

UN Proposal

**Supported by the Government of Japan
and the Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC)**

International Recovery Platform

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADRC	Asian Disaster Reduction Center
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention & Recovery
CRD	Centre for Reviews and Dissemination
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDB	Inter- American Development Bank
IFI's	International Financial Institutions
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
ILO	International Labour Organization
IRP	International Recovery Platform
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
NGO's	Non Governmental Organizations
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Co-ordination
UNDMT	United Nations Disaster Management Team
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNCT	United Nations Country Teams
UNEP	United Nations Environmental Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

UN Proposal

INTERNATIONAL RECOVERY PLATFORM

A. Introduction

While UN system capacities for disaster response and humanitarian assistance are widely recognized as well developed, there is currently a vacuum in terms of capacities and accepted system wide mechanisms for post-disaster recovery, particularly those with a risk reduction focus.

Experience increasingly affirms that the post-disaster recovery phase provide a critical opportunity to shift the focus from saving lives to restoring livelihoods, and a time to introduce measures to reduce future disaster risk. Recovery can help close the gap between relief and development and transform disasters into opportunities for sustainable development. This occurs when efforts are made to support local and national recovery processes at an early stage, when risk reduction considerations are factored into all recovery activities, and when the synergies between development, humanitarian and other actors involved in the response phases are properly channelled. A successful recovery effort, then, is predicated on having advance agreements and mechanisms in place so the recovery process is effectively conceived and managed, and is initiated in a timely manner. This includes such measures as appropriate assessment methodologies, pre-established resource mobilization mechanisms, surge capacity to support UN Country Teams and standing co-ordination mechanisms.

Shared concerns related to the UN approach and processes for post-disaster recovery have resulted in the formulation of a joint initiative by the UN System and partners¹, with the encouragement and support of Japan and other donors, and key programme countries². The initiative contained in this paper is designed to support a more coordinated UN system approach and methodologies so that the recovery process helps transform disasters into opportunities for sustainable development. The initiative was presented during the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (18-22 January 2005) in Kobe during a session dedicated to post disaster recovery. It is expected that the initiative will attract the support of a wider range of UN Agencies, donors, disaster prone countries, IFIs and regional institutions

B. The current context for recovery: gaps and challenges

Common, conventional approaches to recovery can be characterized as follows:

- Response to disaster is still dominated by saving lives and the provision of emergency relief assistance. While vital to mitigate loss of life and suffering,

¹ UNDP, OCHA, ISDR Secretariat, specialised agencies HABITAT, ILO, UNEP, WHO and others; ADRC and regional organisations

² India, Iran, South Africa and Turkey

emergency relief does not address the underlying causes and risks that provoked the crisis in the first place, nor does it stimulate rapid recovery.

- Disaster recovery is often not an integral component of response planning systems, either as part of preparedness or part of the disaster relief effort. The needs for recovery personnel, assessments, and to develop recovery planning frameworks are commonly not identified until well into the relief operations.
- The long time spans required for the necessary impact studies, the design of programmes and projects and the negotiation of multilateral loans for reconstruction generates a gap between the ending of humanitarian assistance and the initiation of reconstruction programming in which affected people are usually left without support for recovery
- Post-disaster recovery is often conceptualised and designed to return a country to the conditions of normal development it enjoyed before a disaster occurred, which too often means rebuilding pre-existing conditions of disaster risk, thus preparing the ground for future disaster. It is also often limited to the physical aspects and fails to facilitate the social and economic recovery of the affected population.
- During the “gap” people and communities begin to recover spontaneously, rebuilding, resettling and, too often, reproducing and entrenching conditions of disaster risk and vulnerability. The opportunity to reduce vulnerabilities and risks and reorient development is usually lost as the necessary technical assistance to orient this process is not available at the right time and with the necessary strength.
- International assistance for emergency relief is at its peak in the immediate aftermath of the disaster. After this phase funding levels drop dramatically meaning that often insufficient resources are available to support the recovery of the affected population.
- Support to recovery by UN agencies, bilaterals, IFIs, NGO’s and others is often through isolated and uncoordinated interventions, leading to a duplication of efforts in some areas, a waste of resources in others and again a failure to factor in risk reduction considerations and put in place the conditions for sustainable recovery. There is no system wide approach to recovery understood and accepted by all parties.

