



# UNDAC ADVISORY BOARD MEETING 2024

## Background paper

This paper presents an overview of the UNDAC Advisory Board for 2024 and reviews the significant activities carried out by the UNDAC system in both 2023 and 2024. It encompasses UNDAC deployments for emergency responses and preparedness missions, along with trainings conducted for our close partners worldwide. Additionally, it provides insights into the primary UNDAC partnerships that the OCHA Emergency Response Section (ERS) has bolstered over the past year, highlighting key humanitarian organizations.

## PROGRAMME

The UNDAC Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 9 May, at the CICG in Geneva, coinciding with the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week (HNPW). Preceding the Advisory Board, a series of events will occur, including the UNDAC 101 online public event on Wednesday, 1 May. This event will be conducted three times to accommodate different time zones and will be available in three languages: English, French, and Spanish. The target audience for UNDAC 101 includes the general public interested in learning more about the UNDAC system, including new Focal Points and interested Member States.

On Thursday, 2 May OCHA ERS will host an online UNDAC Governance meeting for self-funding members of the UNDAC Advisory Board. This session aims to provide updates on topics related to UNDAC roster management, administrative, and financial issues that may require support or endorsement.

During HNPW on Monday, 6 May the UNDAC Core Committee group will convene face-to-face in Geneva to discuss follow-up actions and address outstanding issues, such as the co-chair, its work plan, overall purpose, and utility.

Starting from Monday, 6 May participants of HNPW arriving in Geneva will have the opportunity to visit the exhibition titled "*Presenting UNDAC and Introducing the new UNDAC Handbook and Website.*" Active UNDAC members, support partners, and OCHA ERS staff will be on hand to showcase the work of UNDAC and share their experiences as emergency responders. The exhibition will feature the newly revised UNDAC handbook, along with the launch of the new website. Visitors will also have the chance to view videos and gain insights into the activities of the UNDAC system.

On Thursday, 9 May members of the UNDAC Advisory Board will convene both online and in person at the CICG for their annual gathering, which is open to all UNDAC member countries, organizations, and operational support partners. During these sessions, keynote speakers and panel members will discuss developments and challenges within the broader humanitarian system and emergency response, including those impacting OCHA and the UNDAC system. The agenda is available [here](#).

Following the opening, a panel will present an overview of activities from the past year, along with lessons learned from key emergencies such as the Libya floods and the Yemen pollution spill. Drawing from experiences in these emergencies, UNDAC's approach to operating in non-permissive environments will be shared during the meeting, with a draft concept note available for reference [here](#).

This session will be followed by an update on the collaboration between OCHA/UNDAC and the WHO Emergency Medical Team (EMT) Initiative.

After the coffee break, a panel will provide updates on operational guidance, methodology training, and capacity development activities. This will include information on UNDAC operational partners, the UN Security Management System, the launch of the new edition of the UNDAC Handbook, UNDAC Induction and Refresher training, and key UNDAC (supported) activities in various regions.

The final session in the morning will offer an overview and analysis of the UNDAC roster and deployments, along with roster management issues.

In the afternoon, the Advisory Board program will largely consist of smaller group breakout presentations and discussions on the following topics:

- Strengthening UNDAC support for USAR coordination (details provided below)
- The Assessment & Analysis Cell Concept: Next Steps (details provided below)
- Diversifying the UNDAC Trainers Pool. A concept note on this topic has been developed by OCHA ERS, which is available [here](#).

Following the round of consultations in the breakout groups, participants will come together in plenary and facilitators will provide feedback about the discussions held in groups, during the plenary summary.

