, much depends on the *local context*, the *level of knowledge* and understanding of this, the *nature of the intervention*, and the *capacity* of the organisation to respond appropriately.

There is no absolute way of pre-determining methods of targeting, and while special consideration does need to be given to women, it cannot be assumed that targeting aid delivery to them will be either locally appropriate or effective.

As noted in the April 2001 paper *Analysis of emergency evaluations*, relief interventions are not conducted in a vacuum - local factors, including the influence of local government officials, familiarity with local communities from previous programming and the proximity of the community to road or river transportation, may have a disproportionate influence on the targeting and delivery of aid.

Attached as **Supporting Document 4** is an extract from a paper prepared for Save the Children UK. The paper – *Targeting food aid in Ethiopia* – is obviously context-specific, but contains a useful overview of targeting issues.

Delivery

As with the determination of who should benefit from the intervention, the process of delivery can consolidate or challenge local hierarchies and structures. As a general rule, local structures should be understood and, if appropriate, incorporated into any deliberations on targeting and the delivery of relief.

3.6 Co-ordination

The co-ordination of emergency programming is becoming an increasingly important aspect of disaster response, and one on which donors are placing a higher premium. Taken at its most basic, co-ordination is generally seen as a mechanism for avoiding the duplication or overlap of interventions and that all areas affected by the disaster receive attention. A more considered understanding of co-ordination might suggest that it offers the potential to better integrate not only programme interventions, but also policy and strategy.

While there is no doubt that there is always a ‘cost’ associated with co-ordination, particularly of staff time, there are also benefits. Depending on the context, these may include:

- The sharing of knowledge and information to allow for a better understanding and analysis of the context.
- This analysis can be used to develop a coherent strategy to respond to the disaster and in the establishment of more appropriate and effective interventions.
- The agreement on common standards (such as Sphere) and packages of response, so that the nature of organisations’ response is consistent and equitable.
- Clearly agreed programmatic and geographic responsibility for responding to the disaster so as to ensure that the basic needs of all of the most affected communities are met.
- In terms of advocacy, a position taken by the humanitarian community *en masse* has far more influence than individual agencies expressing an individual opinion.
- This principle extends to collective bargaining with governments or militias on issues such as access to areas of the country which might previously have been out of bounds. A strong coalition of agencies also minimises the opportunities for governments to develop ‘divide and rule’ mechanisms.

Essentially, good co-ordination can result in the maximisation of benefits for affected communities and should be pursued as a matter of priority.

3.7 Monitoring and assessment of impact

In the *Guidelines for the Production of Project Proposals*, the organisational definition of monitoring that is offered is that it is *the continuous and systematic collection of information over the life span of a project which allows adjustments to be made and objectives to be refined. Monitoring involves setting indicators of achievement or progress and the means of measurement of those indicators. It provides the information on which evaluation is based.*

Essentially, monitoring is about the collection and effective utilisation of appropriate information. The August 2000 paper, *Report on the analysis of external evaluations submitted to Council in 1998 and 1999*, states that even though the summary of findings indicates that the ability to measure the impact of interventions had been an area of weakness within the projects, this was more due to *the way in which information was being collected, rather than that information was not being collected. In many instances data was being gathered but it*

was in a form that was not easily accessible, and from which information that would benefit the projects could not be extrapolated.

The report also suggests that several evaluators felt that *information was gathered to address the completion of components of the project so as to be able to complete reports for donors – i.e. the measurement of inputs rather than impact.*

During the initial phase of responding to emergencies, the fact that we are addressing essential needs has meant that we have tended to confine our assessment of impact to documenting what we have delivered. We need to move beyond the recording of *output indicators* and ensure that *impact indicators* for our work are established as soon as possible after the establishment of an intervention. We need to be clear as to what we are trying to **achieve** rather than just what we are trying to **do**, and to establish *process indicators* to analyse **how** we do things.

Each section of the Sphere Guidelines has a sub-section dealing with analysis standards, one of which is monitoring and evaluation.

The *Guidelines for the Production of Project Proposals*, states that *while monitoring is concerned with on-going assessment of the progress of a project, **evaluation is concerned with an examination at a particular time of a number of critical project performance indicators, such as success in targeting, value for money or positive impact (i.e. 'how did we do?')***. An assessment allows for the analysis and interpretation of the data that has been collected and should also allow for an examination of the expected and the unexpected impacts of the intervention.

Given that the findings of the evaluation will have a bearing on the future development of the project, and forms an important part of the project planning cycle, it is important that evaluations are incorporated into the project planning process from the outset.

Concern's Council requires that all programme interventions are evaluated. If a donor carries out an evaluation of an emergency response (as is the case with the DEC) that does not fully adequately cover the response made by the organisation, then Concern should conduct its own evaluation – either of the entire intervention, or of those parts of the intervention that have not been covered in the donor evaluation.

3.8 Performance standards

External

Given that the external performance standards to which we are signatories – the Sphere Standards, the Red Cross Code of Conduct, the Humanitarian Charter and the People in Aid Code - are becoming increasingly important yardsticks against which the quality and nature of our interventions are being judged, there is a clear need for a wider and deeper understanding of these key documents by all staff engaging in emergency interventions.

