

**No. 790**

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**UNITED NATIONS  
(OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR)  
and  
ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**

**Agreement concerning the co-ordination of disaster relief.  
Signed at Geneva on 18 October 1977**

*Authentic text: English.*

*Filed and recorded by the Secretariat on 18 October 1977.*

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**ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES  
(BUREAU DU COORDONNATEUR  
DES NATIONS UNIES POUR LES SECOURS  
EN CAS DE CATASTROPHE)**

**et**

**ORGANISATION DES ÉTATS AMÉRICAINS**

**Accord concernant la coordination des secours en cas de  
catastrophe. Signé à Genève le 18 octobre 1977**

*Texte authentique : anglais.*

*Classé et inscrit au répertoire par le Secrétariat le 18 octobre 1977.*

AGREEMENT<sup>1</sup> BETWEEN THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES AND THE UNITED NATIONS DISASTER RELIEF CO-ORDINATOR CONCERNING THE CO-ORDINATION OF DISASTER RELIEF

WHEREAS the General Assembly of the United Nations, by Resolution 2816 (XXVI),<sup>2</sup> endorsed the proposal of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the establishment of an adequate permanent Office in the United Nations (hereafter referred to as “UNDRO”) to serve as the focal point in the United Nations system for disaster relief matters, which Office would be headed by a Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (hereafter referred to as the “Co-ordinator”), authorized to establish and maintain, on the Secretary-General’s behalf, the closest co-operation with all organizations concerned with a view to mobilizing, directing, and co-ordinating the relief activities of the various agencies of the United Nations system in response to a request for disaster assistance from a stricken state, and to co-ordinating United Nations assistance with that made available by other sources of aid; and

WHEREAS the Inter-American Emergency Aid Fund (hereafter referred to as “FONDEM”), created pursuant to resolution VIII of the Second Special Inter-American Conference of the Organization of American States (hereafter referred to as the “OAS”), is intended to supply, without considerations of a political nature, aid—exclusively social in character—in the form of food, medical equipment and medicines, or other types of material, technical and financial assistance, both in kind and in services, to any member state of the Organization that is threatened by, has suffered from, or finds itself in an emergency situation of any origin whatever, and is operated by the Inter-American Emergency Aid Committee (hereafter referred to as “FONDEM Committee”) which is authorized to conclude agreements with international organizations in order to achieve the objectives of FONDEM; and

WHEREAS the Secretary-General of the OAS (hereafter referred to as the “Secretary General”), in accordance with articles 5, 7 and 8 of the statutes of FONDEM, is responsible for carrying out the decisions of the FONDEM Committee, for receiving contributions, and for establishing within the General Secretariat the machinery and procedures for the proper functioning of FONDEM, and was authorized by a decision taken by the FONDEM Committee on September 27, 1977, to conclude an agreement to establish co-operative relations with the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator in order to make the most effective use of disaster relief for the benefit of stricken OAS member states;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Secretary General of the OAS and the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordinator have agreed to the following:

1. The Secretary General and the Co-ordinator recognize their respective responsibilities for co-ordinating disaster assistance to a stricken state and

<sup>1</sup> Came into force on 18 October 1977 by signature, in accordance with paragraph 14.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-sixth Session, Supplement No. 29* (A/8429), p. 85.

mobilizing funds for such assistance, and declare their intention to co-operate for the accomplishment of these purposes.

2. Although UNDR0 works in two main fields of activity—pre-disaster planning and disaster relief co-ordination—the present Agreement is concerned only with co-operation in disaster relief co-ordination, without prejudice to future agreement regarding pre-disaster planning.

3. The FONDEM Committee, the Secretary General and the Co-ordinator will co-operate with respect to disaster relief assistance rendered to a stricken OAS member state in connection with natural disasters and other disaster situations, before relief operations are phased out and the stricken state moves into the stage of rehabilitation and reconstruction.