## UNDAC DEPLOYMENTS

### MENA

#### The Türkiye earthquake February 2023

The impact of the Earthquakes in Southern and Central Türkiye, on both Türkiye and Syria have been one of the major emergencies the UNDAC and INSARAG system responded to. Our tools and services have responded immediately to those emergencies and adapted to the context to provide the most appropriate support. Yet, the challenges were huge. The Türkiye response following the catastrophic earthquake in Kahramanmaraş on 6 February 2023 led to the largest UNDAC deployment since the 2004 Tsunami response with 67 staff mobilizing, including 38 UNDAC members (20 OCHA, 18 National members from Argentina, Denmark, Ireland, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, UK) and 29 UNDAC Ops partners from Atlas Logistics, IHP, iMMAP Inc., IOM, MapAction, REACH, UNOSAT, WFP. The main challenges were access and transport throughout the affected area and the need to operate in five locations with fully functioning sub-OSOCCs. The coordination structure was one of the most complex ever set up with OSOCC, Sub-OSOCCs, RDC, USAR Coordination Cell and Sector Coordination Cells throughout the affected area (Gaziantep, Hatay, Kahramanmaras, Adiyaman, and Malatya).

## The Impact of the Türkiye Earthquake on Syria

A seven-member UNDAC team from OCHA deployed to Syria to support and coordinate the interventions of Urban Search and Rescue teams and to liaise between international coordination decision-makers and the affected country. In addition, the team supported the localisation of disaster management and provided coordination support to specialized international teams.

## Earthquake in Morocco September 2023

In response to an earthquake which occurred in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco five UNDAC members were immediately mobilized on a no-regrets basis, but with a strong national response, their services were not required and the mission returned.

## Libya Flood Storm Daniel September 2023

On 10 September, Storm Daniel hit northeastern Libya with torrential rains and flash floods affecting multiple cities and towns. The human toll was significant with more than 5,000 people dead and 10,000 believed missing. OCHA estimates that approximately 884,000 people in five provinces in affected areas were impacted to varying degrees. A total of 16 UNDAC members deployed, including six from OCHA, one UNDAC national member from Kuwait and nine UNDAC Operational support partners from Atlas Logistics, IMMAP Inc., REACH/IMPACT and MapAction.

## Yemen oil spill February 2024

Following the sinking of the MV Rubymar vessel in the Red Sea, which occurred a few weeks after it was attacked, on 18 February, the Yemeni government requested technical assistance from the United Nations to address the situation, raising concerns about a potential environmental emergency. The United Nations (including IMO, UNEP, OCHA, UNDP) and its partners (such as the European Commission through DG ECHO and the Emergency Mutual Aid in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden – EMERSGA) mobilized to provide technical assistance. Two UNDAC members were deployed from OCHA and EUCPT, while JEU and UNOSAT provided remote support.

## THE AMERICAS

### Chile Forest Fires February 2023

In response to devastating forest fires in Chile that affected over 430,000 hectares and displaced thousand people, UNDAC supported the UN Resident Coordinator in response coordination. International and national responders, totalling nearly 11,000 personnel, were mobilized. The mission concluded in early March, but recovery efforts continued with various UN agencies and the Chilean government assessing damage and supporting recovery. A five member-UNDAC team was deployed with the participation of Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and OCHA staff from the Regional Office in Panama.

## Peru Floods March 2023

Following severe floods in Peru in March last year, an UNDAC team supported the national government in humanitarian coordination, analysis, assessment, and information management. This mission, initiated in early April, concluded after six weeks, with a comprehensive USD 6.8 million CERF proposal approved to aid over 570,000 affected individuals. The UNDAC team deployed included the participation of eight members from Paraguay, Uruguay and OCHA Regional Office in Panama. The support from UNDAC operational partners included three staff from AST, three from MapAction (two on site and one remote). Given the environmental aspect related to the emergency, the Joint Environmental Unit OCHA/UNEP mobilized an environmental expert from The Netherlands through the European Union.

## AFRICA

### Ghana Floods November 2023

Responding to flooding caused by the spillage of the Akosombo Dam in November of last year, UNDAC deployed a team specializing in assessment, analysis, and relief coordination. The UNDAC team arrived in Ghana to provide support in humanitarian coordination, assessment, and analysis regarding the floods that have resulted in devastating social, economic, infrastructural, and environmental impacts in the Volta region of Ghana. The team collaborated closely with the OCHA Regional Office for West and Central Africa, the Resident Coordinator's Office, the UN Country Team, and other organizations, with a focus on providing tents for displaced persons and developing a response mechanism.

