

## COMMITMENT FIVE:

We will endeavour to prevent and be prepared for natural disasters and man-made emergencies and to meet transitory and emergency food requirements in ways that encourage recovery, rehabilitation, development and a capacity to satisfy future needs.

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

**OBJECTIVE 5.1: To reduce demands for emergency food assistance through enhancing efforts to prevent and resolve man-made emergencies, particularly international, national and local conflicts.**

*To this end, governments, individually and collectively, and in partnership with all actors of civil society, will:*

*(a) Use appropriate international, regional and national mechanisms to prevent or reduce those situations, in particular war and civil conflict, which give rise to man-made emergencies and increase demands for emergency assistance, including food aid;*

*(b) Coordinate policies, actions and legal instruments and/or measures to combat terrorism and other activities contrary to human rights and human dignity;*

*(c) Promote the continuation of international discussions and cooperation on all aspects of anti-personnel land mines.*

The United States :

The United States has a long and generous tradition of aiding the victims of man-made and natural disasters, with many instances of U.S. assistance making the difference in the survival of victims. The demand for this assistance has increased sharply in recent years with the proliferation of complex emergencies, e.g., Bosnia and Haiti. This unfortunate aftermath of the Cold War is one of the most challenging issues facing the U.S. today. In 1996, The U.S. allocated almost \$760 million to 65 declared emergencies. The U.S. continued its response to numerous complex emergencies as well in Rwanda, Sudan, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The objective of this assistance is to reduce the suffering and the need for future funds. The U.S. increasingly focuses its humanitarian assistance on prevention and transition out of crises. The agency targets three areas: prevention, relief, and transition. An additional component is reinforcement of development potential.

Save the Children has developed a sophisticated computer software program that uses existing data to pinpoint areas at risk of food insecurity and target available resources accordingly.

U.S. counterterrorism policies are coordinated by the Department of State internationally, and the Federal Bureau of Investigations domestically. Overall government policies are overseen by the Interagency Working Group on Terrorism and the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. The U.S. also provides terrorism-related assistance to foreign countries through the Antiterrorism Assistance Program.

Many U.S. humanitarian, religious, human rights, and other organizations support the Ottawa Treaty on Landmines and continue to urge the U.S. government to sign the treaty. Many of these organizations support rehabilitation programs for landmine victims as well as mine-clearing operations.

See also: 1.1 (a) and 1.1 (e) on conflict prevention or reduction; 1.1 (c), 1.4 (d), 5.1 (b), 7.4 (a), 7.4 (c), 7.4 (d), and 7.4 (e) on rights; 5.4 (c) on landmines.

**OBJECTIVE 5.2: To establish as quickly as possible prevention and preparedness strategies for LIFDCs and other countries and regions vulnerable to emergencies.**

*To this end, governments, in partnership with all actors of civil society and with international organizations where necessary, will, as appropriate:*

*(a) Prepare and/or maintain for each LIFDC, and other countries and regions vulnerable to emergencies, vulnerability information and mapping, drawing on, amongst others, a food insecurity and vulnerability information and mapping system, once established, with an analysis of the major causes of vulnerability and their consequences, making maximum use of existing data and information systems to avoid duplication of effort;*

*(b) Maintain, promote and establish, as quickly as possible, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and other organizations, as appropriate, the preparedness strategies and mechanisms agreed upon at the ICN, including development and application of climate forecast information for surveillance and early-warning, drought, flood, other natural disasters, pest and disease alertness;*

*(c) Support international efforts to develop and apply climate forecast information to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of emergency preparedness and response activities, with special efforts to create synergy and avoid duplication;*

*(d) Promote the development of appropriate community-based and regional surveillance systems to gather and assess information and to implement prevention and preparedness programmes.*

The United States:

While it is not always possible to prevent emergencies, their potential adverse impact can be reduced. Droughts may be unavoidable, but famine is not; internal tensions are inevitable, but social collapse is not. The U.S. seeks to prevent transient difficulties from becoming complex crises. This requires a strategic approach involving planning, prevention, and regional initiatives.

The Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI) is putting into practice the "crisis prevention" concept. The GHAI was born of necessity in 1994 where it became evident that development progress in the region was repeatedly destroyed by recurrent crises. The initiative has revitalized governments, donors, and local institutions in the region to take on broader roles in regional cooperation and development.

To lessen the effects of humanitarian crises, the U.S. identifies the potential effect of the crises on the populations at risk, works with groups that mediate between potential combatants, and aids in conflict resolution. Other avenues consist of early-warning systems and disaster mitigation, preparedness and relief:

The U.S. invested in preparedness activities in Bangladesh, increasing host country capacity to deal with cyclones. In 1995, 25% of the population of the country had access to relief supplies within 72 hours of the end of a storm.

The U.S. established a Burundian radio production facility, by Hutu and Tutsi journalists, to reduce ethnic violence and counter hate radio by stressing themes of peace and conciliation.

The U.S.-supported Sahel Regional Program established early-warning systems for droughts, famine, and pest infestations, created food crisis networks, set up disaster monitoring and mitigation systems that identified vulnerable populations, and helped put into place mechanisms to minimize the potential impact of natural and complex disasters. As a result, there has not been a single drought-related emergency in the region in the past ten years.

On FIVIMS see: 2.2 (a), 7.2 (b), and 7.3 (c).

**OBJECTIVE 5.3: To improve and, if necessary, develop efficient and effective emergency response mechanisms at international, regional, national, and local levels.**

*To this end, international organizations, in close cooperation with governments and civil society, as appropriate, will:*

*(a) Strengthen the coordination and efficiency of international emergency assistance to ensure rapid, coordinated and appropriate response, particularly by improving communications amongst the international community.*

***Governments, in partnership with all actors of civil society, will, as appropriate:***

*(b) Seek to ensure adequate supervision of emergency operations and involve communities, local authorities and institutions and grass-roots relief initiatives and structures in implementing emergency operations to better identify and reach populations and areas at greatest risk. Women should be fully involved in the assessment of needs and in the management and evaluation of relief operations;*

*(c) Pursue at local and national levels, as appropriate, adequate and cost-effective strategic emergency food security reserve policies and programmes;*

*(d) Promote triangular food aid operations;*

*(e) Protect the lives of civil populations, including humanitarian aid workers, in times of conflict;*

*(f) Seek to ensure that access to food, with particular attention to women-headed households, is protected during emergency situations;*

*(g) Consider the creation of national volunteers corps, building*

The United States:

Timely and effective emergency relief activities consist of meeting critical human needs, providing for near-term food needs, and coordinating emergency responses with other countries and relief organizations. U.S. assistance helps meet victims' needs, the majority of whom are women and children, and aids their resumption of productive lives. Over the past year, the U.S. responded to 48 natural disaster, including 22 floods, 2 droughts, 3 epidemics, 2 tornadoes, 3 cyclones, 6 earthquakes, 2 winter emergencies, 1 fire, 1 volcanic eruption, and 1 mud slide. The agency implemented continuing complex emergency relief efforts in such countries as Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Burundi, the Caucasus, Liberia, and Rwanda.

A total of 4.2 million refugees, 7.5 million internally displaced people, and 9.2 million others affected by emergencies received emergency food assistance, with the majority of the emergency assistance allocated to man-made disasters.

InterAction coordinates U.S. PVO efforts to monitor and respond to emergencies through its Disaster Assistance Committee.

Many U.S. NGOs are working to assure timely replenishment of the U.S. Food Security Commodity Reserve.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the main federal agency responsible for emergency response. FEMA works with state and local emergency management agencies, 27 federal agencies, and the Red Cross on all aspects of emergency prevention, preparedness, response, recovery, mitigation, and risk reduction. FEMA encourages the creation and training of local or grass roots emergency responses through Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training for first responders and civilian community members.

