

# Part I:

## Dictionary

### A

**Abandon** To give up or forsake. To break off a relationship of dependency, as between parent and child.

Cf. unaccompanied minor

**Abate** To mitigate violence, to lower a risk, to weaken in force or intensity, to reduce, to attenuate.

Cf. attenuation

**ABCDE** Mnemonic acronym for Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Disability, Exposure. A primary extended but rapid survey in case of grave multiple injury to be performed in no more than 2–5 min.

Cf. ABC, AVPU

**Abduct** Anatomy: To move a limb laterally, away from the midline.

Law: To carry away illegally; to separate forcefully; to kidnap.

Cf. kidnap, deport

**Abnormal** A state or quality of being outside the established parameters or of deviating from the usually accepted norm. A malformation.

**Abolitionism** Doing away with, terminating totally. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it referred mainly to the social movement and objective of ending black peoples'

slavery. Currently, it mainly aims at abolishing the death penalty and terminating other inequalities and injustices in human rights.

**A-bomb** Sn: atom bomb, atomic bomb  
Cf. nuclear war, weapon of mass destruction

**Aborigine** The indigenous or original living people (and fauna and flora) of a particular geographical region, before the arrival of colonists.

In Australia and Canada, the designation of the original people of these countries. In Canada also called First Nations.

Cf. absorption, acculturation, ethnic group, racial discrimination

**Abort** Medicine: Premature delivery of a child. Miscarry.

Firefighting: To jettison a load of water or retardant from an aircraft – FAO.

Management: To terminate prematurely an unsuccessful project or action.

**Abortion, unsafe** The termination of an unintended pregnancy either by persons lacking the necessary skills or in an environment lacking the minimal medical standards, or both. The brunt of unsafe abortions occurs primarily in the developing world – WHO.

**Absolute (human) right** A right that exists at all times, stays asserted under all circumstances, cannot be restricted or derogated. Example: freedom from torture – after V. Condé. Cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, rights – inalienable

**Absorbed dose** The quantity of a substance (drug, pollutant) or energy (ionizing radiation) received during a given time by a person, group or environment.

Cf. ionizing radiation, nuclear energy, pollutant, retained dose, gray (Gy units)

**Absorption** Social: The process by which an individual is assimilated by a community, system or society, resulting in changes in the absorbed individual but not in the absorbing system. Example: cultural absorption. Cf. acculturation, assimilation

Biology: Transformation of a nutrient, drug or pollutant, into cellular material by a living organism.

Hydrology: Sucking in of fluid.

**Abuja Declaration** Solemn undertaking in 2001 of African leaders pledging to “set a target of at least 15% of their annual budgets for the improvement of the health sector” – WHO.

Cf. Paris Declaration, Accra Agenda

**Abuse** Health: The excessive, wrong or improper use of health-care services or products, such as drugs.

General: Misuse, treat badly by committing improper action, or by omitting necessary action.

**Academic Council on the United Nations System/ACUNS:** A highly professional association of educational and research institutions and individual scholars, teachers, academics, politologues and practitioners active in multilateral relations,

world politics, global governance, UN-related issues and international cooperation.

Sn: ACUNS

**Acaricide** Sn: miticide

**Acceleration** The rate of change in velocity in a given time. In seismology, the variation in the movement of a point on the earth or of a structure during an earthquake. It is expressed as a fraction of gravity and is measured by the accelerograph.

Cf. earthquake, seismograph

**Acceptable collateral damage:** In military operations, a degree of unintended damage that is subjectively considered the victim could accept or live with, as part of the unfortunate and unavoidable price of achieving the military objective.

Cf. collateral damage

**Acceptable risk** The eventual loss and agreed conditions or degree of human, material and economic damage that a country or community is willing to accept as tolerable under the prevailing economic, social, political, technical, structural and other conditions, rather than provide the necessary finances, efforts and resources to reduce such a risk.

Cf. disaster act, disaster preparedness, disaster probability, risk

**Access: health care/security** Health: Access to health care is a human right, and patients must be provided with the necessary facilities to reach or to obtain the needed health care. Access may be influenced by (a) the availability of health personnel, transport and infrastructures, (b) by patient-related factors and (c) at the structural level, by the organization of health systems.

Security: Persecution victims must have access to advice, comfort assistance and necessary protection.

**Accident/Incident** Accident, a sudden, unforeseen event that can cause varying degrees of harm and/or destruction, from mild damage to serious injury or death. It is more serious than incident, although these two terms are often misused interchangeably in emergency management. Accident requires greater attention and response, whence accident prevention, accident departments in hospitals, accident legislation, emergency services.

Cf. incident/accident, chemical accident, emergency

**Accident site** In disaster medicine, the place where the rescue team is in operation to extricate and relieve the victims – EU.

**Acclimatization** Adjustment of a living organism to a new climatic environment other than that to which it has been accustomed. By extension, it is also used for non-climatic adjustment.

**Accountability** Liability of persons, groups or governments to be called to account, to be answerable before the law for decisions and actions that they have undertaken and are responsible to maintain, as agreed. (The opposite would be impunity.)

Cf. Vienna Declaration, impunity

**Accra Agenda for Action** In the field of health financing, a call, in 2008, to donor countries to strengthen their commitments for national health planning and improvement in support of the Millennium Development Goals.

Cf. Paris Declaration, Abuja Declaration, Millennium Development Goals

**Acculturation** Process by which a human society assimilates or adopts part or all of the customs, beliefs and cultural values of another society. Also refers to the results of such assimilation.

Cf. absorption, assimilation

**Acetone peroxide, TAPT** A chemical explosive of artisanal manufacture often used in suicide bombing and terrorist attacks. Easily available ingredients are hydrogen peroxide, acetone and sulphuric or hydrochloric acid. Also known as TAPT or Mother of Satan.

Sn: TAPT

**Acid rain** Sulphuric acid ( $H_2SO_4$ ) in the atmosphere, formed by the combination of sulphur trioxide with water, resulting in a relatively stable mist of acid droplets. In excessive concentrations in the air, it increases the acidity of the soil and disturbs the pH causing agricultural and ecological damage.

Cf. air pollution, transboundary pollution

**Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome/AIDS** A highly infectious disease of pandemic proportions, caused by the HIV virus. Also referred to as HIV/AIDS. A person who has the virus is a carrier and can infect others. Spread is by sexual intercourse, by contaminated needles and syringes, transfusion of infected blood, by body fluids, by infected mother to her unborn child. Spread is unlikely through daily social contact, such as shaking hands.

Note: Non-infective immune deficiency can also be acquired through radiation.

Sn: AIDS, HIV/AIDS

Cf. HIV, immunodeficiency

**Action phase/of disaster** Within the varying stages of disaster management, the actual direct action emergency response phase. In all preparedness programmes and especially to face emergencies that may occur without warning, it is essential to have an established plan for action.

Cf. phases of disaster, action plan

**Action plan** A tactical plan developed by the competent directorate, the emergency team or the incident command system, in support of the organization's projected progress, or of successfully managing the emergency, or of the incident action strategy against a specific disaster.

Cf. disaster management

**Active volcano** A volcano that is known to have erupted in the past and which, although silent or non-eruptive at the present time, can be expected to erupt at an indeterminate time, as based on oral tradition, archives and scientific observations.

Cf. volcanic risk map

**Activity (nuclear)** The spontaneous emission of alpha, beta or sometimes gamma rays from the disintegration of the nuclei of atoms per second. The unit of radioactivity is the becquerel (Bq).

Cf. becquerel, nuclide, radioactivity, nuclear activity

**Acute/Chronic Health Evaluation – APACHE scale** Medicine: Acute physiology and chronic health evaluation: APACHE. A numerical score to predict patient outcomes, performance and prognosis, in seriously ill patients. Ethnology: A major indigenous tribe of North America.

**Acute radiation syndrome** Cf. radiation sickness

**Acute respiratory disease** Term that refers to several acute, mild to severe infections of the respiratory tract, caused by a variety of viruses and bacteria. It ranges from the common cold to influenza, bronchitis, even to fatal pneumonia and SARS. A major cause of illness and mortality in disaster situations.

Cf. infection, severe acute respiratory syndrome

**Adaptation** The process and the result of physical, biological and psychological changes of an organism or a population in order to adjust to given environmental conditions.

Cf. degree of adaptability, environment, coping, society, adjustment

**Adaptive capacity** The ability of living organisms to respond to changes of different nature and adjust to actual or expected variations, thus coping with situations and increasing their chances of survival and well-being.

Cf. coping

**Addict/Addiction** A person who has the unsocial behaviour of dependence on a drug or toxic substance which, when discontinued, can aggravate the situation with additional pathological withdrawal effects.

Addiction is the state of such dependence, substance dependence.

Cf. dependence, drug

**Adequacy** A health programme or action is adequate if it is proportionate to requirements – HFA.

**Adjustment** Adapting, reconciling, modifying differences both at the human, behavioural level, such as on arrival into a new society, and at the physical, external level, such as altering office space to accommodate new work.

Cf. adaptation

**Adobe** Mud brick that is only sun-dried but not burned or kilned. Extensively used in developing countries for low-cost housing, particularly vulnerable in earthquakes and floods.

**Advanced life support/Advanced trauma life support** In a critically ill patient, after ensuring basic life support, the further (= advanced) resuscitative measures taken by trained personnel, such as life-saving medication, electrocardiography and heart defibrillation, to restore spontaneous blood circulation and resuscitation and to avert death.

Sn: ALS; ATLS

Cf. basic life support, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, Glasgow trauma scale

**Advective thunderstorm** Thunderstorm arising from the instability produced by the advection of cold air in the upper levels, or of warm air at lower levels, or by the combination of both.

**Adverse medical/drug event** Medical: An injury that is caused by medical management rather than by underlying disease and that prolongs hospitalization, produces disability at discharge or both – Inst. Med. US.

Drug: An event that is noxious, unintended and occurs at doses used in man for prophylaxis, diagnosis, therapy or modification of functions – WHO.

**Advocacy** Pleading, arguing, favouring, supporting and persuading for a worthy cause, policy, ideal, people, etc.

**Affirmative action** A sociolegal concept introduced in the United States to take positive measures to redress certain existing disadvantages by providing corrective favourable obligations, e.g. ensuring positive consideration to a black employee in respect of a competing white employee.

**Afforestation** The policy and process of establishing a forest in a previously non-forested area.

Cf. reforestation, deforestation, forestation

**Aflatoxins** Carcinogenic fungal toxins that can contaminate large quantities of corn, peanuts and other crops, causing widespread health risks. The Codex Alimentarius has set concentration limitations.

**African trypanosomiasis** Cf. trypanosomiasis, sleeping sickness, American trypanosomiasis, neglected tropical disease

**Aftershock** One or more smaller earth tremors that follow the main seismic shock and originate at or near the larger earthquake's epicentre. Fore-shocks are the opposite, preceding the earthquake.

Cf. earthquake, epicentre, foreshock

**Aga Khan Foundation** International foundation that without discrimination promotes health, education, rural development, inter-religious relations and enhancement of relevant NGOs, especially in developing countries.