### Volcanic activity in Cape Verde December 2023

In December 2023, an UNDAC team supported the UN Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Team Task Force in Cape Verde as seismicity at Brava Island increased due to volcanic activity. The main objectives of the team were to support the UNCT Task Force with general coordination and civil-military coordination, support the Government's seismic expert of the Instituto Nacional de Meteorologia Geofisica with situation monitoring and advisories, and assess and advise on enhancement of the country's seismic/volcanic monitoring system. The focus shifted from response preparedness to contingency planning due to the volcano's decreased risk level.

## CADRI missions in Cameroon, Mongolia and Zambia

Through CADRI missions in Cameroon, Mongolia, and Zambia, UNDAC engaged in strengthening disaster risk management and reduction capacities. In Cameroon (27 March-7 April), UNDAC's mission focused on assessing and enhancing national DRR strategies and stakeholder capacity building.

In Mongolia (4-18 September), the mission aimed to assess and improve Mongolia's climate and disaster risk management, with a focus on identifying strengths and gaps in national and local systems and providing recommendations for early warning, preparedness, and risk reduction.

In Zambia (25 September-6 October), the mission, integral to the country's National Development Plan, concentrated on improving governance, early warning systems, and disaster risk financing strategies.

Additionally, at the workshop in Mozambique (29-31 May), UNDAC shared best practices and fostered regional cooperation on Early Warning Systems, emphasizing their role in disaster preparedness and risk reduction.

## TRAININGS

### ASIA & THE PACIFIC

In 2023, UNDAC supported a number of regional and national initiatives on disaster response capacity development and interoperability. Among others, UNDAC participated in and supported National Emergency Response Team (NERT) Training in Solomon Islands and Fiji. The NERT is a national disaster response roster, from which teams can deploy to a disaster that overwhelms local response capacity. NERT methodology in Fiji and the Solomon Islands is based on UNDAC and is also expected to work as a linkage between national and international assistance where international assistance is provided. Like NERT, the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA) developed the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT) localization training, which is to develop capacity at national and provincial level of emergency responders by localizing ERAT training methodology. The AHA Center conducted a Training of Trainers (ToT) in Vietnam in 2023 supported by UNDAC who covered the international response aspects and interoperability between ASEAN-ERAT and UNDAC.

UNDAC was also invited to participate in ASEAN Regional Disaster Emergency Response Exercise (ARDEX) to enhance interoperability of ASEAN and UN response. ARDEX used an earthquake response scenario and was an opportunity to highlight the USAR liaison role of UNDAC.

### AFRICA

The UNDAC Induction Course took place in November last year in Saly, Senegal, where 30 participants received training in UNDAC's rapid deployment methods and coordination techniques for international humanitarian response. The course included a simulation exercise. Funding for the courses was provided by Belgium and Switzerland, with the participation of UNDAC operational partners from Atlas Logistique and MapAction, and support from the OCHA Regional Office for West and Central Africa.

The Namibia Emergency Operations Center (EOC)/ On-Site Operations Coordination Centers (OSOCC) Awareness Workshop facilitated in September emphasized the roles of EOCs and OSOCCs in disaster contexts, enhancing stakeholder capacity for operational decision-making during emergencies.

OCHA is part for the SADC Disaster Risk Management Strengthening in the Southern African Development Community Project financed under the 11th European Development Fund Intra-African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Programme. The overall aim of the project is to contribute to the reduction of the impacts of natural and man-made hazards, to strengthen disaster risk management and preparedness capacity, and to increase resilience. Implementation period from January 2023 to March 2026. OCHA funding is administered via IFRC, and OCHA contribution in the project focuses on:

1. Developing and setting up an Integrated Emergency Response Team (ERT) management system with Alert and Deployment management functions for the SADC ERT.
2. Developing two induction training programmes for SADC ERT based on UNDAC methodology and informed by the SADC disaster preparedness and response mechanisms as well as global and continental best practices. These will be held in Kasane, Botswana. The initial one is scheduled for July 2024, while the second in 2025.
3. Conducting simulation exercises to test SADC Emergency Response Mechanisms in terms of Preparedness, Early Warning and ERT deployment with SADC Member States.