Emergency food assistance is administered by the USDA's Food and Consumer Service. It may take the form of emergency food stamps if commercial chains of food distribution are available, or the provision of food supplies on a community or household level from the federal commodities and food for the school lunch program and other commodity distribution programs.

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The U.S. government has a number of programs in place under FEMA and the USDA to ensure food access to all American households in times of emergency.

upon "White Helmets", as defined by UNGA Resolutions 49/139 and 50/19, and already launched by the United Nations Volunteers (UNV), in order to support emergency relief and rehabilitation operations, when deemed pertinent and in accordance with the guiding principles on humanitarian assistance embodied in UNGA Resolution 46/182.

See 5.3 (b)

**OBJECTIVE 5.4: To strengthen linkages between relief operations and development programmes, along with de-mining activities where necessary, so that they are mutually supportive and facilitate the transition from relief to development.**

*To this end, international organizations, governments and civil society will, as appropriate:*

*(a) Keep under review the standards for the nutritional adequacy of food assistance to disaster-affected populations;*

*(b) Ensure that emergency operations will foster the transition from relief, through recovery, to development;*

*(c) Prepare and pursue well-planned post-emergency rehabilitation and development programmes to re-establish the capacity of households, including those headed by women, to meet their basic needs in the long term as well as to rebuild national production capacity and return to sustainable economic development and social progress as soon as possible. Where necessary, these should include operations to remove land mines.*

**The United States:**

U.S. assistance targets the unique needs of nations emerging from crisis to enable them to return to normalcy and resume their sustainable development efforts. Since these crises frequently occur in the poorest, most unstable countries, a primary goal is to provide "transition" assistance to return them to sustainable development schedules. This assistance includes programs to reinforce local security through demobilization and de-mining, to strengthen local governance and institutions that promote peaceful conflict resolution, and to restore social and physical infrastructure.

Over the past decade, more than a million children have lost one or both parents as a result of war. In response, the U.S. launched the Fund for Displaced Children and Orphans and collaborated with the Red Cross, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and NGOs to reunite orphaned, lost, or abandoned children with family members. The programs focus on reuniting unaccompanied children affected by war, street children, and orphans of the HIV/AIDS pandemic with their remaining relatives.

War victims need help if they are to once again contribute to their societies. Under the War Victims Fund, the U.S. provides prosthetic and related medical, surgical, and rehabilitation services to civilians and has helped more than 30,000 persons in Angola, Armenia, Cambodia, and Mozambique.

Improving agricultural infrastructure to bring about sustainable improvements in agricultural productivity is a major focus of the non-emergency Public Law 480 Title II and Title III food programs. The Title II programs support labor-intensive, food-for-work activities aimed at building rural roads, small-scale irrigation works, and other infrastructure, promoting reforestation, preventing floods, and establishing village-level grain and seed storage facilities. In Ghana, Title II wheat is monetized, generating local currencies to finance small farmer and cooperative activities to increase yields of nutritionally essential foods and selected nontraditional export crops. Other Title II activities include feeding programs at health centers to encourage mothers to bring their children for immunizations and for the mothers to receive training in nutrition, health, family planning, and increasingly community leadership and literacy. In 1997, Title II development assistance supporting agricultural sector activities was \$108 million.

Title III programs form essential components of the U.S.'s macroeconomic and sectoral policy reforms and food security activities and complement U.S. field mission programs. The multi-year Title III program in Ethiopia furthers efforts to liberalize food markets and develop targeted food safety net programs. Specific planned actions consist of the manufacturing and ultimate privatization of state-owned enterprises engaged in agro-based manufacturing, distribution, and marketing; and the creation of an enabling environment for the private sector to develop an efficient agricultural inputs market, with particular emphasis on fertilizer, and grain distribution. In Haiti, the program builds on the continuing commitment of the Haitian government to

economic policy reforms, including enhancement of food security, trade liberalization and rehabilitation of the environment. Wheat flour is now commercially imported and sold through private sector channels. The Haitian government has developed a draft national environmental action plan that has the enhancement of agricultural productivity as one of its objectives.