Cf. development, rural development

**Age groups** On the basis of health-relevant issues, life-span years are subdivided and named by categories that can vary according to country and legislation. Generally accepted groups are as follows:

Early childhood: from birth to 9 years

Child: up to age 18 years (UN). Also minor, juvenile

Adolescent: 10–19 years

Youth: 15–24 years

Adulthood: 20–59 years (including reproductive years 15–44)

Old age: 60 years and over

Cf. child

**Age profile** Graphic representation of the statistical composition of a population, during a given period, by the juxtaposition of histograms representing the age distribution by sex.

Also age pyramid.

**Agent BZ** A psychochemical of secret chemical structure developed as an incapacitating agent for chemical warfare.

Cf. chemical weapons

**Agent G** Represents a class of nerve gases used as chemical weapons. Highly toxic.

Cf. nerve gas, agent V, Geneva Protocol, chemical weapons

**Agent orange** A highly toxic herbicide (2,4,5,-T, trichlorophenoxyacetic acid) containing a high proportion of dioxin, used in military attacks over Vietnam, with great damage to vegetation and the population.

Cf. dioxin, Seveso, UN hazard classification

**Agent V** One of the nerve gases used as toxic chemical weapon.

Cf. nerve gas, agent G

**Agent VX** A highly toxic nerve gas, more lethal than sarin as a weapon.

Cf. sarin, nerve gas, chemical weapons

**Aggression** Illegal attack and criminal hostilities by a State against the independence and sovereignty of another.

According to the Nuremberg Court, "to initiate a war of aggression is not only an international crime, it is the supreme international crime". It is now considered a crime against peace.

**Aggression, Crime of** The UN General Assembly (Res.3314, xxix,1974) defined aggression as "the gravest and most dangerous form of unlawful use of force". The UN Charter not only prohibits the recourse to force

but also the aggressive menace of using force, as being incompatible with the principles of the United Nations.

Cf. aggressiveness, Kampala Conference, Briand-Kellogg Pact

**Aggressiveness** A hostile position, act or threat, usually unprovoked, to establish dominance, induce fear or to protect territory, the family group or offspring.

**Aid** Free material or financial assistance or other support given to a needy organization, community or country, without expecting any gain.

Sn: assistance, relief, help

Cf. donor, humanitarian medicine, Paris Declaration

**AIDS/Aids** Acronymic term given to acquired immunodeficiency syndrome. Usually written in capital letters, less often as Aids. Caused by the HIV virus. Commonly referred to as HIV/AIDS.

Sn: acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

Cf. immunodeficiency, HIV virus

**Air mass thunderstorm** Thunderstorm which arises within an unstable air mass and which is not caused by the passage of a front.

Cf. thunderstorm

**Air pollution** Presence of considerable quantities of gaseous, liquid or solid contaminants in the atmosphere and liable to be harmful to animal, vegetable and human life.

Cf. atmosphere, pollutant, contamination, atmospheric pollution

**ALARA/Alara** Acronymic term for "As low as reasonably achievable", concerning the extent of needed interventions against the release of nuclear, chemical or other dangerous materials.

**Alarm** A visual, acoustic, semaphoric, radio or other emergency signal informing the population of an imminent danger and calling the relevant personnel to proceed to their appropriate responsibilities.

Cf. alert, warning

**Alert** An advisory signal notifying that a hazard is approaching. It is less imminent than an “alarm” or a “warning” signal.

Cf. epidemic alerts, WHO alerting degrees, alarm, warning

**Algorithm** A structured graphical process and representation of a systematic and logical sequence of interdependent steps to guide in decision-making, with the aim of arriving at optimal decisions.

**Alien** Any individual who is not a national of the State in which he or she is present – OHCHR.

**Allergen** Any substance such as pollen, toxin, drug or food that can act as an antigen and induce an allergic reaction in an organism.

Cf. allergy, antigen, immunization

**Allergy** The hyper-reaction or pathological response of a person or certain organisms to a given allergen.

Cf. allergen

**Alleviate** To lighten the burden, to relieve the suffering, to mitigate.

Cf. mitigate

**Alluvium** Debris, soil and particles resulting from erosion transported and deposited by a stream or by the sea.

Sn: alluvial deposit

**Alma-Ata Declaration** On September 12, 1978, at Alma-Ata, then in the Soviet Union, the World Health Organization, all its members and UNICEF unanimously signed the Declaration on Primary Health Care, which has become the global

spearhead for the protection and promotion of all peoples’ health and the foundation of the concept of Health For All.

Cf. primary health care, Health for All

**Alternative technology** Technology that, as an alternative to resource-intensive and wasteful industry, aims to utilize resources sparingly, with minimum damage to the environment, at affordable cost and with a possible degree of control over the processes.

Cf. TCDC, appropriate technology, sustainable development, MDGs

**Altruism** Regard and unselfish consideration of others, humanitarian concern for the welfare of the needy, with willingness to help as a principle.

Cf. humanitarian medicine, voluntary agency, pro bono

**Amelisap** Acronymic term for Association des Médecins Libéraux Sapeurs-Pompiers. French association of volunteer physicians trained for and active in forest fires, burns and disasters.

Cf. forest fires

**American College of Surgeons** Largest and most prestigious professional organization of surgeons, devoted to the study, teaching, practice and ethics of surgery nationally and internationally. Has a special programme “Operation Giving Back” and awards for volunteerism and humanitarian work to strengthen surgery in the developing countries.

Cf. Royal College of Surgeons of Canada, essential surgery, humanitarian surgery

**American trypanosomiasis** Sn: Chagas disease

Cf. African trypanosomiasis, neglected tropical disease



**Amnesia** Partial or complete loss of memory. Frequent in various degrees after a head injury or major accident.

**Amnesty** An expression of goodwill, offering general pardon, reconciliation on humane grounds, while remaining uncompromising on breaches of human rights.

Cf. Amnesty International

**Amnesty International/AI** An entirely independent and active international humanitarian movement that struggles for the liberation of prisoners of conscience, exposes breaches of human rights such as torture, disappearances, hostage taking, impunity and renders the world conscious of such persecutions. Respected and valuable actions that earned AI the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977.

Cf. amnesty, human rights, disappearances, prisoners of conscience, torture

**Amoebiasis** A parasitic disease of the intestinal tract due to *Entamoeba histolytica* dysentery with occasionally liver complications. It is associated with hot climates, poor sanitation and faecal contamination of water. Disaster conditions, with overcrowding, increase the spread of amoebiasis. Also amebiasis.

Cf. dysentery, enteric diseases

**Amplitude tidal range** The difference between the height of the mean level and the maximum or minimum height of the water in the partial movement caused by the wave.

Sn: tidal range

Cf. tide, tidal scale

**Anaemia** Diminution of the quantity of red cells and functional haemoglobin of the blood, which may be due to multiple causes: malaria, haemolysis,

sickle cell anaemia, hookworms, bleeding, iron and other nutritional deficiencies. Widespread. A major problem in pregnant women.

Also anemia.

**Anarchism** From the Greek an=without, and archos=rule, the belief that society does not need rules or an organized State to function, which is considered harmful and must be abolished.

**Anchor point** In firefighting, an advantageous point of a barrier from which a protective fire line can be constructed, especially to reduce the hazard of being outflanked by the flames.

**Angst** Marked anxiety, despair, feeling of gloom. Common in disaster situations and in face of injustice.

**Animism** A belief that objects, phenomena and happenings in nature, such as trees, gales, earthquakes, have a spirit, totem and conscious life. In some cultures and primitive beliefs, animism is used to explain natural disasters, catastrophes, disease, healing and other phenomena.

Cf. natural disaster, traditional medicine, shamanism, totem.

**Ankylostomiasis** A debilitating parasitic disease of the intestinal tract caused by two kinds of hookworm, especially prevalent in tropical and subtropical areas. Gives pharyngeal and laryngeal manifestations and a major cause of anaemia. Spread by plantar exposure, it can be individually prevented by wearing shoes.

Cf. enteric diseases

**Annual flood** The annual peak discharge of water observed in one year.

**Answerable** The liability of a person, community or state called to account; responsible for acts committed.



**Antenatal** Before birth; during gestation. Special clinics are conducted for the care of expectant mothers. Mother and child are particularly at risk in situations of disaster and poverty.

Sn: prenatal

**Anthrax** A contagious disease of animals caused by *Bacillus anthracis*, infrequently transmitted to man through contact, ingestion or inhalation. Infection renders immunity. Has been used as a biological weapon for terrorist purposes.

Cf. zoonosis, biological warfare, bioterrorism

**Anthropic erosion** Man-made land erosion caused or accelerated by excessive clearing or grazing, with destruction of the surface vegetation, which leads to the degradation of the upper layers of the soil.

Cf. man-made disaster, erosion, desertification

**Antiballistic missile** A military pilotless rocket-propelled projectile (missile) designed to intercept and destroy an incoming enemy ballistic missile or its warhead before it reaches its target. The antiballistic missile defence (ABM) Treaty of 1972 limited the deployment of antiballistic missiles and restricted their development. It distinguished between "strategic" or long-range missiles (prohibited) and "non-strategic" or short-range missiles (not prohibited). This Treaty terminated in 2002 when the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty (SORT) came into force. To be reviewed in 2012.

Sn: ABM

Cf. strategic defence initiative, arms race, ballistic missile, star wars, SALT, START

**Antibody** An immunoglobulin serum protein in the body that binds with a specific antigen and confers protection against it.

Cf. antigen, vaccination

**Anticyclone** An atmospheric zone of relatively high pressure, normally characterized by fine weather and freak winds. It circulates clockwise in the northern and counterclockwise in the southern hemisphere.

Cf. cyclone, atmospheric pressure, wind

**Antidote** A chemical or medicine given to counter a specific poisoning.

**Antigen** Biological substance in the blood capable of stimulating the formation of protective antibodies.

Cf. antibody, vaccination

**Antimissile shield** A much disputed defensive/offensive plan of the United States envisaging the placement of a belt of long-range antimissile weaponry along the eastern borders of Europe.

Cf. star wars, START-II

**Apartheid** An Afrikaans term introduced in 1929 to signify the separation of the black population of South Africa from the supposedly superior white population, based on the illegal and immoral racist concepts of supremacy, resulting in unlawful segregation, injustices, persecution and pauperization of the black people. Abolished after the fall of the undemocratic racist regime.

Cf. racism, segregation, human rights

**Apathy** Absence of concern, indifference, lack of motivation. Such a temporary passive attitude is not rare among disaster victims. It can also be observed in groups for various reasons.