Of these external standards, the Sphere Project's *Minimum standards in disaster response* is the one most frequently debated. While the scale of response may be dependent on local conditions, the principles behind the standards are derived from human rights and are not open for negotiation.

Internal

All programmes should comply with the performance standards contained within the existing internal emergency modules.

Uniform minimum standards in logistics should be adopted by all fields, covering issues such as supply systems and the purchasing of supplies.

Agreed systems for targeting, programme planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and financial control should be established when seeking to work with local partners.

While striving to meet minimum specifications, we need to balance this against our ability to meet the needs of beneficiaries in a timely manner.

3.9 Security

Citing the fact that in 1998 seventeen UNHCR staff died in separate incidents, whereas eight military peacekeepers were killed in the same year, a recent article in the *Los Angeles Times* stated that *it is more dangerous to be a UN humanitarian aid worker handing out food than to be a soldier on peacekeeping duty in a war zone*. The increased threat to staff safety has led to a recognition of the need to have well documented and understood security guidelines.

The Strategic Plan states that *'Concern's most important resource is its staff'* and that the organisation aims to develop human resource policies in line with the People in Aid Code of Best Practice. One of the principles of People in Aid is that *'We take all reasonable steps to ensure staff security and well-being'*.

The draft Human Resources policy for Concern makes the following commitments:
Concern is committed to the development of procedures and practices aimed at securing the security of our staff. Central to this is identification and monitoring of risks and assessing humanitarian needs in relation to the risks. The main criteria in making a decision to work, or to continue to work in a conflict zone or potentially insecure area, is the humanitarian need and the organisation's ability to maintain a standard of security acceptable to the organisation.

It is Concern policy that all country programmes develop and regularly update security manuals following the guidelines in Koenraad van Brabant's book 'Operational Security Management in Violent Environments'. All staff should be acquainted with these guidelines.

Current Practice

Responsibility for security currently rests at country level with the Country Director and in Dublin with Senior Management during a crisis. Responsibility for developing the organisation's security policy and for mainstreaming good security practice has been assigned to the Emergency Unit.

As part of this process, and in co-operation with German Agro Action (DWHH), Concern has submitted a proposal to Echo for a contribution towards the funding of a two year staff security and safety intervention. The overall objective of this intervention is to ensure that the security and safety management of the two organisations is enhanced so that their staff can operate effectively in insecure environments and thereby contribute to more effective relief operations.

The project purpose is to develop appropriate security and safety management policies and systems, and ensure that they are applied on a sustainable basis by both organisations.

The principle activities envisaged under this intervention include:

- i. The development of integrated policies and guidelines for security management
- ii. Preparation of training modules for Training of Trainers and Training of Disseminators

- iii. Conducting Training of Trainers' and Training of Disseminators' seminars

3.10 Supplies

The current supplies systems have proven to be relatively effective to date, but it is essential that this competence be sustained. In order to facilitate this, the Emergency Catalogue is being updated and will then be distributed to all fields as a source material not only for the items held in stock by the organisation, but also in terms of it providing the agreed minimum specifications and standards that we should adhere to and an indicative price of these items.

The purchase of local supplies is becoming an area that is under increasing scrutiny from donors. We must ensure that donors' tendering procedures are followed in their entirety. Failure to do so may result in the loss of donor funding for the intervention.

Similarly, all fields must ensure that all local purchases meet recognised standards and specifications as outlined in the Emergency Catalogue. It is the responsibility of each programme to ensure that it complies with these standards.

3.11 Proportionality and the role of the media

Article two of the Red Cross Code of Conduct states that the programmes of all signatories to the Code *will reflect considerations of **proportionality**. Human suffering must be alleviated wherever it is found; life is as precious in one part of a country as another... The implementation of such a universal, impartial and independent policy, can only be effective if we and our partners have access to the necessary resources to provide for such equitable relief, and have equal access to all disaster victims.*

While Concern is a signatory to the Code of Conduct, the reality is that our capacity to implement programmes is limited by – amongst other things, notably staff - the availability of funding.

With regard to the proportionality of aid, and thus of the level of funding available, it is evident that different countries receive different levels of funding. A review of the UN's CAP appeals shows that the 1999 appeal for Kosovo amounted to US\$207 per person, while the appeal for Sierra Leone raised US\$16 and that for the Democratic Republic of Congo US\$8. Would anyone argue that the relative levels of *need* in these countries are reflected in these figures ?

Similarly, the level of funding raised by the DEC for the flooding in Mozambique in 2000 was disproportionate to previous DEC appeals of this nature. The DEC's own evaluation of the DEC response to the emergency has stated: *In terms of the size of the population affected, the number of deaths and the estimated value of the destruction caused, the Mozambique cyclone was the smallest of the four recent DEC responses to flooding. By contrast, the high levels of media coverage and the intensity of the images transmitted resulted in the Mozambique appeal raised over £28M equivalent to all the other three appeals combined*⁸.