(See Annexes 2 and 3)

C. UN’s proposed approach to Systematic and Sustainable Recovery

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

This proposal for the establishment of an International Recovery Platform (IRP) attempts to address the above gaps and challenges. The intent is to set-up the IRP

to function as an international repository of knowledge and clearing-house mechanism for recovery that currently does not exist within the UN system. The IRP will promote a shared vision and common approach and strategies for its members.

IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES

- To provide a coordination framework and network for post-disaster recovery, in support of the Resident Coordinator system and disaster affected countries, involving the UN system, programme countries, donors, IFIs and others
- To facilitate the dissemination of lessons learned and the development of common tools and mechanisms relevant for recovery needs assessment, strategy development and programming.
- To provide advice and support on the formulation of post-disaster recovery planning and programming, including how to incorporate risk reduction into recovery, and factor recovery into response preparedness measures.
- To strengthen national capacities for post-disaster recovery ensuring links with longer term development programming
- To facilitate South-South co-operation between disaster prone countries and to utilize the accumulated know-how of these countries in post-disaster recovery.

PRIORITY ACTIVITIES

At the initial stage, the IRP will focus on the following three inter-related service lines:

1) Advocacy & Knowledge Management

This service line will focus on identifying, capturing and disseminating lessons and good practices, sharing accumulated knowledge from global experiences, developing common tools and mechanisms and promoting post-disaster recovery as a practice area.

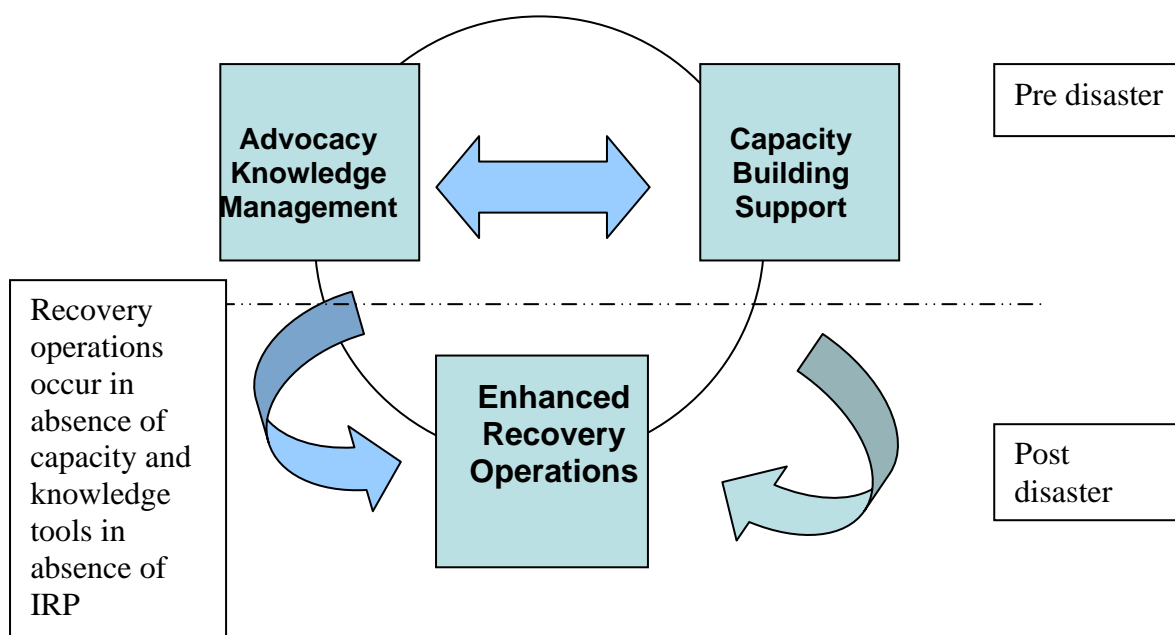
2) Capacity Building

This service line will focus on activities to build the capacities for post-disaster recovery with an emphasis on human resource development within UN Country Teams, as well as national and international counterparts.