## PARTNERSHIP

### UNDAC Operational Partners

UNDAC teams are supported by 15 operational partners (including UN Agencies, governments, NGOs, and the private sector) that ensure specialized services for the humanitarian response in the areas of logistics, information communication technology (ICT), remote sensing and mapping, as well as assessment and analysis. Their support extends to all UNDAC associated member organizations such as the United Nations and governmental agencies, Cluster Lead Agencies and other humanitarian actors collaborating with UNDAC. These partners include: ACAPS; Americas Support Team-USAID; Atlas Logistique-Humanity and Inclusion (Handicap International); Cascos Blancos; DG ECHO European Commission; DHL; Fuel Relief Fund; iMMAP Inc.; IMPACT/REACH Initiative; International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP); MapAction; REACT Disaster Response; Telecoms Sans Frontières (TSF); UNOSAT.

Following the UNDAC mission to Türkiye in response to the earthquakes that struck the country on 6 February 2023, a mapping exercise was rolled out in July to all UNDAC Operational Partners. The objective of the mapping exercise was to gather comprehensive information regarding deployment capacities, create a mutual understanding of those capacities and ensure complementarity. It analyzed the resource requirements provided by the partners during an emergency response in order to immediately inform emergency mission requirements and capacities.

In 2023, 93 Operational partners deployed to sudden onset humanitarian emergencies and to situations where specific expertise was required and not available within the organization, for short-term deployments. This included the largest yet deployment of Operational Partners where there were 73 staff to support the response to the Türkiye earthquake.

In addition, UNDAC's emergency response framework was significantly enhanced through collaborations with its operational partners. A notable initiative was the UNDAC Operational Partners Course in Luxembourg, in March 2023, which involved experts from 10 agencies (ACAPS, AST, Atlas Logistique, DP-DHL, IHP, iMMAP, MapAction, MSB, REACH, and TSF). This training program was crucial in equipping participants to efficiently work within or alongside UNDAC teams during emergencies, ensuring their specialized services are effectively utilized. The second iteration of this course will take place again in Luxembourg from 2-4 July 2024 which will be attended by 17 organizations.

This year the UNDAC Advisory Board will provide a platform to share our updated Guidance on UN Security Management System (UNSMS) Coverage vis-à-vis UNDAC Operational Partners. UNSMS

provides a framework to establish and maintain operations in insecure and unstable environments. It includes UNDAC and partner organizations' personnel deployed through OCHA as part of the OCHA response.

The Guidance on UNSMS is available [here](#).

## Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)

OCHA, with the ERS Regional Focal Point has strengthened collaboration with the SADC Secretariat through the SADC Disaster Risk Management Strengthening for Southern Africa project aligned to Objective 1.2 of the UNDAC Strategy on enhancing UNDAC's core functions (field coordination, assessment and analysis, information management and logistics and operations support) enabling stronger coordination and inter-connectedness of local and international response capacities and decision-making. The plan for 2024 include support to the development of a regional response team, managed by SADC, inspired by the UNDAC methodology. For this, the ERS is planning to deliver a SADC Induction course, funded by the EU, in June-July 2024 in Botswana, working closely with IFRC for the implementation of this project.

## European Union Civil Protection Mechanism

Strategic collaboration was a key theme throughout the reporting period, as evidenced by the series of EU Civil Protection Mechanism Workshops for EUCP and UNDAC Team Leaders held in Piedmont, Italy, and Barcelona, Spain (twice). The overall purpose of these workshops is to bring EUCP and UNDAC Team Leaders together to foster effective collaboration in the field, based on the formal agreement, operational guidance and standard operating procedures between DG ECHO and UN OCHA, and to strengthen the networking between these two teams. The workshops allowed EUCP and UNDAC Team Leaders to exchange and share experiences, to contribute to a greater understanding of the respective mandates and roles aimed at optimising the work together in field missions.

The Administrative Arrangement signed between DG ECHO and OCHA Response Support Branch in 2022 formalizes the strong connection between the two systems enabling joint activities, including exchanges of expertise and know-how between experts from both mechanisms. UNDAC national members have participated in Module Exercises (MODEX) in 2023, such as in Bulgaria, Germany, Serbia and Türkiye.