- Apatrie** French word, from *a/patrie*, meaning “without a fatherland”, a stateless person.  
Cf. stateless, refugee
- Appeal** Emergency: A request by a governmental or non-governmental organization to a government or the public for financial support to a charitable or humanitarian cause, or to counter a disaster.  
Cf. declaration of disaster  
Legal: Appeals court: a higher court that re-examines cases previously tried in an inferior court.
- Appropriate technology** Techniques, knowledge, methods, procedures and equipment that are adapted and appropriate to local needs, acceptable to those who use them and to those for whom they are used, scientifically valid yet uncomplicated, which can be maintained and utilized with the resources the country or community can afford.  
Cf. alternative technology, technology transfer, TCDC
- Aquiculture** The production of aquatic plants or animals in a marine or fresh water environment for commercial purposes.  
Sn: aquaculture
- Arbitration** The binding settlement of a political, social or industrial dispute by the decision of a mutually agreed or chosen one-time arbitral tribunal or conciliator called for that purpose.
- Archipelago** A group of islands.  
Example: the Archipelago of Azores
- Ariboflavinosis** Sn: vitamin B<sub>2</sub> deficiency
- Arid** A climate or land in which the humidity and rainfall are insufficient to counterbalance the evaporation and loss of water necessary for vegetation.  
Cf. desert, semi-arid zone
- Aridity** Characteristic of a climate where precipitation is insufficient to maintain vegetation.  
Cf. arid, semi-arid zone
- Arithmetic growth** Growth of an organism or population by linear increase in size or number.  
Cf. exponential growth
- Armed conflict** War. A state of hostilities in which two or more organized armies are at war against each other. In modern warfare, the attack may be with conventional arms, chemical and/or biological weapons or nuclear weapons.  
Cf. Geneva Conventions, CBW, atomic bomb, biological warfare, chemical warfare
- Arms control** Measures taken by a State – or required by the United Nations – intended to limit or reduce forces, regulate armaments and restrict the deployment of troops or weapons, with the view to rendering that State less dangerous and to inducing similar behaviour in other State(s), pursuant to an agreement.  
Cf. disarmament
- Arms race** Since the end of the Cold War, the arms race has slackened but not ended. The military capacity of three major nations at mid-2011 is as follows: Nuclear warheads: US 8,500, Russia 11,000, China 240; Military personnel: US 1,560,000, Russia 1,050,000, China 2,290,000; Submarines: US 71, Russia 67, China 71; Warships: US 112, Russia 31, China 78; Aircraft carriers: US 11, Russia 1, China 0; Combat aircraft: US 3,897, Russia 1,880, China 1,998; Military spending (2010): US \$698 billion, Russia \$58.7 bn, China \$119 bn – after SIPRI, IISS, *Time*.

**Arsenalization of space** The increasing use of the earth’s atmosphere for military purposes with missiles, satellites, probes, space stations, etc. and resulting space débris.

Sn: militarization of space

Cf. strategic defence initiative, space race

**Arson** Criminal setting on fire of another’s property or the intentional burning of one’s own property when insured. A fire also set by an unstable individual for personal, psychopathological satisfaction.

**Artificial feeding** Infant feeding with milk other than human breast milk.

**Ascariasis** A parasitic infection of the intestine, frequent and sometimes endemic especially in children, in tropical countries. Caused by a nematode worm. Commonly transmitted through ingestion of food contaminated by faeces.

Cf. enteric diseases

**Aseismic construction** Design, building, rebuilding or retrofitting of any construction, such as houses, factories, bridges, dams, skyscrapers, hospitals, according to materials, mathematics and regulations destined to make the structure withstand collapse or damage during an earthquake.

Sn: antiseismic, nonseismic

Cf. Mercalli scale, Richter scale

**Ash** Fire: The residual content of a product after complete combustion.

Volcanology: Tiny fragments projected by a volcanic eruption.

Cf. tephra, ash flow, volcano

**Ash fall** The falling down of volcanic ash onto the ground after it has been projected into the air. The ash clouds following the Iceland volcanic erup-

tion in 2010 caused severe disruption of aviation and of agriculture.

Cf. ash

**Ash flow** In volcanic eruptions, most of the gas-charged ash remains close to the ground and falls by gravity like foam. It is a form of nuée ardente. Can cause severe respiratory distress.

Cf. ash, lahar, tephra, nuée ardente, volcano

**Asia-Pacific Conferences on Disaster Medicine** International professional group that studies, advises and promotes humanitarian health issues and emergency preparedness in the circum-Pacific countries which are highly disaster prone. Holds specialized conferences every two years, while its national counterparts, like the Japan Medical Team for Disaster Relief, are actively operational.

Cf. disaster medicine, international assistance, Japan Medical Team for Disaster Relief

**Asphyxia** Acute respiratory obstruction of airflow, with impairment of the oxygen supply to tissues due to reduced oxygen intake in the lungs, leading to imminent cell death.

Cf. respiratory distress

**Assessment (of disaster)** Survey of real or potential disaster to estimate the actual or expected damages and to make recommendations for preparedness, mitigation and relief action.

Cf. damage assessment, rapid assessment protocol

**Assimilation**

1. Biological: Transformation of nutrients into cellular material by a living organism.
2. Social: Cf. absorption

**Assistance/Aid** Providing help, relief and support with the aim of diminishing a person's or community's suffering or increasing their capacity to cope. Such material and social assistance and humane aid are primordial in disaster situations and are provided by individuals, governments and humanitarian volunteer bodies.

Cf. relief, humanitarian medicine, voluntary associations, aid

**Association for Trauma Outreach and Prevention** An organization that strives for a meaningful world and justice in which every individual enjoys physical, mental and spiritual health. Provides internships and publications in these fields.

Sn: ATOP

**Asylum** Temporary or permanent stay on its territory, consented by a State to a refugee, stateless person or other persecuted people, with guarantee of their safety and human rights.

Cf. asylum rights, asylum seeker, persecution

**Asylum rights** Providing asylum is a humanitarian act. According to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is the right of everyone "to seek asylum and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution".

Cf. asylum, asylum seeker, persecution

**Asylum seeker** A person or community requesting entry into a country for safety, humanitarian or other valid reasons. According to UDHR, it is a right "to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution".

Cf. asylum right, refugee, territorial asylum, diplomatic asylum, human rights

**Athrepsia** Sn: nutritional marasmus

**Atmosphere** The gaseous and turbulent envelope that englobes the earth.

**Atmospheric pollution** Presence in the atmosphere of large quantities of gases, solids and radiation produced by the burning of natural and artificial fuels, chemical and other industrial processes and nuclear explosions. To a lesser extent also contamination by accumulation of cosmic dust, surface dust by wind, volcanoes, natural radioactivity, etc.

Cf. acid rain, air pollution, ozone depletion, transboundary pollution

**Atmospheric pressure** Pressure of the atmosphere that varies according to the latitude and to meteorological conditions. Normal atmospheric pressure is 76 cm of mercury at 0 °C.

**Atoll** A circular coral reef, generally with one or more low islands, surrounding a central lagoon which may or may not communicate with the ocean.

**Atom** The smallest particle of matter, in an electrically neutral state, consisting of a positively charged (proton) nucleus, round which revolve negatively charged electrons.

Cf. atomic bomb, nuclear reaction, nuclear reactor

**Atomic bomb** Atom bomb, or A-bomb, the basic nuclear weapon in which the explosive energy is derived only from fission of the atomic nuclei, liberating energy and radiation. The first atom bombs dropped in 1945 on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, were of this type.

Sn: atom bomb, A-bomb, fission bomb

Cf. fallout, kiloton, fusion bomb, hydrogen bomb, thermonuclear bomb, nuclear war, uranium, plutonium, mushroom cloud, Hiroshima

**Atomic disaster** Cf. nuclear disaster

**Atomic power plant** Sn: nuclear power plant, nuclear reactor

**Atomic reactor** Sn: nuclear reactor, nuclear power plant, reactor

**Attenuation** Diminution, reduction, lessening in force of destructiveness or virulence, abatement.

Cf. disaster mitigation

**Attac** An independent international movement in support of citizens, active in opposing the excesses of free trade and for more equitable alternatives in social, environmental and democratic processes.

Sn: (Full French title:) Association pour une taxation de Transactions financières pour l'Aide aux Citoyens, more generally known under its acronym, attac.

Cf. globalization, social accountability

**Audit** Systematic, documented, independent, periodic examination of an institution to determine whether or to what extent activities comply with the planned and agreed system.

**Auschwitz/Buchenwald** Two of the many notorious concentration camps set up by the Nazi regime during World War II with an inhuman programme of purifying the nation by exterminating entire populations, where thousands of inmates of all ages and both sexes were herded in appalling conditions, imprisoned without trial or reason, killed in gas chambers or incinerated in death ovens. Among other camps, Dachau and Birkenau also remain notorious. Other dictatorships create other such camps.

Cf. ethnic cleansing, racism, human rights, pogrom, extermination

**Autocracy/autocratic** Form of anti-democratic government, ruled by a dictator who has absolute self-

sustained power and governs and dictates without consideration of the people governed.

Sn: dictatorship

Cf. democracy, plutocracy

**Autopsy** Post-mortem (after death) examination of a cadaver with the view to determining the cause and mode of death and identity of the body.

Sn: necropsy

**Auxiliary health worker** A community health assistant or health worker who is experienced but has less than full professional qualifications and needs supervision by qualified personnel.

**Auxiliary power unit** An electricity generating machine, supplementary to the normal power line, that can be used when the latter fails. Particularly useful in developing countries, first aid tents and situations like refugee camps, where the supply of electricity may be unreliable.

**Avaaz** A worldwide independent, non-profit, humanitarian information campaign organization that works to ensure that the values, views and actions of the world's people inform and shape global decision-making in a just manner.

**Avalanche** Sudden slide of a huge mass of snow and ice, usually carrying with it earth, rocks, trees and other debris.

**Average** In marine insurance, means damage.

Particular average is damage to the goods.

General average: Expenses voluntarily incurred to save a ship and her cargo.

**Avian influenza – H5N1** A highly contagious poultry (or other bird) disease due to the influenza virus H5N1 that affected South East Asia in 2003, transmitted to humans with high case fatality.

Cf. International Health Regulations, pandemic

**AVPU** Emergency acronym for Awake, Verbal response, Part response, Unresponsive. A rapid neurological assessment of a trauma patient when there is no time to do the Glasgow coma scale.

Cf. ABCDE, Glasgow coma scale

## B

**Bacillary dysentery** An acute, severe, intestinal disease due to the *Shigella* bacillus, type 1, characterized by bloody stools and fever, associated with poor personal hygiene and sanitation in crowded closed communities (ships, refugee camps, jails). Especially frequent in children and often occurring as sudden outbreaks. Transmitted via the faecal-oral route or water-borne through contaminated water supply, either directly through hand contact or indirectly through contaminated food. The term dysentery is often used in a general sense for many non-specific cases of gastroenteritis and diarrhoea.

Cf. enteric diseases, dysentery

**Bacillus Calmette-Guérin** Better known as BCG, an attenuated and non-virulent vaccine made from bovine *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* used in vaccination against tuberculosis. It is one of the six vaccines used in the WHO Expanded Programme on Immunization.

Sn: BCG

Cf. vaccine, vaccination, EPI, tuberculosis

**Backfire** In firefighting, a fire started intentionally by the firefighters along the inner edge of the fire-control line with the aim of consuming the fuel in the path of a forest fire, or of changing the direction of the fire's advance.