3) Enhanced Recovery Operations

This service line will support post-disaster recovery operations through the provision of common tools and mechanisms for operational activities, including a surge capacity facility based on South-South cooperation amongst disaster prone countries that have world-class capacities in this area

The diagram below illustrates the linkage between the three categories:



EXPECTED OUTPUTS

1- Advocacy and Knowledge Management

1.1 Recovery needs assessment and planning tools

- Development of methodologies for recovery needs assessment by adapting existing needs assessments tools,
- Development of methodologies and guidelines for developing strategic frameworks for recovery and vulnerability reduction

1.2 The systematization of recovery experiences

- Compilation of best practices in post- disaster recovery,
- Compilation of "Lessons learned" of post-disaster recovery experiences.
- Systematic technical documentation of different aspects of recovery and reconstruction programmes

1.3 Information Management tools

- Creation of a Web site and internet resource library for recovery approaches, methodologies, case studies, best practices and current work

1.4- Programming tools

- Programming and procedure manuals for all phases of post-disaster recovery
- International advocacy initiatives on post-disaster recovery

2. Capacity Building

2.1 Key human resources trained in post-disaster recovery concepts and skills.

2.2 Global network of experts and global databases for recovery experts established.

2.3 Training curricula, manuals and modules produced.

3. Enhanced Recovery Operations

3.1 UN Country teams and national and local authorities able to develop recovery plans that incorporate risk reduction and response preparedness elements, through a common UN system approach that facilitates participation by other partners such as IFIs and NGOs.

3.2 Technical surge capacity support services available to UN Country teams and national and local authorities, to provide technical assistance to post-disaster recovery operations.

3.3 Advisory services to UN Country teams and national and local authorities to develop resource mobilisation strategies, consistent with requirements of IFIs including regional banks.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

At the inception phase of the IRP, these activities and outputs will be specifically targeted, to a limited group of developing countries with high disaster risks and that could expect a major disaster in the next few years. The results and lessons learned from this phase can be extended to a larger number of countries in the following phases.

The IRP will initially be supported by the existing coordination mechanisms between UNDP, OCHA and ISDR. The IRP will disseminate its knowledge management products and provide capacity building services at the country level through the existing regional structure (UNDP/OCHA/ISDR co-located Regional Advisor System) and UN Resident Co-ordinator/ Humanitarian Co-ordinator system.

(See Annex 4)

The IRP will also function as a mechanism for co-ordination to effectively and strategically link different agencies in the UN system, i.e. ILO, UN-Habitat, WHO, UNEP. Additionally, the IRP will establish close ties with sponsoring governments, IFIs NGOs, IFRC, ProVention Consortium and regional Institutions focusing on disaster risk, such as ADRC.