4. When a request for disaster relief assistance is received by either of the Parties from a disaster-stricken member state of the OAS, each will promptly inform the other of the request and the two will then hold consultations on the action to be taken.

5. The Secretary General and the Co-ordinator will provide each other with information on contributions made to either of them from any source and on contributions known to have been made to any agency or to the stricken OAS member state that would satisfy or modify the request made by that state.

6. The Secretary General will instruct the Director of the Office of the OAS General Secretariat in a member state to establish contact with the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (who is the representative of the Co-ordinator), so as to ensure that the FONDEM will be associated with the assessment of disaster relief assistance requirements.

7. Whenever warranted and practicable, the Co-ordinator, the FONDEM Committee, or the Secretary General will send one or more representatives to make an on-the-spot assessment of the situation and to advise the government of the disaster-stricken OAS member state. The need for such missions will be determined by the Parties to this Agreement on a case-by-case basis. If needed expertise cannot be readily supplied by the staff of UNDR0 or of the OAS General Secretariat, the Co-ordinator, the FONDEM Committee and the Secretary General will consult with a view to arranging for providing the disaster-stricken OAS member state with the necessary advice and assistance.

8. Any action taken by the Secretary General will be subject to the decisions of the FONDEM Committee and conditioned by the resources available to it.

9. The FONDEM Committee, the Secretary General, and the Co-ordinator recognize that the rapid exchange of information on matters of mutual interest is of paramount importance. Therefore, the Secretary General and the Co-ordinator will keep each other fully informed on any action that is being or is to be taken. In particular, they will send each other copies of relevant cables and other communications, taking the necessary measures to ensure their rapid delivery.

10. The disaster relief assistance covered by this Agreement may take the form of services of staff members of, or experts under contract to, the OAS General Secretariat, including their travel and subsistence. It may also take the form of supply of goods and equipment, including shipping and insurance, or

such other forms of assistance as circumstances may require. The direct costs incurred by FONDEM in providing this disaster relief assistance and the clearly identifiable associated administrative costs will be met directly by the OAS General Secretariat. When FONDEM acts at the request of the Co-ordinator to provide at UNDRO's expense personnel, or to procure and provide goods and equipment, which FONDEM would not have provided from its own resources or those of the OAS General Secretariat, the direct costs and the clearly identifiable associated administrative costs will be paid from UNDRO funds made available to FONDEM.

11. No "overhead" charges will be levied on any funds transferred by one Party to this Agreement to the other for disaster relief assistance. Interest earned on funds in excess of US\$500,000.00 held by the Parties for periods exceeding three months, pending actual disbursement, will be used to augment the funds available for the particular disaster relief operation for which the funds are being held. Any interest earned on funds held for less than three months and on amounts of less than US\$500,000.00 shall be used to augment the general funds of UNDRO or FONDEM as the case may be, and shall be made available for any disaster relief operation, in accordance with the financial regulations, rules, or practices of the Party concerned.

12. Within three months after the conclusion of each disaster relief operation, the Parties will exchange financial reports showing how the funds entrusted to them by the other Party were utilized. Any unexpended balance of funds provided by one Party to the other will be returned to the donating Party, in direct proportion to its contribution to the operation. In addition to these financial reports each Party will, whenever practicable, provide the other with a narrative report to be transmitted to the original donors, describing the action taken.

13. The Secretary General and the Co-ordinator, or their representatives, will meet from time to time to review and evaluate the effectiveness of the collaboration covered by this Agreement, and to determine such improvements as may prove desirable in the light of the experience gained.

14. This Agreement shall enter into force on the date it is signed by the Secretary General and the Co-ordinator. It may be amended by mutual consent of the Parties, or terminated by either of them by written notification, three months in advance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties sign this Agreement in duplicate in the city of Geneva, on the eighteenth day of October 1977.

[Signed]

ALEJANDRO ORFILA  
Secretary General  
of the Organization of American States

[Signed]

FARUK N. BERKOL  
United Nations Disaster  
Relief Co-ordinator