**Bactericide** Chemical compound that kills bacteria and is used against infections.

Cf. pesticide, virucide

**Bag bomb** Portable nuclear arm usually stolen or illegal. Also known as nuclear bag, Bombe valise.

**Ballistic missile** A pilotless rocket-propelled projectile boosted into space and whose thrust can be terminated at a chosen time, after which its re-entry vehicle returns it to the earth's atmosphere. BM with a range of over 5,500 km is called intercontinental missile (e.g. ICBM) and under 500 km, a strategic missile.

Cf. antiballistic missile, ABM Treaty, arms race, START

**Barcelona Declaration** Declaration made in 1995, emphasizing the role of diverse cultures in health, promotes dialogue between civilizations and traditions and encourages regional scientific and technological exchanges as essential factors in improving understanding between people and health.

**Barefoot doctor** In a developing country, a rural-level primary healthcare provider, usually chosen and culturally accepted by the community he or she lives in. System introduced in China during the Cultural Revolution.

Cf. barehead doctor

**Barehead doctor** In the rural areas of Thailand, Buddhist monks are trained to deliver simple, primary health care at low cost and according to the country's traditions.

Cf. barefoot doctor

**Barrier** Geography: In the polar regions, the mass of ice formed by the freezing of sea water.

Cf. ice pack, pack ice

**Firefighting:** Any obstruction to the spread of fire, usually a strip of land free from any combustible material.

Cf. firebreak

**Bartonellosis** An infectious disease endemic in the high valleys of the Andes, transmitted at night by the bite of insects.

Sn: Oroya fever, verruga peruana

**Basal metabolic rate** The minimal rate of energy production, representing the energy requirements of the body at rest. A measure of the function of the thyroid gland, which is very susceptible to radiation uptake.

Sn: BMR

Cf. calorie, goitre, Lugol's iodine

**Basel Accords** Beginning in 1974 and reinforced in 2010, a series of financial negotiations establishing international guidelines and rules on security of the world banking system to maintain sufficient shares and capital to cushion against eventual disastrous economic crises, like the one in 2008.

**Basel Convention** International instrument operated by the United Nations Environment Programme to reduce transboundary movements of hazardous wastes, to minimize such material, to control their moves and incidents and to assist in environmental management in developing countries.

Cf. chemical accident, environmental pollution, hazardous material, International Programme on Chemical Safety

**Basic health care** The provision of the minimal, simplified essential health requirements in a low-income country, based on essential vaccination, essential medicaments and simple perinatal care, not necessarily integrated within the country's organized basic health

services and socioeconomic needs. It should be distinguished from Primary Health Care.

Cf. Primary Health Care, essential surgery

**Basic life support/BLS** An advanced form of non-invasive first aid to a person who is critically ill or has a severe injury in order to ensure the ABC of survival, i.e. Airway clearance, Breathing maintained and Circulation assured. These are the first elements of cardiopulmonary resuscitation – Safar.

Sn: BLS

Cf. ABC, advanced life support, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, survival chain

**Basic societal functions** In any given society, the significant functions that may affect – or be affected by – actions and circumstances that may result in disorder, disaster, injustice or loss of human rights. Inter alia, these may include a country's legal structure, governance, security, education, economy, health and sanitation systems, water and shelter, public works, food, energy and communications, transport, distribution and level of social participation.

**BCG** Sn: Bacillus Calmette-Guérin

**Beaufort scale** Numerical scale from 0 to 12, indicating wind force.

0 calm, 1 light air, 2 light breeze, 3 gentle breeze, 4 moderate breeze, 5 fresh breeze, 6 strong breeze, 7 strong wind, 8 gale, 9 strong gale, 10 storm, 11 violent storm, 12 hurricane.

Cf. Douglas scale, gale, hurricane, storm, wind, Saffir-Simpson scale

**Beijing Declaration, 1995** Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The 4th World Conference on Women, UNESCO, set positive gender standards and obligations in favour of women.



**Beneficiary** Person, group or country that receives the aid or services of others.

Sn: donee

Cf. aid, international assistance

**Beriberi** A severe nutritional deficiency of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> mainly seen in areas where the basic diet is polished rice (South East Asia). It is characterized by neuritis, oedema, muscular atrophy and cardiac failure.

Sn: vitamin B<sub>1</sub> deficiency

Cf. nutritional deficiency

**Bermuda triangle** Cf. intertropical convergence zone

**Bhopal disaster** Major technological/ industrial disaster that took place in the town of Bhopal, India, on 3 December 1984, when large quantities of highly toxic methyl isocyanate escaped from a damaged chemical factory, causing over 2,000 deaths and thousands others disabled, in respiratory distress and blind. The worst chemical disaster to date. Compensations are still pending.

Cf. man-made disaster, technological disaster, Chernobyl, Seveso

**Bifurcated needle** A special two-pronged needle used in vaccination to deliver equal doses of vaccine. Was particularly used in global small-pox vaccination.

**Big One, The** A hypothetical devastating earthquake of 8.3 Richter over the San Andreas Fault in California predicted to have 50% probability of striking the San Francisco Bay area within the coming quarter century.

Cf. fault, sliding fault, Richter scale

**Bilateral cooperation** Technical cooperation or assistance given by a donor country to a recipient country, through direct agreement between the two governments, without UN or other intermediary.

Cf. international assistance, technical assistance

**Bilateralism** In international or inter-governmental relations, the conduct of doing business or negotiations between two States or organizations, in respectful consideration of the positions of both.

Cf. multilateralism, unilateralism

**Bilharzia** Sn: schistosomiasis

**Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation** Richly endowed foundation with particular action against the major communicable and socially disruptive diseases, in close collaboration with WHO and the World Bank, through imaginative funding systems.

Sn: Gates Foundation

Cf. GAVI, Global fund, World Bank

**Binary weapon** A chemical arm which is not lethal until two chemical compounds are mixed in the detonation moment.

Cf. chemical war

**Bio** From the Greek *bios*, life; prefix denoting life, living, organic life. Example: biology

**Bioburden** Bacteriological contamination complicating a wound or a patient's condition.

**Biodiversity** The global sum total of all the varieties of living genes, organisms, species and ecosystems on earth. Its preservation is absolutely essential to human well-being and the earth's health, yet it is under constant threat.

**Bioethics** A term made of the Greek words *bios* (life) and *ethos* (ethics). In health care and life sciences, the systematic study and consideration of human conduct in relation to principles and moral values, with attention to the person and the person's humanity.

**Biogeography** The science that deals with the causes, modifications and interactions of geographical distribution of living organisms on earth.

**Biological agents classification** Biological agents/weapons are usually classified (a) according to their taxonomy: fungi bacteria and viruses; (b) according to their infectivity, virulence, lethality, pathogenicity, incubation period; (c) according to their contagiousness and mechanism of transmission; and (d) according to their stability or capacity of survival. Cf. chemical agents classification, chemical weapons, biological warfare

**Biological and chemical weapons** The two are usually considered together.

Cf. chemical and biological weapons, biological weapons, chemical weapons

**Biological disaster** Disaster caused by a large-scale exposure of the biomass or living organisms to toxic substances, germs or radiation.

Cf. biomass, biological warfare, environmental disaster, man-made disaster, technological disaster, toxicological disaster

**Biological equilibrium** Condition in which the interactions between the different animal and vegetable species is such that the structure and function of an ecosystem remain fairly constant.

Man is the main element in the modifications of this equilibrium.

Cf. ecosystem, biodiversity

**Biological hazard** A source of potential damage of varying degrees caused by living organisms, including pathogenic microorganisms, saprophytes, vaccines and other biological substances that may cause injury, loss of life, social disruption, economic disturbance and environmental degradation.

Cf. biological disaster, hazard

**Biological warfare** The intentional spread of disease in warfare through the dispersal of infective bacteria, rickettsiae, viruses, toxins or other biological weapons which cause diseases such as anthrax, plague, typhoid, brucellosis.

There is a UN Convention against biological weapons. Biological and chemical weapons are considered together (CBW) as weapons of mass destruction.

Sn: bacteriological warfare, biological weapon, BW

Cf. bioterrorism, chemical warfare, nuclear war, toxin, CBW

**Biological weapons** Weapons that achieve their intended target effects through the infectivity of disease-causing microorganisms and other replicative entities, including viruses, infectious nucleic acids, prions – WHO.

The Biological Weapons Convention requires states parties “never in any circumstances to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain (1) microbial or other biological agents or toxins ... and (2) weapons equipment or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict” – BWC.

Cf. biological warfare, Biological Weapons Convention, chemical weapons, CBW

**Biological Weapons Convention/ CBW** United Nations Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxic Weapons and their Destruction, signed in 1972.

Cf. biological warfare, biological weapons, chemical warfare, man-conceived disaster, bioterrorism, terrorism, CBW, weapons of mass destruction

**Biomass** The total quantity of the living matter of organisms present in a given environment at a given time.

It is expressed in volume, in mass (dry weight, fresh weight, decalcified or not), in carbon, in calories per unit of volume or of surface.

Sn: standing crop

**Biosphere** The biotic environment of the earth where life can be maintained and supported by ecosystems, including the hydrosphere, the lower part of the atmosphere, the upper part of the ionosphere and, by extension, of the totality of living matter on earth.

Cf. ecosystem

**Bioterrorism** Planning, threatening, using or spreading contagious disease organisms or toxin, e.g. botulism, anthrax, viruses, debilitating war gases, as a terrorist tool or weapon.

Cf. terrorism, biological warfare, chemical warfare, man-conceived disaster, CBW

**Birth rate** Ratio between the number of births during a given period and the total size of the population.

Cf. death rate

**bit** Acronym for BINARY digiT. The smallest unit of information with which a digital computer works

**Black tide** Cf. oil slick

**Bleaching powder** Calcium hypochlorite

Cf. chlorine

**BLEVE** Acronymic name for boiling liquid expanded vapour explosion.

The sudden rupture of a closed vessel system containing liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) flammable under intense pressure due to flame impingement, creating a blast wave, missile projectile damage and immediate ignition of the expanding fuel-air mixture leading to a disastrous fireball. Examples: Los Alfaques in Spain, Mexico City.

Cf. fire, fire hazard

**Blizzard** Violent and very cold wind laden with snow, at least some part of which has been raised from snow-covered ground.

Cf. wind, winter blizzard

**Blood bank** A special section or part of a laboratory, usually in a hospital, which has the scientific facilities to receive and store human blood and blood components from a blood centre – while often it may itself be the blood centre. It performs blood compatibility testing and provides blood and blood products to hospitals and transfusion centres. It may be called the transfusion laboratory.

**Blood diamonds** The valuable and expensive stone, the diamond, that plays an important role in the economy and development of its producing countries is also used for illegal and unethical purposes such as purchasing arms, funding conflicts, supplying armies, providing influence, fomenting rebellions or financing dictatorships, thus being referred to as blood diamonds or conflict diamonds. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme was set up in 2003 by governments and the diamond industry to stop the illegal trade in rough diamonds that help buy influence or pay rebel groups, civil wars and totalitarian régimes, mainly in Africa.

The term extends also to other precious metals and expensive products, such as blood copper or blood rubber.