ANNEX 1

Guiding Principles for Systematic and Sustainable Recovery

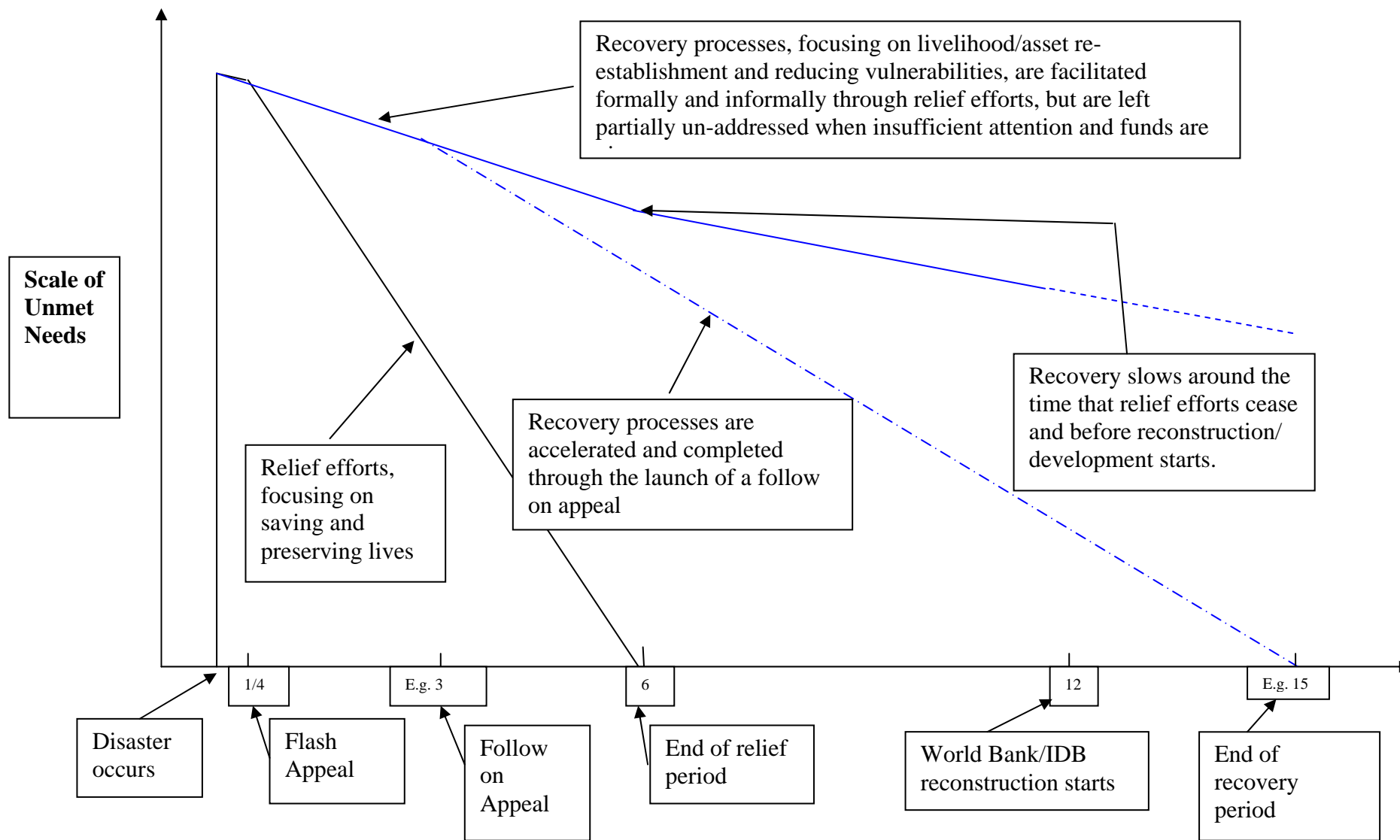
The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) defines recovery as the “decisions and actions taken after a disaster with a view to restoring or improving the pre-disaster living conditions of the stricken community, while encouraging and facilitating necessary adjustments to reduce disaster risk.” The following outlines some initial guidelines developed by UNDP based on its experience in post-disaster recovery.

Recovery needs to be promoted as an integral part of ongoing development processes at all levels. The development of a recovery framework as early as possible following a disaster has proved to be a good practice in major recovery operations. The context in which recovery takes place will be necessarily shaped by the prevailing social and economic conditions and the vulnerability levels of the affected states and communities before, during and after the disaster. Recovery needs to focus on how to best restore the capacity of the government and communities to rebuild and recover from disasters and prevent future relapses. The opportunity should be seized to reduce the development deficits of the affected areas and not to simply replace the damaged infrastructure. As a tool for improving the institutional and legislative systems, recovery can contribute to new or modified policies for disaster risk, and to help factor disaster risk management and reduction measures and capacities into institutions and mechanisms at different levels.

