

[ENGLISH TEXT — TEXTE ANGLAIS]

FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CIVIL DEFENCE ASSISTANCE

PREAMBLE

The States Parties

Deeply concerned over the increase both in the number and the seriousness of disasters of all kinds throughout the world, whether from natural causes or man-made,

Recognising that it is, in the first instance, up to States to take the necessary measures in the face of potential disasters or other emergency situations which may arise,

Considering that national Civil Protection, Civil Defence, Civil Safety or Emergency Management structures, have a major part to play in the face of disasters, as much with regard to prevention and preparation as with regard to intervention, and that they are increasingly called upon to function as co-ordinating bodies for all entities brought in to respond to emergency situations, and that they are the appropriate body to guide the many and diverse operations for safeguarding life, property and the environment before, during and after disasters,

Considering that the risk of disasters and the consequences thereof are not containable by national frontiers,

Considering, however, that differences between States regarding the concept of Civil Defence may impede international co-operation in this field,

Considering the need for the development of international co-operation in the field of Civil Defence in terms of prevention, forecasting, preparedness, intervention and postcrisis management, both in the interests of disaster victims and in order to safeguard property and the environment,

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1: DEFINITIONS

a) "States Parties" refers to all States having ratified, accepted, approved or acceded to the present Convention.

b) "Civil Defence Service" means a structure or any other state entity established with the aim of preventing disasters and mitigating the effects of such disasters on persons, on property and the environment.

c) "Disaster" is an exceptional situation in which life, property or the environment may be at risk.

d) "Assistance" means any action undertaken by the Civil Defence Service of a State for the benefit of another State, with the objective of preventing, or mitigating the consequences of disasters. This includes all duties assigned to the Civil Defence Service of the Parties and accepted by the Beneficiary Parties, potentially with the assistance of any other partner.

e) “Beneficiary State” is a State Party whose territory is threatened or affected by a disaster and which requests or accepts external assistance.

f) “Supporting State” is a State Party providing assistance to a Beneficiary State at its request or with its acceptance.

g) “Civil Defence Unit” means relief personnel, equipment and goods belonging to the Civil Defence Service of the Supporting State. It is identifiable by the national or international emblem (blue equilateral triangle on an orange background) of Civil Defence.

Article 2: OBJECTIVES

Within the context of the present Convention the States Parties commit themselves to:

a) promoting co-operation between Civil Defence Services, as defined under Article 4, particularly with regard to training of personnel and exchange of information and expertise;

b) reducing obstacles to assistance and particularly delays in intervention.

Article 3: PRINCIPLES

The States Parties undertake to respect the following principles in terms of providing assistance when a State is threatened or affected by a disaster:

a) Only assistance requested by the Beneficiary State or proposed by the Supporting State and accepted by the Beneficiary State may take place.

b) All offers of assistance shall respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Beneficiary State as well as the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of this State and should be carried out with due respect for its ways and customs.

Such assistance should not be viewed as interference in the internal affairs of the Beneficiary State.

c) Assistance shall be provided without discrimination, particularly with regard to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or any other opinion, to national or social origin, to wealth, birth, or any other criterion.

d) Assistance shall be undertaken in a spirit of humanity, solidarity and impartiality.

e) Offers of, or requests for, assistance shall be examined and responded to by recipient States within the shortest possible time.

Article 4: FIELD OF APPLICATION

States Parties undertake to explore all possibilities for co-operation in the areas of prevention, forecasting, preparation, intervention and post-crisis management.

a) General conditions

In case of disaster or threat of disaster:

1) The Beneficiary State shall provide all necessary information available relating to the situation, so as to ensure smooth implementation of the assistance, and shall provide timely notice of actions required.

2) The Supporting State shall send only those Civil Defence Units requested or accepted by the Beneficiary State.

3) The Beneficiary State shall simplify and reduce to a minimum the administrative and customs' formalities relating to the entry and stay of the Civil Defence Units which shall benefit from a temporary entry scheme.

4) The Beneficiary State and the Supporting State shall define together the tasks entrusted to the Civil Defence Units of the Supporting State.

The Beneficiary State shall direct and assume responsibility for operations after prior consultation with the Head of the Civil Defence Unit of the Supporting State.

5) The Beneficiary State shall, within the framework of national law, grant all privileges, immunities, and facilities necessary for carrying out the assistance and shall provide protection for personnel and for property belonging to the Civil Defence Unit of the Supporting State.

6) The mission of the Civil Defence Unit of the Supporting State shall come to an end when the crisis for which it was sent is deemed to have ended, or when the Beneficiary State so requests, or the Supporting State so decides.

7) States Parties undertake to facilitate the transit by air, land, sea or river of Civil Defence Units.

b) Special conditions

It is incumbent upon the States Parties to this convention to outline, where necessary in detail, by means of agreements, technical modalities and other implementation procedures with a view to facilitating such international co-operation.

Article 5: RELATION WITH OTHER OBLIGATIONS

This Framework Convention does not affect other obligations held by the States Parties under International Law.

Article 6: RESERVATIONS

Reservations may be expressed at any time concerning any provision of the present Convention, provided that they do not affect the object and purpose of the treaty.

Article 7: SIGNATURE, RATIFICATION, ACCEPTANCE, APPROVAL AND ACCESSION BY STATES

a) The present Convention is open for signature by all States at the Headquarters of the International Civil Defence Organization in Geneva, from the 22nd of May 2000 and will remain open for a period of twelve months.

b) This Convention shall be ratified, accepted or approved. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary General of the International Civil Defence Organization.

c) This Convention shall be open for accession by all States from the date when it is opened for signature. Accession is by deposit, with the Secretary General of the International Civil Defence Organization, of an instrument of accession.

Article 8: ENTRY INTO FORCE

a) The Convention shall enter into force sixty days after the deposit of the second instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

b) For each State that ratifies, accepts or approves this Convention or accedes thereto after the deposit of a second instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, the convention shall enter into force sixty days after deposit of the relevant instrument.

c) This Convention shall be registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations Organisation.

Article 9: FOLLOW-UP OF THE CONVENTION

The States Parties agree to meet every two years to review the evolution of international co-operation in the field of Civil Defence.

Article 10: AMENDMENTS

Every State Party has the right to propose amendments to the present Convention during the biennial Conferences referred to in Article 9. The amendments shall be considered as adopted unless a State opposes it.

Article 11: DENUNCIATION

a) Each State Party may denounce the present Convention by notification to the Secretary General of the International Civil Defence Organization .

b) Denunciation shall take effect one hundred and twenty days after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary General of the International Civil Defence Organization .

Article 12: DEPOSITORY

The Secretary General of the International Civil Defence Organization shall notify all States and the Secretariat of the United Nations of:

- 1) the deposit of all instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.
- 2) all dates of entry into force of the present Convention in accordance with article 8.
- 3) all reservations which might be expressed in accordance with Article 6.
- 4) all notifications received in application of the provisions of article II and the date on which the denunciation shall take effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, duly authorised to this effect, have signed the present Convention

DONE AT GENEVA on the twenty-second day of May, in the year two thousand, in a single copy in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish, each text being equally valid, the original of which shall be deposited in the archives of the Secretariat of the International Civil Defence Organization which shall transmit certified copies to all signatory States and acceding States.