Sn: conflict diamonds

**Blood products** Any therapeutic substance derived from human blood, including whole blood, plasma, plasma-derived products and labile blood components, used for medical purposes.

**Boat people** People who due to persecution, insecurity, poverty or any other reason flee a country by boat and seek security or asylum in another country. They are usually subjected to much suffering, disease, danger on the high seas, administrative complications or refusal to land.

Cf. displaced persons, refugee, high seas

**Body mass index/BMI** A measure of weight in relation to height. Calculated as weight in kg, divided by the square of height in metres. A BMI of less than 25 is considered normal, 25–30 is overweight, greater than 30 is obesity. Used in nutritional assessment.

Cf. obesity

**Body surface area/BSA** Assessment of the burnt surface area of the body in a thermal injury. BSA is usually expressed in sections of 9% (the rule of 9) of the body area burnt. Less frequently, it is also expressed mathematically:

$$\sqrt{\frac{\text{BSA (m}^2\text{)} = \text{Ht (cm)} \times \text{Wt (kg)}}{3600}}$$

Cf. burn, burn extent, rule of 9, burn degrees, burn disaster

**Booby trap** A military or a terrorist improvised device designed to explode on being manipulated, e.g. when a person opens a door, starts up a car or picks up a parcel.

Cf. terrorism, landmines

**Botulism** Cf. food poisoning

**Bovine spongiform encephalopathy/BSE** Cf. mad cow disease, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease

**Bradford disaster scale** To facilitate comparison of one disaster with another, the BDS defines magnitudes

by taking the logarithm (base 100) of the number of fatalities.

Supplementary to magnitude, a classification system can be introduced – Keller.

<i>Fatalities</i>	<i>Disaster</i>	<i>Deaths</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Magnitude</i>
0–10			0	0
10–10 <sup>2</sup>	Bangkok	166	1	1.73
10 <sup>2</sup> –10 <sup>3</sup>	Zeebrugge	187	2	2.27
10 <sup>3</sup> –10 <sup>4</sup>	Bhopal	2,000	3	3.30
10 <sup>4</sup> –10 <sup>5</sup>	Armenia	24,000	4	44.38
10 <sup>5</sup> –10 <sup>6</sup>			5	

Cf. disaster severity scales

**Brain death** A traumatic condition in which electroencephalography reveals no cortical brain activity. A vegetative state in which the heart may continue beating.

**Breeder reactor** A nuclear reactor facility which produces more fissile nuclei than it consumes.

**Briand-Kellogg Pact** League of Nations Pact of 1928 that condemns the “recourse” to war for the “settlement” of international disputes as an instrument of national politics in international relations.

Cf. crime of aggression

**Brock Chisholm Memorial Trust** Scientific and humanitarian institution established in 1984 at WHO by Grace B. Chisholm and S. William Gunn to honour the legacy of Dr. George Brock Chisholm of Canada, first Director-General of the World Health Organization, and to perpetuate his ideals and vision of humanism, health, international understanding and peace. Subsequently, the Trust has been incorporated as the International Association for Humanitarian Medicine Brock Chisholm (IAHM).

Cf. International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, humanitarian medicine

**Brucellosis** A febrile zoonotic disease caused by eating unpasteurized milk or dairy products from infected animals.

Sn: Malta fever, Mediterranean fever, zoonosis

**Buffering** The capacity of a society or community to protect itself from the damaging effects of a disaster, or to prepare itself to minimize the effects of an expected disaster. Cf. Attenuation.

In geopolitics, a smaller zone or country between two larger belligerent countries, diminishing the chances of hostilities.

**Building code(s)** A series of governmental and professional regulations setting technical and functional standards for the built environment, especially concerning materials, structure, design, aesthetics, safety, salubrity and social welfare.

Cf. built environment, retrofitting

**Built environment** Within the context of mainly exploitable land, any and all physical structures built by man, including houses, factories, roads, electric lines, satellite antennas, underground wires, communication tunnels, sewers, ports, dams, bridges, farmhouses or sheds, airports, railways, schools, recreation grounds, municipal structures, etc., as distinct from the natural environment.

Cf. building codes

**Bulghur** Boiled, dried and crushed wheat with outside bran removed, used for food. Total cooked whole wheat.

Cf. conventional food

**Burden of disease** In the assessment of health levels or a health system, an indicator that quantifies losses of healthy life from disease and injury.

Double burden represents a large number of non-communicable diseases coinciding with large numbers of communicable diseases, malnutrition and maternal mortality.

Cf. disability-adjusted life expectancy, disease surveillance, ten-ninety disequilibrium

**Burn** Tissue damage of varying degrees caused by the heat produced from a thermal agent. Burns are classified according to the extent of body surface involved, according to the depth of tissue damage, or according to the cause, e.g. flame, steam, electric, chemical, lightning, nuclear radiation

Cf. chemical burn, electrical burn, burn degree, burn extent, Euro-Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters, thermal agent disaster

**Burn, chemical** Cf. chemical burn

**Burn classification** Cf. burn

**Burn, degrees** On a burnt patient, three degrees of burns are distinguished, according to the depth of the burnt area, important in the healing process and treatment. First degree: damage limited to the outer superficial layer of the epidermis, with redness and pain, e.g. sunburn; 2nd: the burn extends through the epidermis down to dermis, but not entirely compromising the regeneration process; 3rd: full-thickness burn, killing the skin.

These degrees concern the depth and not the extent of the area burnt.

Cf. burn, burn rule of 9

**Burn disaster** The overall effect on living persons or animals, caused by massive burn action from a known thermal agent, characterized by a large number of immediate deaths and burnt patients and a high rate of

secondary mortality and disability – Masellis.

Cf. thermal agent disaster, burn, burn centre.

**Burn extent – Rule of 9** In a burned person, the body's surface area (BSA) that is burnt has great importance in the outcome of the injury and treatment. For practical calculations, the body is divided into areas, each representing 9% of its surface. Thus, the head represents 9%, an arm 9%, a leg 18%, the back 18%, etc. (This assessment – of surface – is different from the degree of burn.)

Cf. burn, burn degree, body surface area, thermal injury, Euro-Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters

**Burns Centre** Particular unit and facilities in a hospital for the specialized care for all aspects of severely burned patients, including surgical, reconstructive, nursing, medico-social, rehabilitative and other ancillary facilities for a large number of patients. It also promotes burns prevention in the community and collaborates closely with the authorities in firefighting and preparedness programmes.

Cf. emergency medical services, fires

**Burn out** A state of physical and psychological exhaustion that a person presents in response to the heavy stress and difficulties of unrelenting performance expended or demanded in the individual's occupation. This is not uncommon among disaster responders who often work under most unfavourable and strenuous conditions.

**Buruli ulcer** A destructive skin infection caused by *Mycobacterium*

*ulcerans* that belongs to the same family of organisms that cause leprosy and tuberculosis. A neglected tropical disease.

Cf. neglected tropical diseases

## C

**Caesium** A naturally occurring isotope in the earth's crust. Atomic number 55, symbol Cs. Cesium-137 is a product of atomic fission of uranium and an important component of radioactive fallout.

Cf. uranium, plutonium, fallout

**Calcium hypochlorite** Bleaching powder, chlorine.

Cf. chlorine

**Camp** Lodgings in tents or temporary quarters. Camps are erected for (i) refugees, (ii) displaced persons in time of peace, (iii) persons displaced in time of conflict. (The HCR prefers not to use the term camps for refugees.) Prohibited camps are concentration camps, forced grouping, forced labour camps, extermination camps.

**Canadair** Originally the commercial brand name of a firefighting air tanker, now used generically for any water discharging aircraft.

## Canadian International Development

**Authority** Commonly referred to as CIDA, important governmental department devoted to the study, development of products, institutions, progress and governance in poorer States and sustainable growth in developing countries; includes disaster prevention and emergency aid. (Not to be confused with SIDA.)

**Cancerogenic** That causes cancer, neoplastic disease or malignant growth.

Sn: carcinogenic

**Cancun Agreements** Follow-up to the Kyoto Protocol, establishing clear and verifiable obligations on States concerning high carbon dioxide emissions and their effects on climate and developing countries.

Cf. Kyoto protocol, global warming, carbon dioxide, climate change

**Capacity building** Methods and ends of increasing the aggregate ability of a person, community or nation in individual skills, institutional capacity, organizational structures, economic means, governmental leadership, education, human resources, citizen participation and resilience with the view to strengthening society in face of risks, disasters and other challenges.

Cf. disaster preparedness, resilience

**Cape Town Declaration** Beginning in 1999, the UN started building bridges to the private sector through the Global Compact. The 2007 Cape Town Declaration strengthened this process by innovative UN partnerships with NGOs and the private sector with commitment to corporate social responsibility and a stronger engagement in the Millennium Development Goals.

Cf. Global compact, Millennium Development Goals

**Carbon capture** Carbon capture and storage (CCS) is a new technology to tackle the world's increasing rate of carbon dioxide emissions, with resulting atmospheric and climate change.

**Carbon dioxide – CO<sub>2</sub>** A colourless gas produced by complete combustion of carbon, by thermal decomposition and during fermentation. It is essential to metabolism – exhaled by animals and absorbed by plants. Important role in climate change.

Major component of industrial and automobile emissions.

Cf. glasshouse effect, Kyoto protocol, Cancun agreements, global warming, climate change

**Carbon monoxide – CO** Odourless poisonous gas, a product of incomplete combustion. May be fatal if formed under conditions of limited supply of air, as in a closed room.

**Carcinogenic** Chemical, viral, radioactive or other agent that can induce cancer or malignant disease in man or in other organisms.

Sn: cancerogenic

**Cardiac arrest** The stopping of blood circulation with disappearance of blood pressure and cessation of heart function. Commonly called heart attack.

Cf. first aid, basic life support

**Cardiopulmonary-cerebral resuscitation** In a severely ill or seriously injured person, providing the essential life needs for survival through manoeuvres that ensure emergency oxygenation, restoration of spontaneous blood circulation and cerebral resuscitation.

Sn: CPR

Cf. basic life support

**Cardiopulmonary resuscitation** The technique and manoeuvres applied to a severely injured patient in order to ensure the basic functions of the heart and lungs and to maintain such vital support until the end of the critical period.

Sn: emergency intensive care, CPR, critical care

Cf. emergency critical services, first aid, rescue

**Caritas Internationalis** Confederation of many national Catholic charity organizations to provide relief, social



aid and justice in the world. Member of the Vatican Pontifical Council Cor Unum.

Cf. humanitarian, international assistance

**Carrier** A person or animal who harbours an infection without knowing it and without clinical signs of disease and who serves as a potential source of involuntary transmission to other persons. A healthy carrier may be in an incubation period or may be completely ignorant of any disease, while the convalescent carrier is himself cured but may transmit the disease.

Cf. incubation period, source of infection, quarantine

**Cartagena Protocol on Biodiversity** International treaty on Biodiversity (2000), the first such legally binding environmental instrument. It seeks to protect biological diversity from potential risks of genetically modified organisms (GMO), regulating their transboundary movements and maintaining biosafety centres.