## WHO/EMERGENCY MEDICAL TEAM

The collaboration between WHO's Emergency Medical Team (EMT) system and UNDAC has recently been strengthened to ensure the two systems we are well joined up before, during and after response. A letter of intent has been drafted to ensure strengthened collaboration in readiness activities and sudden onset responses. The areas of cooperation include the exchange of information related to operations, joint deployment to affected countries, collaboration in preparedness, readiness, and capacity-building activities of mutual interest, cross fertilisation through trainings. Lastly a joint EMT coordination expert pool to allow complementary leveraging of each entity/mechanism's technical expertise, pooled resources and networks to serve the needs of affected people better.

# METHODOLOGY

## UNDAC HANDBOOK

The UNDAC Handbook serves as a vital and easily accessible resource for UNDAC team members and other first responder organizations. It represents a wealth of institutional knowledge concerning methodology, processes, and coordination procedures, requiring periodic updates to reflect current practices, developments, and lessons learned. To this end, the revision process has engaged over 80 subject-matter experts from OCHA and UNDAC's operational and affiliated partners. Two versions are in development: an extensive PDF version for training purposes, scheduled for release at HNPW in May 2024, and a concise printed version featuring more visuals and checklists, tailored to mission needs and slated for printing in June 2024. Significant updates and additions encompass new chapters addressing the significance of protection and quality response, emergency response preparedness and anticipatory action, localization, access, inter-cluster/sector coordination, responding to environmental hazards and emergencies, and psychosocial support for UNDAC team members.

## UNDAC Trainings

OCHA ERS embarked on the revision of its flagship courses: the UNDAC Induction and the Refresher. The updated version of the Induction package was used during the course held late last year, in Senegal, in French. The content of the Refresher course was revised last year and a pilot course was organized in November in Brazil in Spanish mainly for the active members from Latin America.

## Assessment and Analysis (A&A) Cell

Building on the lessons learned from the Türkiye earthquake last year, that revealed that the A&A cell model needed to go through some changes to become more fit for purpose, the A&A partners conducted discussions in several opportunities throughout the year 2023. These conversations pointed to the need to dedicate some time to review the A&A cell purpose and concept and, for this reason, a workshop was organized on January 2024. More than 20 participants from 10 organizations joined the two-day workshop in Geneva. They include ACAPS, Data Friendly Space (DPS), OCHA, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the EU, IMMAP, MapAction, IMPACT/REACH, UNOSAT, IFRC, Atlas Logistique. Through the discussions the partners reviewed the A&A concept and agreed on a workplan to implement changes and improvements to the A&A cell model. The workplan is being implemented and agreed changes have also been integrated into the revision of the UNDAC handbook.

## USAR Liaison Pool

Following the earthquake response in Türkiye in 2023, INSARAG conducted a comprehensive after-action review on its performance including the relationship with UNDAC. Key recommendations include strengthening UNDAC members who support USAR coordination by joint training and meetings to enhance mutual understanding between UNDAC and INSARAG methodologies and the various ways on how UNDAC can support USAR coordination as clarified in the USAR Coordination Handbook. Following the recommendations, in order to further strengthen the collective synergies of UNDAC USAR Liaison Officers and the USAR Coordination Cell, OCHA ERS, as the INSARAG Secretariat, have engaged with host countries of USAR Coordination courses and to accommodate one or two members from UNDAC to the training. The USAR chapter of UNDAC Handbook has been also updated in line with the UC Handbook.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

OCHA ERS would like to extend sincere gratitude to the Member countries that have supported the UNDAC system in 2023 and 2024. In particular, appreciation goes to countries that have permitted the deployment of their own national UNDAC members or members from other countries, including Argentina, Canada, Chile, China, Denmark, Ireland, Kuwait, Nepal, The Netherlands, Norway, Paraguay, Russian Federation, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, the UK, the United States and Uruguay.

Special recognition is also reserved for countries that have hosted and funded UNDAC trainings and activities, such as Belgium, Brazil, Luxembourg, and Switzerland.



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