While there are many factors that might influence the level of funding that is available, the impact of the media can be decisive. As Dylan Hendrickson has stated, *the media effectively*

⁸ P13, *Independent evaluation of expenditure of DEC Mozambique floods appeal funds, report on the initial field work of July 2000*

*has the power today to decide whether or not it is ‘scandalous’ that thousands of people are dying from famine and who, if anyone, should answer for this.*⁹

The importance of the media in raising funds means that there is often pressure for agencies to be *seen* to be doing things as soon as they reach areas in which the media already has a presence. There is no doubt that while capricious, the media play an essential role in emergencies and Concern needs to maximise any benefits that they can from media access.

However, this pressure may run contrary to the need to develop at least a rudimentary understanding of the situation, and the needs of the intended beneficiaries, before establishing a response, and the latter must be given primacy. Sending media staff out at an early stage of an emergency may mean that they will only be able to document the nature of the problem rather than our response to it. The Overseas Division needs to ensure that it sets the agenda for the media strategy in response to any new emergency response, and that the expectations of the media output for any field visit are clear from the outset.

3.12 Engagement with the military in conflict-based emergencies¹⁰

Military intervention in *conflict-based emergencies* is becoming increasingly commonplace and has, to some extent, come to be seen as an alternative to seeking ways to find long term political and economic solutions. Intervention alone will probably never work – if conducted at all, the military intervention of external forces must be part of a wider process, and the political will has to be in place for that process to be effective.

The NATO intervention in Kosovo has been seen as something of a watershed in terms of the humanitarian community’s engagement with the military. NATO presented their military intervention as “humanitarian”, an approach that has been imitated by the British and American forces operating in Afghanistan. This blurring of humanitarian and military interventions has led some to claim that aid is becoming increasingly ‘militarised’.

The DEC evaluation of the Kosovo intervention highlights the dangers attendant upon an over-close relationship between agencies and international military forces which, in conflict-based emergencies, may blur the division between the military and humanitarian worlds in the eyes of the practitioners and, more importantly, in the eyes of the host communities. The evaluators cite Kofi Anan’s assertions about the need to keep humanitarian and military actions distinct and his view that “*if these lines are blurred, there is a grave risk of irreparable damage to the principle of impartiality and humanitarian assistance*”.¹¹

In determining the relationship between Concern and military forces, we should be guided by the *Code of Conduct*¹². Engagement with military forces is a difficult area to be entirely prescriptive on, with local circumstances having a huge impact on the nature of any such relationships, but the following should be borne in mind:

⁹ P9, RRN Paper 25, *Humanitarian action in protracted crises: the new relief ‘agenda’ and its limits*

¹⁰ The intervention of international forces in an emergency is one that has the potential for an advocacy position to be adopted by the organization, but this will have to be discussed in the context of each emergency as it occurs.

¹¹ Page xxviii, Volume I, *Independent evaluation of expenditure of DEC Kosovo appeal funds*.

¹² Article four of the Code of Conduct states: *We will never knowingly - or through negligence - allow ourselves, or our employees, to be used to gather information of a political, military or economically sensitive nature for governments or other bodies that may serve purposes other than those which are strictly humanitarian, nor will we act as instruments of foreign policy of donor governments.*

1. There should be a clear distinction drawn between military operations and humanitarian activities. The blurring of responsibilities, neutrality and public perception is an almost inevitable consequence of an over-close association. It should be remembered that international forces are only deployed if there is a need for military intervention, and that the primary aim of the military in these circumstances is to establish and maintain peace and security, and to help sustain a comprehensive political settlement.
2. On the other hand, the primary aim of humanitarian interventions – as encapsulated in the humanitarian imperative - is to protect human dignity and save lives, rather than to engage in conflict resolution.
3. Humanitarian interventions should not be used as a sticking plaster to cover the lack of political will to address the underlying social, political and economic factors which might underpin the conflict. In addressing conflict-based emergencies, there is need for political commitment and intervention to balance military and humanitarian activities.
4. Humanitarian agencies must maintain their independence of decision and action, and can never operate under the command of the military, although there is an obvious need to share certain types of information, particularly with regard to security, conditions in shared space (transport, aid movements, common use airfields), general estimates about the scale of the emergency, etc.

Information should not be shared if it could in any way endanger communities or risk staff security, and must be guided by the Red Cross Code of Conduct principle that; *we shall not endeavour to act as instruments of government foreign policy.*

5. Generally speaking, military and civil defence assets should not be used in the direct delivery of assistance. In those instances where such assets are used, this should be determined by need and the unavailability of other such assets, rather than by convenience or cost.

In addition, military or civil defence assets may only be used if their use poses no danger to Concern's neutrality – or to the public perception of that neutrality.

6. Concern does not rule out the employment of armed guards for the protection of equipment and facilities, particularly in areas where violent crime is rife. However, the nature of this protection needs to be considered in light of the local context and the possible impact that its utilisation may have on perception of neutrality.
7. As a rule, Concern should seek to avoid using armed protection for its vehicles, as it may be seen to compromise our principles and impartiality. This is particularly the case if the protection is not provided by a neutral force. This is not an absolute - in circumstances of instability, it may be a requirement of the government or local authorities for vehicles to be escorted by police or military personnel.