Cf. biodiversity, genetically modified organisms

**Cartel** Politics: An understanding (usually secret) between political bodies, trade unions and other similar organizations with the view to more effective concerted action.

Economics: A secret understanding or antisocial agreement (often criminal) between commercial or industrial bodies to ensure monopoly, domination of the market prices and high profits.

Cf. Palermo protocol, mafia

**Carter Center** A special section of the Jimmy Carter Foundation Presidential Library devoted to the advancement

of human rights and humanitarian causes, alleviation of suffering, equity in governance and conflict resolution.

**Case fatality rate** The calculation of the number of patients dying from a specific disease, divided by the number of individuals developing that disease. It is usually expressed per 1,000 affected persons

**Cassava** The root of two plants of the spurge or manioc family (bitter and sweet cassava), the flour of which is used for bread and is an important source of food starch in many countries.

Sn: manioc

Cf. staple food

**Casualty** Any victim of any emergency health situation, without specifying the gravity or nature of the emergency. May concern a sharp abdominal pain, a cut, burn, heart attack, fracture, fall, poisoning, drowning, fainting, shock, head injury or any other acute episode, minor, serious or lethal that has called for some attention and necessary care. Often in disaster statistics, the term is erroneously used for the seriously injured and dead.

In the UK, the Casualty Department is the general Emergency Department of a hospital.

Cf. accident, mass casualty situation, hospital capacity

**Cataclysmic** An exaggerated term from the Greek for the Biblical deluge. Describes a very severe, extensive disaster. It has no practical value and should not be used.

Cf. catastrophic, Hiroshima, Bhopal, Chernobyl

**Catastrophe** Sn: disaster

**Catastrophe theory** A mathematical and philosophical theory that tries to explain and define transitional discontinuity according to which a disaster represents a sudden, brutal break and change in the forces present in natural, physical, social or psychological phenomena – Thom.  
Cf. chaos theory

**Catastrophic** Catastrophe and disaster are synonymous. The adjectival form “catastrophic” is sometimes used to describe a very extensive disaster. Such exaggerated, figurative terms, including “cataclysmic”, have no practical value and are not recommended.

The term “catastrophic fires”, however, denotes the simultaneous coalescence of multiple fires or firestorm (Cf)

**Catastrophic fire** General term for the simultaneous coalescing of multiple fires, or firestorm.

**Catastrophic health spending** A situation “when the proportion of people spends out-of-pocket more than 40% of their incomes for health after deducting expenses for food each year” – WHO.

The situation hits particularly the poorer people and poor families with a disabled member.

**Catchment area** Sn: catchment basin, river basin

**Catchment basin** Sn: river basin

**Caveat** In Latin: “Let him or her beware” or “be careful”. A warning notice to the reader to be aware of something possibly misleading, or possible confusion between two terms. Particularly important in international texts of varying languages.

**Central depression** Vast meteorological and barometric depression, usually

stationary or semistatic, within which smaller depressions circulate.

Cf. depression

**Centre Europe-Tiers Monde/Europe-Third World Centre (CETIM)**

The Europe-Third World Centre is an NGO dedicated to the defence and promotion of all human rights, on the principle that these rights are inseparable and indivisible. Publishes useful guides in these fields at University of Lausanne.

Cf. third world, human rights, development

**Centre for International Health and Cooperation/CIHC**

A think-and-action group at Fordham University based on the precept that health and other humanitarian endeavours may sometimes provide the only common ground for initiating dialogue, understanding and cooperation among people and nations at war or in conflict. The Centre directs the International Diploma in Humanitarian Assistance (IDHA).

**Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters**

A pioneering facility at the School of Public Health, Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium, for research, study and training in the epidemiology and medical aspects of disasters. A WHO Collaborating Centre.

Sn: CRED

Cf. disaster medicine, epidemiology

**Center for the Study of Bioterrorism and Emerging Infections**

Major centre at Saint Louis University, USA, on all aspects of military and bacteriological epidemiology of bioterrorist threats and biodefence.

Cf. bioterrorism, biological weapons, anthrax

**Cerebral haemorrhage** Bleeding into the brain. A serious condition that can be due to circulatory disease, or to skull injury, as in entrapment in an earthquake.

**Cerebrospinal meningitis** Very serious, highly contagious neurological infection attacking the envelope (meninges) of the brain and of the spine. Can attain epidemic proportions.

Cf. encephalitis

**Chagas disease** A chronic infection caused by trypanosomes, characterized by irregular fever, swelling of lymph glands, oedema, skin eruptions and, in advanced stages, by apathy, convulsions and coma. It may appear in acute form in children. Predominant in South America and Africa, spreads through blood-sucking flies, infected blood transfusion, organ transplantation. A neglected tropical disease.

Sn: sleeping sickness, American trypanosomiasis

**Chaos theory** A mathematical theory and technique applied to non-linear dynamics to ascertain the changing structure or pattern that underlies certain apparently random observations, as in wind, fire, waves, hazardous chemical propagation or even human behaviour.

Cf. catastrophe theory

**Charity** Altruistic action in a variety of fields and ways, by an individual or organization, to help, relieve, soothe and advance a cause, a public need, persons or communities in distress.

Cf. altruism, voluntary organization

**Chartering** In transport and shipping, the contract or hire of a ship or airplane or of part of the vessel.

Sn: charter party, freighting

**Charter party** Sn: chartering

**Chatham House Rules** An undertaking by participants in a conference or discussion proceedings that one can report on what was said at the meeting but cannot give the name or affiliation of the person who said it. This is based on the core principle that governs confidentiality of the source of information.

**Chauvinism** Excessive, aggressive patriotism; the belief that one's country is the best in everything and cannot be criticized.

**Chemical accident** Accidental release outside its accepted confines that may occur during research, production, transportation or handling of toxic or other hazardous chemical substances, dangerous to human health and/or the environment in the short or long term. Also referred to as chemical incident. Such events include fires, explosions, leakages or terrorism.

Cf. corrosion burn, environmental pollution, hazmat, International Programme on Chemical Safety

**Chemical agents classification** Classification of harmful chemicals may take several paths: (a) according to the degree of effect, e.g. harassing, lethal or incapacitating; (b) according to the route of entry, e.g. respiratory agents, cutaneous agents; (c) according to the duration of the hazard, e.g. persistent agents, non-persistent, temporary.

Cf. chemical agents/weapons, biological agents classification

**Chemical agents/weapons** Chemical agents are weapons that are effective because of their toxicity, i.e. their chemical action on life processes

capable of causing death, temporary incapacitation or permanent harm. Some toxic chemicals such as phosgene, hydrogen cyanide and tear gas may be used for both civil and peaceful, as well as for hostile purposes. In the latter case, they too are chemical weapons – WHO.

Cf. chemical weapons, biological weapons, Chemical Weapons Convention, riot-control gases

**Chemical and biological weapons** The two are usually studied together, with considerations of lethal effects, incapacitating effects, harassing effects. (Cf. these terms.)

**Chemical burn** Destruction of human tissue due to the action of chemical agents. Also called corrosion burn. For exposure to corrosive substances with skin damage, classification can be made according to the principles applying to thermal burn injuries, as follows (IPCS): Group 1, life threatening injury: dermal and full-thickness injuries exceeding 50% of body surface area; Group 2a, severe injury: full-thickness injuries of 10–50% or dermal injuries of 20–50% BSA; Group 2b, moderate injury: full-thickness injuries of 2–10% or dermal injuries of 10–20% BSA; Group 3, mild injury: full-thickness injuries 2% BSA, or dermal injuries less than 10% BSA or epidermal injuries.

Cf. body surface area, burn disaster, chemical accident, thermal injury, corrosion, International Programme on Chemical Safety

**Chemical hazard** A chemical product that, on exposure, may cause health problems to persons or communities.

**Chemical warfare** War in which harmful chemical substances are used with the intention to kill, injure, or otherwise incapacitate humans or to destroy the environment and national economies. A weapon of mass destruction.

The many chemical weapons are grouped in seven main categories in terms of their toxic properties: nerve agents (lethal), cyanide (lethal), tissue damaging vesicants (mustards, lewisites, halogenated oximes), psychotomimetics, riot control agents (incapacitating) and defoliants. Chemical weapons are internationally outlawed by the 1925 Geneva Protocol.

Sn: chemical weapon, CW

Cf. Chemical Weapons Convention, Geneva Conventions, GLAWARS, International Humanitarian Law, biological warfare, defoliant, agent orange, weapons of mass destruction, WMD

**Chemical weapons** According to the Chemical Weapons Convention, “chemical weapons” means the following together or separately: (a) toxic chemicals and their precursors... (b) munitions and devices specifically designed to cause death or other harm through their toxic properties...and (c) any equipment specifically designed for use directly in connection with the employment of munitions and devices specified above – CWC.

Cf. toxic chemical, chemical agents, biological weapons, bioterrorism, weapon of mass destruction

**Chemical Weapons Convention/ CWC** More exactly the Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical

Weapons (CWC) that entered into force in 1997 defines “chemical weapons” and “toxic chemicals” that are or may be used as weapons, sets measures of prohibition, establishes elaborate provisions on verification and also describes a list of chemicals not prohibited under the Convention. Cf. chemical weapons, toxic chemicals, chemical warfare

**Chemoprophylaxis** The administration of chemotherapeutic medications to a susceptible or contaminated person or germ carrier for the purpose of preventing the development of a clinical infection in him.

**Chernobyl** A town in Ukraine, site of a nuclear reactor that, during mechanical inspection, exploded and burned on 26 April 1986, causing radioactive contamination locally and in distant countries, with deaths, birth anomalies and agricultural and environmental damage extending far afield and over many years, still continuing. The whole reactor (No. 4) has been permanently covered under a heavy concrete sarcophagus and put definitively out of action. However, over time, this having proved insufficient, an all-steel sarcophagus is to be installed. The most serious nuclear disaster to this date, highest (level 7) on the INES scale. It resulted also in IAEA’s extensive revision, strengthening and continuous supervision of all nuclear facilities.

Cf. Three Mile Island, Sellafield, Windscale, Fukushima, reactor, man-made disaster, sarcophagus, concrete encasement, International Nuclear Event Scale, International Atomic Energy Agency

**Chikungunya fever** A viral fever transmitted by the mosquito *Aedes albopictus*.

Presents with headaches, joint pains, diarrhoea and vomiting with dehydration. Infrequent but sudden epidemics, e.g. La Réunion, 2006.

**Child** Every person under the age of 18 years (unless under national law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier) – Rights of the Child, 1989.

Every human being under the age of 18. The age limit, below which it should not be permitted to deprive a child of his or her liberty, should be determined by law – UN.

Sn: minor, juvenile

Cf. child abuse, child protection, child soldier, child prostitution, human rights, UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child

**Child abuse** An action or situation in which a child’s development is threatened or stunted due to systematically bad treatment, neglect, emotional harassment, sexual or other physical assaults, by a perpetrator who is a caretaker or family member.

