

# Land and Natural Disasters

## Guidance for Practitioners



## **Land and Natural Disasters: Guidance for Practitioners**

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## Acknowledgments

In 2005, following the Humanitarian Response Review, the Humanitarian Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) endorsed a Humanitarian Cluster Approach System to improve responses to complex emergencies, post conflict situations and natural disasters (<http://www.humanitarianreform.org/humanitarianreform>). The Humanitarian Clusters have been asked to develop framework responses to common issues after emergency situations. These common issues include land - an area identified by the Humanitarian Response Review as a major gap in humanitarian responses.

In 2007 UN-HABITAT was requested by the Global Cluster Working Group on Early Recovery (CWGER) to prepare guidelines for addressing land issues after natural disasters. The proposal was funded through the IASC Humanitarian Global Cluster/Global Capacity Building Appeal. Additional financial support was provided through the Global Land Tool Network, facilitated by UN-HABITAT (<http://www.gltn.net>). UN-HABITAT and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) have collaborated to prepare these Guidelines.

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Country/Region	Type of disaster	Year	Authors
Pakistan/South Asia	Earthquake	2005	Robert Home, Nilofer Qazi
Indonesia/Asia-Pacific	Tsunami	2004	Daniel Fitzpatrick, Jaap Zevenbergen
Grenada/Central America	Hurricane Ivan	2004	Grenville Barnes, Jerry Riverstone
Honduras/Central America	Hurricane Mitch	1998	Grenville Barnes, Jerry Riverstone
Mozambique/Southern Africa	Recurrent floods	2000-2005	Simon Norfolk, Paul de Wit
Gujarat, India/South Asia	Earthquake	2001	Tony Burns
USA/North America	Hurricane Katrina	2005	David Stanfield

Daniel Fitzpatrick (Australian National University) prepared the main draft with the information from the cases and other global experiences laying strong foundations for this work. An early draft was discussed and reviewed with partners from different UN agencies and land professionals during an expert group meeting organized with the support of Richard Trenchard (FAO) in Geneva in 2008. The Guidelines also underwent a series of substantial revisions in 2008 and 2009 by Daniel Fitzpatrick, Rhodri Williams and the UN-HABITAT team. Sectoral experts provided additional inputs: Jon Unruh, who reviewed an early draft; Roberto Ottolenghi who provided inputs on Planning; Jean-Christophe Adrian and Maggie Stephenson who provided inputs to the Shelter section; Jaap Zevenbergen who revised the land administration section; and Adriana Herrera (FAO) who provided inputs on agriculture and rural livelihoods.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction

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***Good land use is critical for disaster prevention and early recovery.***

The main purpose of the Guidelines is to provide a holistic approach to addressing land issues from the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster through early recovery and reconstruction phases. It is targeted at humanitarians and land professionals, as well as Government officials. The Guidelines take an inter-disciplinary approach to land, one that also brings together emergency relief and early recovery perspectives.

This Section provides an introduction to why land issues are important in the context of natural disasters. It also outlines the structure of the Guidelines, who should use the Guidelines, and how and when the Guidelines should be used. It concludes with a table summarizing the issues covered and where further information can be found in the Guidelines. It should be emphasized that the Guidelines have been developed as a modular product, including information regarding important processes, critical land issues, references to relevant tools, and guidance on who should do what when. Users are encouraged to read through this Section to learn where they can find the information they seek.

### 1.1 Why land issues are important

A disaster is the consequence of a natural hazard (e.g. volcanic eruption, earthquake, landslide, tsunami) which moves from potential into an active phase, and has an impact on human vulnerabilities. Human vulnerability, exacerbated by the lack of prevention and preparedness or lack of appropriate emergency management response systems, leads to human, structural, and financial losses. The resulting loss depends on the capacity of the affected population to support or resist the hazard, that is, their resilience.

Good land use and planning are essential for the prevention of disasters. In addition, land is fundamental to the recovery from disasters. It provides a site for shelter, a resource for livelihoods and a

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