

# **Cross-Border Facilitation Measures for Disaster Relief**

## ***Recommendation No. 44***



**United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation  
and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)**



**UNITED NATIONS**



**United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business

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Cross-Border Facilitation Measures  
for Disaster Relief**



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## Foreword

The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) estimated that direct economic losses experienced by disaster-hit countries in the period of 1998-2017 amounted to \$2.9 trillion, of which 77% (\$2.2 trillion) were caused by climate-related disasters - a 151% increase from the previous two decades. The poor and vulnerable populations, especially those heavily dependent on agriculture, are disproportionately affected, left with no assets and resources to cope with the devastating aftermath of human and economic losses. Agriculture, a crucial sector in the poorest regions, is most heavily affected by climate-related disasters, jeopardizing the livelihoods and food security of millions.

As natural disasters are on the rise, 396 instances were reported in 2019, above the annual average of the last decade, so are the resulting deaths, displacements, and economic losses. By June 2020, 9.8 million people had been displaced due to disasters, many more are to follow from the flooding and typhoon seasons in Asia and the Pacific, exacerbated by climate change. These pressures will only continue to build and erode the economic and social progress realized in the past years (GHO OCHA, 2021).

As part of the UNECE's efforts to promote and foster economic prosperity and sustainable development, UN/CEFACT, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) and significant contributions from the members of the IMPACCT Working Group such as the World Customs Organization (WCO), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), developed this Recommendation to offer guidance on capacity building to prevent and mitigate the effects of disasters. It presents a framework, relevant policies and practices that will enable governments to ensure that disaster relief rapidly reaches disaster-affected people and communities, saving lives and minimizing economic losses.

It complements the Sendai Framework endorsed by the UN General Assembly following the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which recognizes the primary role of states to reduce disaster risk, but also highlights the need to share the responsibility with other stakeholders.

With the help of various humanitarian organizations and private entities, the total amount of humanitarian assistance allocated in 2020 is estimated to be \$14 billion (UNOCHA). While it is reassuring, the large number of actors involved in disaster-related humanitarian aid and little coordination means that often aid is held up due to bureaucracy and inefficient management, especially the lack of clarity on importation requirements and procedures for needed relief items, as governments deal with the aftershock of a sudden onset of a disaster.

Building on UN/CEFACT's experience with facilitating cross-border passage of goods, this recommendation also sets out technical guidance for border regulatory agencies to efficiently receive the sudden influx of humanitarian aid. The measures aiming at improving disaster preparedness and response will also increase the accountability of all stakeholders involved in managing disaster relief at border entry points.

The measures presented in this Recommendation help advance the achievement of Sustainable Development targets, particularly Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11, on making cities and human settlements safe and resilient to disasters but most importantly, contribute to saving priceless human lives. I therefore invite all concerned actors to make effective use of this Recommendation.



Olga Algayerova

United Nations Under-Secretary-General

Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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### **The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT)**

#### **Simple, Transparent and Effective Processes for Global Commerce**

UN/CEFACT's mission is to improve the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transitional economies, to exchange products and relevant services effectively. Its principal focus is on facilitating national and international transactions, through the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows, and so contribute to the growth of global commerce.

Participation in UN/CEFACT is open to experts from United Nations Member States, Intergovernmental Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations recognised by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Through this participation of government and business representatives from around the world, UN/CEFACT has developed a range of trade facilitation and e-business standards, recommendations and tools that are approved within a broad intergovernmental process and implemented globally.

UN/CEFACT is committed to ensuring that the gender dimension is reflected in norms, roles, procedures, and access to resources. Government and trade are encouraged to promote equal opportunities for women and men within the scope of Trade Facilitation activities. UN/CEFACT specifically encourages the collection, analysis, and monitoring of gender disaggregated data in order to better understand and support women's engagement in international trade and transport facilitation.

This Recommendation encourages governments, business communities, development partners, international organizations, and other policymakers to follow UN/CEFACT's commitment to ensure inclusiveness for women.

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