Cf. child, child protection, child neglect, child soldier, UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child

**Child deaths tragedy** Nearly 11 million children under 5 die every year, mostly from diseases that are preventable.

**Child neglect** The child has the right to food, housing, clothing, medical care and adequate leisure to grow normally. Not providing these facilities constitutes neglect, punishable by law. The rights are applicable even under difficult circumstances, such as in a disaster situation.

Cf. child, UN Declaration on the Rights of the Child, Save the Children

**Child prostitution** The use of a child in sexual activities for remuneration or any other form of consideration – UN.

**Child protection** The necessary surveillance, care, protection and comfort provided to children who are at risk of abuse, neglect, army enlistment, sexual traffic or abandonment, or who have already suffered from such maltreatment.

Cf. child, child abuse, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Child soldiers** Children and minor age boys are being increasingly recruited, encouraged or forced into joining armed forces in several belligerent countries, especially in revolutionary armies, insurgent troops or illegal fighting groups, with extremely harmful effects on the children concerned and on their families. This is against all international law and the rights of the child and must be denounced.

**Chlorine** Chemically calcium hypochlorite, also called bleaching powder, a generally available chemical substance used for disinfection of water and waste products. Differently prepared solutions or powders are used for water chlorination (water purification, using 0.7 mg/l) and for disinfection of solids, such as powdering the latrines in a refugee community. Its excessive use in industry can cause severe environmental pollution.

Sn: bleaching powder, calcium hypochlorite

Cf. environment, hygiene, environmental pollution

**Chlorofluorocarbons (CFC)** A group of chemical compounds used in industry and in the household, mainly as the propelling agent in hairsprays, shaving foam, etc. Their excessive and universal use is believed to be one of the causes of ozone depletion, with resulting environmental damage.

Cf. ozone depletion, greenhouse effect

**Chloroquine** A classical quinine derivative that has been successful against malaria, but which has induced chloroquine resistance, with reduced effect.

Cf. mefloquine, quinine, malaria

**Cholera** A severe, acute infection of the intestines, characterized by profuse watery diarrhoea, vomiting, dehydration, muscle cramps and collapse. It is spread by the ingestion of food and water contaminated by the faeces of infected (symptomatic or asymptomatic) persons.

Several diarrhoeal diseases are diagnosed as cholera, but the latter is caused by the *Vibrio cholerae*. It is subject to international quarantine regulations.

Cf. cholera vaccine, diarrhoeal diseases, quarantine

**Cholera vaccine** A vaccine administered against cholera. It is of limited value and, in disaster situations, sanitary measures rather than vaccination suffice.

**Chromosome** The complex essential structure of the living cell nucleus containing deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) molecules. Chromosome aberration is any mutation of a chromosome due to toxic or radiation accidents that may result in harmful changes to the organism. The Y-chromosome designates the male sex, while the X-chromosome is paired in both male and female sexes.

Cf. genetic aberration, radioactive contamination, DNA

**Ciguatera** Human illness that often appears after tsunamis, caused by the absorption of toxins or marine animals, especially fish and crustaceans, characterized by gastrointestinal disturbance, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

It also seemed to appear following coral destruction from nuclear bomb testing in the Pacific Ocean.

Cf. diarrhoeal diseases, toxin, tsunami

**Circulatory failure** An adverse situation in a person when the cardiovascular system cannot provide sufficient oxygen and nutrients to the body's vital organs and remove the used metabolites.

Cf. cardiac arrest, ABC

**Circumcision** Male: Removal of the penile foreskin. May be for traditional, religious or medical reasons.

Female: Removal of the clitoris and labia in different forms. All are female genital mutilation.

Cf. female genital mutilation

**Civil defence** The system of measures, usually run by a governmental agency, to protect the civilian population in wartime and to prevent and mitigate the consequences of major emergencies in peacetime. The wider term civil protection is now preferred.

Cf. civil protection, International Civil Defence Organization

**Civil disturbance** Hostile confrontation among the population, for various reasons; conflict within the social order, with protests and unruly actions on the public domain; may degenerate into riots and need the intervention of the forces of order. May follow a tense disaster situation or may be the fair expression of justice against oppression.

**Civil liberties** The fundamental legal rights of all citizens to think, decide and act on their own, without state interference and without curtailing the rights of other citizens.

Cf. civil rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Civil protection** The organized actions of planning, training, preparedness and response to all emergencies at the local and national levels, with the view to protecting the civilian population in case of natural catastrophe, man-made disaster or war. As a wider, all-hazards approach, the term is now preferred to and covers civil defence. Cf. civil defence, International Civil Defence Organization

**Civil rights** According to international laws, it is the right of everyone, without distinction of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, to enjoy civil equality before the law, notably the following rights: (a) the right to equal treatment before the tribunal and justice; (b) the right to security and protection; (c) political rights; (d) other civil rights, in particular (i) freedom of movement and residence in one's State, (ii) to leave the country and return, (iii) nationality, (iv) marriage and choice of spouse, (v) own property, (vi) to inherit, (vii) freedom of thought, conscience and religion, (viii) opinion and expression, (ix) peaceful assembly and association; (e) economic, social and cultural rights, in particular (i) choice of work and employment, (ii) form and join trade unions, (iii) housing, (iv) public health, medical care, social security and social services, (v) education and training, (vi) equal participation in cultural activities; (f) the right of access to any place or service for the general public.

Cf. human rights

**Civil society** The aggregate of a very wide gamut of social and public organizations and structures, of any size or nature, within a society, that respond to a community's or citizens'



multifaceted needs and civil expectations, but exclude force, governmental, judiciary, military, police or ecclesiastic elements.

**Civil war** A much used but ill-clarified term, not defined in the Geneva Conventions. It refers to a war between organized armed insurgent opposition groups and the regular armed forces within the same nation or State. A recent definition is 'non-international armed conflict'.

Cf. war, armed conflict, guerilla, Geneva Conventions

**Class of fire** Fires can be classified according to size, according to the kind of fuel, whether natural or man-made, domestic or industrial, etc. Four classes are distinguished according to the kind of fuel and the resulting type of extinguishing, as follows:

**Class A:** Fires started from common combustibles, such as paper, wood, which require cooling, such as with water, retardants, etc.

**Class B:** Fires involving combustibles or inflammable liquid or gases, which require air exclusion for extinction.

**Class C:** Fires caused by electricity.

**Class D:** Fires due to some combustible metal, such as sodium, potassium, which are extinguishable by heat absorption.

**Classification of chemicals** Cf. chemical agents classification

**Classification of corrosive burns** Cf. corrosive burns classification

**Classification of chemical weapons** Cf. chemical weapons classification

**Classification of fires** Cf. class of fire

**Classification of civil rights** Cf. civil rights

**Climate** The aggregate of the average atmospheric conditions that

characterize the weather of a given area. Example: continental climate.

Cf. continental climate, equatorial climate, maritime climate, monsoon climate, mountain climate, macroclimate

**Climate change** An identifiable change in the state of the climate that persists for a long time, over decades, caused either by natural phenomena or due to human activity – after IPCC.

Cf. climate, climatic control

**Climate impact assessment** An investigative practice for identifying and evaluating the harmful as well as beneficial consequences of climate change on natural, living and human systems – after IPCC.

**Climatic control** The complex of climatic factors that relatively permanently determine the general characteristics of the climate in a given region of the earth.

Cf. climate

**Climatic zone** Wide region of the earth sharing a generally similar climate, along the same latitudes, limited by mountains, plains, bodies of water and other atmospheric factors.

Cf. climatic region

**Climatology Numerical** presentation of the components of a region's climate by the use of maps, charts, graphs, models, diagrams, texts, etc.

**Climatological forecast** Forecast based on studies of the climate of a region and not on the dynamic consequences of the current weather. (Not to be confused with weather forecast.)

Cf. weather forecast

**Climatology** The study of climates, including the statistical average variation, distribution and frequencies of the meteorological elements.

**Climigration** A new term to describe forced permanent migration of communities due to severe climatic

changes that impact on such infrastructures as schools, health clinics, livelihoods and well-being, e.g. seen recently in arctic regions – Bronen.

**Clinical trials** Scientific studies outside the laboratory through which the benefits of one or more medical therapies are assessed. The persons involved must give consent.

**Cluster** A group of similar things; or a natural grouping of persons, such as those of the same age, or the same sex; or a village in a district, in a refugee camp or other community. Convenient for statistics, administration or health programmes.

Cf. cohort

**Cluster bomb** A bomb that contains, and on impact disperses, more than 600 bomblets, which in turn explode over a wide perimeter, causing enormous damage directly. Up to 10–40% of the bombs or bomblets may not explode immediately and lie on or beneath the surface of the ground, secondarily exploding upon contact and causing further civilian injuries years after the cessation of hostilities. Many millions of cluster bombs still lie in open fields, unexploded, e.g. in Vietnam or in Southern Lebanon. The Oslo Treaty (2008) internationally prohibits their production, sale or use, but several States still unashamedly use or produce and sell them. Also known as fragmentation bombs.

Cf. fragmentation bomb, landmines, antipersonnel mines, Oslo Treaty

**CNN effect** Following news of a disaster situation or humanitarian crisis, the rise or fall in international awareness, interest and funding that fluctuate with the extent and duration of news media coverage.

Sn: CNN factor, media factor

**Coast** Shoreline of variable contours where the land, sea and atmosphere meet, with consequent environmental, social and economic influences.

Sn: littoral

**Coccidioidomycosis** A fungal infection due to inhalation of a soil fungus in dusty desert areas. Endemic in arid regions, particularly of the American continent.

**Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief** Cf. Disaster relief code of conduct

**CODESEDH** Spanish acronym for Committee for the Defence of Health, Professional Ethics and Human Rights, important humanitarian organization in Argentina and Latin America for human rights, especially against torture.

Cf. torture, ethics, human rights

**Code share** In the aviation industry, an agreement between airlines whereby a flight or other service is published with the codes of two or more airlines and the flight is operated by one of the participating carriers.

Cf. chartering

**Codex Alimentarius/CA** Jointly run by FAO and WHO, the CA Commission sets international food safety, production, quality and handling standards to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the national and international food trade.

**Coefficient of tide** The relation, at a given place, between the tidal range and the mean tidal range during a defined period.

Cf. tide

**Cohort** A group of persons of the same age group banded together or recruited into a population at the same time. Age class.

Cf. age profile, cluster

**Cold chain** System of refrigeration with appropriate apparatus and transport facilities to ensure the cold or frozen conservation of vaccines, blood, medicaments and tissues throughout the transfer, from the place of manufacture and expedition to the point of arrival and use.

For the blood cold chain the term “from vein to vein” is used.

Cf. vaccine, Expanded Programme on Immunization, refrigeration

**Cold front thunderstorm** Type of thunderstorm which occurs in series along a cold front or along a line that precedes a cold front.

Cf. thunderstorm

**Coliform bacilli** The various bacteria which are normal inhabitants of the intestines but which become pathogenic under certain conditions. *E. coli* is the commonest.

Cf. diarrhoeal diseases, enteric diseases

**Collateral damage** Injury to persons or damage to property inflicted unintentionally following the use of a weapon, a nuclear explosion, other attack or harmful event.