The critical sectors typically addressed in a recovery framework include damaged infrastructure, employment, livelihoods, lifeline facilities, environmental and water resources management, housing and resettlement of families. An important principle for the development of recovery frameworks is the power of local knowledge and how to engage that in the recovery planning process. Disaster risk reduction and the promotion of development that is participatory and equitable are at the heart of the sustainability sought in any recovery programme, and will help ensure that the recovery is demand driven and addresses the needs of the vulnerable populations. Particular attention should be paid to the vital role that women play as community leaders and members. Also, considering the recurrent nature of many natural hazards, capacity building should always guide and be a component of recovery actions, even in ad-hoc interventions.

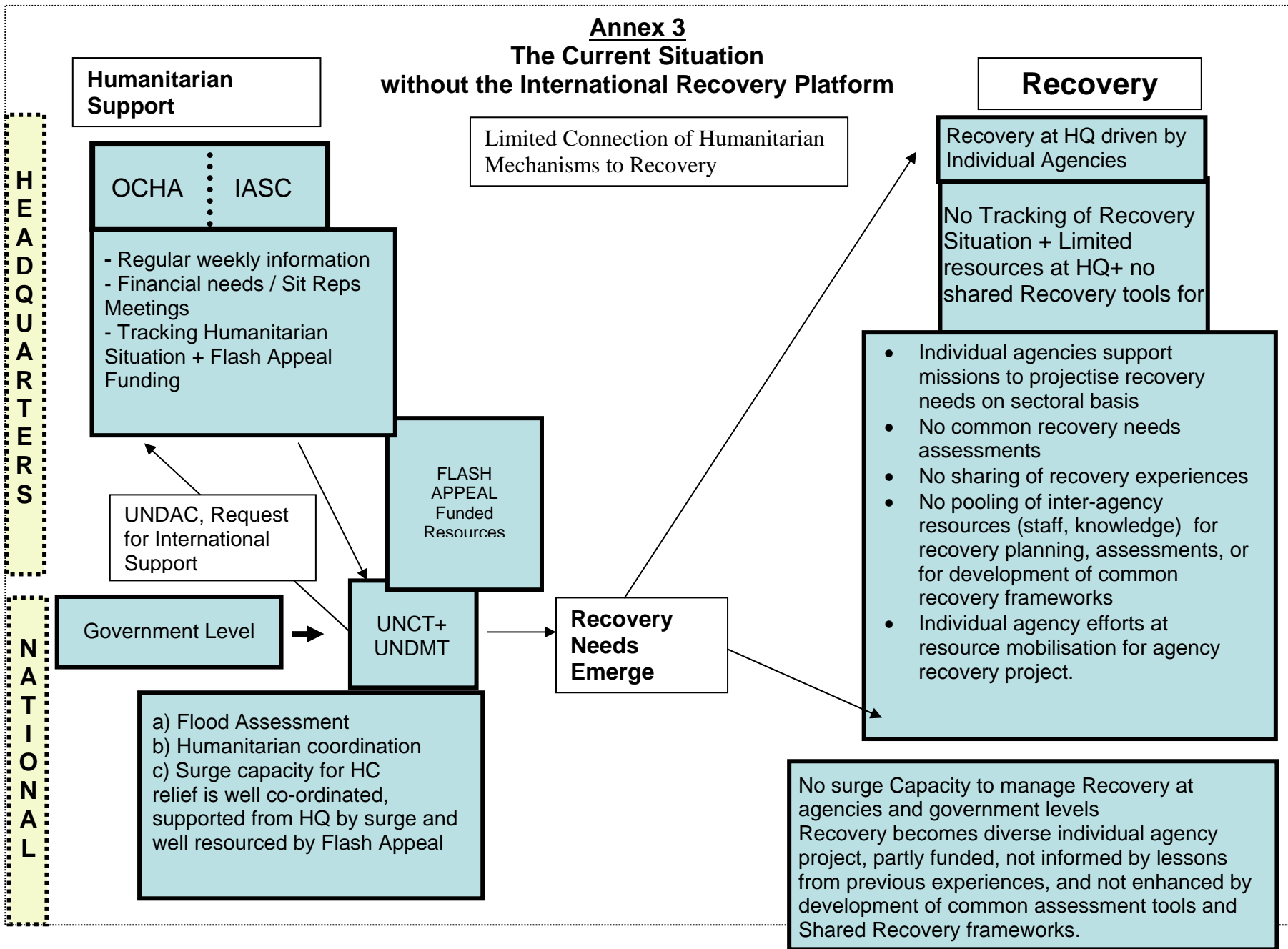
In addition to strong participation from the community, key to any recovery effort is to have the process backed by an approved government policy, an enabling national system, the appropriate tools, and the advocacy among all the actors, including civil society.

