Geographical names and the work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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Who We Are

OCHA is the component of the United Nations Secretariat responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies.
A brief History

1971
General Assembly Resolution 2816 created the role of Disaster Relief Coordinator and established the Office of the UN Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO) in Geneva.

1991
General Assembly Resolution 46/182 designed to strengthen the UN response to complex emergencies and natural disasters.

1998
The Department for Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) became the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and its mandate refined.

2005
Secretary-General introduced a package of humanitarian reforms to ensure greater predictability, accountability and partnership in the international humanitarian response system.

2006
CERF upgraded to include a US$450 million grant facility and renamed the Central Emergency Response Fund.

2009
General Assembly establishes World Humanitarian Day to be marked every year on 19 August. The Day is a way to increase public understanding of humanitarian assistance activities worldwide.

2011
OCHA is coordinating Consolidated Appeals worth nearly US$ 8.5 billion to assist 50 million people affected by 14 of the world’s worst humanitarian crises.
General Assembly Resolution 46/182

Creation of Emergency Relief Coordinator as a focal point and voice for humanitarian emergencies

Establishment of:
• Department for Humanitarian Affairs (which became OCHA in 1998)
• Inter-Agency Standing Committee
• Consolidated Appeals Process
• Central Emergency Revolving Fund
What We Do

- Coordination
- Policy
- Advocacy
- Information Management
- Humanitarian Financing

Credit: UNICEF/Shehzad Noorani
Coordination

OCHA plays a key role in:

- Assessing situations and needs
- Agreeing common priorities
- Developing common strategies to address issues such as negotiating access, mobilizing funding and other resources
- Clarifying consistent public messaging
- Monitoring progress
OCHA collects, analyses and shares information about a crisis among the various organizations involved in the humanitarian response to ensure the coordination system runs efficiently.
Why we need...

Standardized geographic names

- Geography is the common language, the integrator to make sense of a crisis
- Standard names are needed to coordinate the international with the host country

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What we need...

In terms of Geographic data:

• We need standardized geographical names to exist
• We need such a list to be authoritative
• We need such information to be available before the onset of a crisis
• We need information to be discoverable
• We need the data to be free to all parties involved in humanitarian response
What if…

Standardized geographic names are not available:

• Efforts to standardize place names do not gain traction
• Different organizations/clusters adopt different spellings, etc.
• Time and resources are then wasted cleaning non-matching data
• OCHA struggles to piece together the “bigger picture”
What we do: COD/FOD

Geographic data:
- Administrative boundaries
- Populated places
- Transportation infrastructure
- Water bodies, rivers, etc.
- Relief, terrain

Tabular data:
- Baseline demographic data
- Humanitarian data (affected people, displaced people, etc)

Disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu & Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu & Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.
Cod.humanitarianresponse.info

Humanitarian Response
Common And Fundamental Operational Datasets Registry

Most Recent Changes To Common Operational Datasets

Humanitarian Caseload
Humanitarian situation in Colombia. Information about Internally Displaced People, affected people by natural disasters and internal conflict victims.
Country/Region: Colombia
Post date: 1 day 24 min ago

Lakes, rivers, and islands
Lakes, rivers, and islands of Tajikistan. Datasource: GSDF. Scale approx 1 million.
Country/Region: Tajikistan

Most Recent Changes To Fundamental Operational Datasets

Lebanon Hospitals
Lebanon Hospitals, this data sets from 2006 and it needs updates.
Country/Region: Lebanon
Post date: 1 week 6 days ago

Lebanon schools and universities
Lebanon schools and universities, this data sets from 2006 and it needs updates.
Where We Work

• Present in over 50 countries
• 1,900 staff
Where We Work

- 139 Information Management Officers (IMOs)
- In 27 locations excluding HQs

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Coordination Saves Lives
La coordination sauve des vies
La coordinación salva vidas
Координация спасает жизни
بالتنسيق ينقذ الأرواح
致力协调，挽救生命

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