ANNEX 2: Current Gaps in the Relief to Reconstruction Phases



Annex 3

**The Current Situation
without the International Recovery Platform**



Annex 4: Utilisation and Linkage with OCHA and Existing Tools

The importance of utilisation of and building upon major donor investments on existing tools is recognised and indeed has been stressed by donors. However it is perhaps useful to illustrate the some more detailed thinking about this has been undertaken and this is set out below. Clearly these more specific suggestions would only be considered if the IRP is endorsed and these would then be seen as propositions to be explored and developed in a work plan.

Outputs (as per IRP paper)	OCHA tools for emergency	Potential contributions of OCHA	Potential contributions of UNDP	Potential contribution of ISDR
Advocacy and knowledge management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ReliefWeb - H.I.C. - F.T.S. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transitional info on Relief Web - Embracing and adapting H.I.C. - Adapting F.T.S. for transitional phase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documentation of the lessons learned from UNDP disaster reduction and recovery activities - Partnerships between UNDP with other stakeholders in disaster reduction and recovery 	ISDR Publications for recovery
Capacity building support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contingency planning training - Central register 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expertise from programme countries - Introduce transition session in CP training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RDRR advisors - BCPR capacity - TRAC 3 funding for mobilising expertise 	Regional Outreach offices
Enhanced recovery operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNDAC teams - Flash appeal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Better transition - Follow on appeal -Lessons learnt -Response preparedness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TRAC 3 funding for surge capacity of UNDP 	National Platforms

This is a work in progress and linkages to other mechanism such as UN agencies, IFIs, regional organizations will be developed in close consultation with partners

ANNEX 5: Proposed IRP Structure and Service Lines

IRP- Main purpose and structure	Knowledge Management	Capacity Building	Enhanced Recovery Operations
<p align="center">Country Level</p> <p>(UNCT with National authorities , International Experts, Specialized Institutions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compilation of the past national recovery experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inventory of existing training at national level -Inventory of in-country national expertise - Identify resources that can be shared (Universities, technical institutions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Establishing a growing network of collaboration arrangements with local authorities and civil society -Application of planning, programming and assessment tools to national context
<p align="center">Regional Level</p> <p>(Regional Advisory services of UNDP/OCHA/ISDR and regional institutions)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adaptation of existing assessment methodologies for recovery - Systematization of recovery experiences at regional level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Inventory of existing training at regional level -Identification of potential recovery network members from some of disaster prone countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Technical advisory services on the application of tools -Facilitate the transfer of experts from disaster prone countries
<p align="center">International Level (HQ)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (Build on existing resources in members of the platform) - Slim secretariat function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate the development of programming , planning and assessment tools, methodologies, - Develop and maintenance of Web site and internet library for recovery approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Global inventory of international recovery expertise -Developing specific training materials on the basis of case studies - Maintenance of a global data base of recovery experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Coordinate the transfer of international experts / -Link up with IASC -Follow on UNDAC/ IASC flash appeals -Organize international discussion brainstorming workshops on recovery issues