Cf. transboundary pollution, fallout, acceptable collateral damage

**Collective dose** In a nuclear accident or war, the total dose of radiation to an exposed population, expressed as the product of the mean individual dose by the total number of persons exposed.

Cf. absorbed dose, dose, maximum acceptable dose, retained dose

**Colonization/Colonialism** Microbiology: The setting and multiplication of microorganisms on a host species or bacteriological medium.

Politics: The claiming of alien lands forcefully, settling people and a

foreign government on such lands, thus colonizing the country and exercising power and activities usually with primary consideration for their own benefits rather than the interests of the host (colonized) population. Colonialism, with colonies and colonial empires, was part of international power politics from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, with a dominant’s psychology of the powerful colonizer and depressed reaction of the colonized. Most colonies gained freedom in the mid-twentieth century.

**Command and control** A term and system borrowed from the military which relates to the organization, coordination, process and control of all stages and methods of activities to ensure the successful management of a disaster or other major event.

**Commission of European Communities** The institutional arrangements bringing together the European Communities with the aim of gradually integrating their economies and moving towards political unity, with a European Parliament in Brussels. The name has been changed to European Union (EU). Has an active programme (Echo) for disaster relief and assistance to developing countries and civil protection.

Sn: European Union

Cf. Council of Europe, ECHO

**Commodity rate** In transportation, special low rates applicable in air freight traffic for certain categories of supplies, e.g. emergency medicines, between designated airports of origin and destination.

Sn: concessionary rate

**Common source outbreak** A disease outbreak that results from a group of

persons being exposed to the same common agent.

**Communal dwelling** A housing estate, usually multistorey, sharing common areas (entrance, stairs, etc.) and services (heating, caretaking) built to house a considerable number of people.

Cf. dwelling, services

**Communal facilities** All the physical infrastructure and the social and cultural facilities needed for the collective life of a community.

Cf. community

**Communicable disease** An infectious condition that can be transmitted from one living person or animal to another person or animal through a variety of channels, according to the nature of the disease.

Sn: infectious disease, contagious disease

Cf. contagious period

**Communicable period** Period during which an infectious agent can be transmitted directly or indirectly from one person or animal to another person or animal. Sn: contagious period, transmissible period

Cf. carrier, infection

**Communication resources** Inventory of all public and private communication facilities: police, fire, military, government, private radio, amateur (HAM) radio operators, newspapers, other news media, television, telephone and telex, Internet, social network, satellite and other facilities that can be used in time of disaster.

**Community** The complex of individuals or groups of varying size sharing common values, interests or problems, within a given area. Examples: neighbourhood community, rural community, European community.

**Community health worker** A health worker, male or female, chosen by the community and usually living in the community, trained to deal with the health problems of his community and its individuals and to work in close relationship with the health services. CHWs provide the first contact between the individual and health system – WHO.

Cf. primary health care, community

**Complex disaster/Complex Emergency** A major disaster or complicated emergency situation affecting large civilian populations, which is further aggravated by intense political and/or military interferences, including war or civil strife, resulting in serious food shortage, epidemics, population displacements, poverty, loss of human liberties and significant increase in mortality, rendering the management of the situation very complex. Breakdown of government infrastructures hampers humanitarian aid. Examples: Afghanistan, Rwanda, Somalia. (Not to be confused with compound disaster.)

Cf. compound disaster, disaster

**Complex Emergencies Database** CE-DAT, a compilation by CRED that provides information on health, nutrition mortality and epidemiology in complex humanitarian emergencies.

Cf. EM-DAT, Centre for Research in Epidemiology of Disasters, complex emergencies, compound emergencies

**Complexity theory** An approach for transforming the chaotic and complicated into something understandable and simpler. A theory according to which a large number of seemingly independent agents can be made to spontaneously organize

themselves into a coherent, less complex system.

Cf. chaos theory, catastrophe theory

**Compound disaster** A disaster where the concurrent occurrence of more than one kind of major emergency at the same time and place magnifies, aggravates and compounds the destructive event. Example, the 2011 disaster in Japan represented an earthquake, a tsunami, a nuclear reactor failure and a great number of deaths, all taking place on 11 March and in the same region, compounding the seriousness and complication of the disaster. (Not to be confused with complex disaster, where the political, conflict and military elements are predominant factors.) – Gunn.

Cf. complex disaster

**Concentration at ground level** The degree of concentration of a pollutant in the air, measured from ground level up to an adult person's height.

Sn: ground level concentration

**Concentration camp** A supervised and controlled area, provided with buildings, huts or tents and other minimal facilities, reserved for the accommodation of political prisoners, prisoners of war, internees and other victims and persons or groups that the authorities wish to keep under control. Some concentration camps, such as Auschwitz, have been notoriously brutal death camps, against all humanitarian law.

Cf. prison, prisoner of war, Auschwitz, pogrom

**Concessionary rate** Sn: commodity rate

**Conciliation** Cf. arbitration

**Concrete encasement** Rendering completely and definitively out of commission a nuclear facility, such as the damaged reactor in Chernobyl, by

totally and hermetically covering/sealing it in heavily reinforced concrete, known as a sarcophagus. However, with time, cracks, wear and leakages, the expected safety has failed, and a new steel sarcophagus is being constructed. A continuous disaster.

Cf. Chernobyl, sarcophagus, nuclear activity, reactor

**Concussion** A relatively mild, temporary mental alteration, with or without loss of consciousness, following head injury.

**Conditioning** Psychophysiological mechanism, and techniques, of associations between a simple or complex stimulus and an unconscious act.

**Confidentiality** The principle and practice of ensuring and maintaining the privacy and security of any information obtained in trust from or concerning a person or institution in the privileged circumstances of a hierarchical, personal or professional relationship.

**Conflagration** Fire: any great, serious and destructive fire.

In nuclear war, the propagation of fires by the wind, following the coalescence of separate fires ignited by the explosion's thermal pulse or blast wave – Rotblat.

Cf. fireball, firestorm, nuclear war, superfires

**Conflict** A general term for any military, political or ideological struggle, armed or otherwise; personal group opposition, antagonism or clash; declared or undeclared hostilities, civil war, fighting within a state or between one or more enemy countries. If undeclared or international, the instruments of International Humanitarian Law of the United Nations may have difficulty to apply.

Cf. armed conflict, war, Geneva Conventions, International Humanitarian Law, United Nations

**Conflict diamonds** The illegal practice of certain warlords, kleptocrats and unethical financiers to provide funds for wars and conflicts, especially in Africa, through the illicit sale of diamonds. Measures of international certification of diamonds are introduced (Kimberley Process) to counteract such sales. Also referred to as blood diamonds.

Cf. blood diamonds, Kimberley Process, conflict, kleptocracy

**Conscientious objector** Person who on moral grounds and personal conscience refuses, rejects, objects to undertaking certain actions, especially military service. In some tolerant countries, such release from military service may be supplanted by useful social service.

**Consent** General: Voluntarily giving one's agreement or permission to a proposed plan, complying with another person's expressed desire or concurring with a plan of action.

Health care: All treatment or experimentation must have the patient's informed consent. Forced declarations, unconsented experiments, undesired treatment or actions are not permitted.

Cf. Nuremberg Code, Helsinki Declaration

**Consignment** In transport and shipping, a certain amount of cargo, defined by one transport document, where its weight, size, number of parcels or appearance are stated.

**Consolidation** In transport and shipping, the assembling of several loads originating from several sources for joint dispatch.

**Contact case** Person living in proximity to a contagious patient likely or

suspected to have been contaminated and possible to suffer or transmit the disease, thus necessitating surveillance and prophylactic measures.

Cf. carrier, communicable period, contamination, surveillance

**Contagious period** Sn: communicable period

**Container** A standard shipping metallic box, of steel or aluminium, with double doors at one end, in use on sea routes, for easier handling and safe transportation of cargo. There are two types: the 20-ft container, 30 m<sup>3</sup> capacity, 18 tons load and the 40 ft, 60 m<sup>3</sup> capacity, 30 tons load. Discarded containers have at times been transformed and used as dwellings in disaster or refugee areas.

Cf. crate

**Contamination**

1. Invasion of a person or animal by pathogenic germs (contaminants).
2. Presence of an infectious agent on inanimate articles such as clothes, surgical instruments, dressings, water, milk, food.
3. Undesirable presence of a radioactive material.
4. Transfer or propagation of a contaminant.

Cf. infection, radioactive contamination

**Continental anticyclone** Anticyclone situated over a continent during the cold season, caused mainly by prolonged cooling of the earth's surface and by low temperatures in the lower layers of the atmosphere.

Cf. anticyclone

**Continental climate** The typical climate of the interior of continents characterized by the large annual or daily amplitude of the temperature.

Cf. climate

**Continental erosion** Disintegration, in every form, of the soil through the

effect of atmospheric agents: frost, dripping, wind, temperature variations, chemical reactions, streaming.

Cf. erosion, wind

**Continental shelf** The submarine continuation of the margins of the continent extending beneath the sea at a gentle slope.

**Contingency plan** An anticipatory emergency plan to be followed in an expected or eventual disaster, based on risk assessment, availability of human and material resources, community preparedness, local and international response capability, etc.

Sn: emergency plan

Cf. disaster plan, plan

**Contribution** Material or financial aid to an organization or country, without compensation expected from the recipient.

Sn: donation

Cf. aid, donor, recipient

**Contribution in kind** Assistance in case of disaster that consists of materials (e.g. tents, pharmaceuticals) or services (e.g. experts, transport) but not of monetary donations or financial help.

Sn: in-kind contribution

Cf. relief

**Conurbation** The comprehensive system composed of a town and its extensions, with suburbs, shopping centre, station, green spaces, etc.

Cf. urbanization

**Convective thunderstorm** Thunderstorm that accompanies a convective cloud, especially when such a cloud is caused by local conditions, such as forest fires.

**Convention refugee** Person who meets the definition of Article I of the 1951 UN Convention relative to the status of refugees.

Cf. refugee, refugee protection, UNHCR

**Conventional arms/weapons** Arms, weapons or forces that are non-nuclear, non-biological, non-chemical, such as conventional guns, tanks, battleships, aircraft, troops, etc. Whence conventional defence, conventional forces. They are the opposite of arms/weapons of mass destruction.

Cf. weapons of mass destruction

**Conventional food** Food available or obtained through the traditional methods of agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, gathering or cooking within the community and not subjected to unconventional, foreign processing methods.

Cf. bulghur, cassava, sorghum, yam, yoghourt

**Convergence in disasters** A common phenomenon in disaster situations, people moving in many different directions but converging in mainly two different ways: (1) internal convergence: towards hospitals, casualty points, rescue centres, morgue, television stations; (2) external convergence: aid suppliers, NGOs, disaster responders, the press, etc. Proper management of these diverse movements is important.

**Copenhagen Declaration** The World Summit for Social Development, gathered in Copenhagen in 1995, studied and declared the broad range of social services, political, economic cultural health, institutional and other factors that retard or influence social development, especially under changing forces of globalization that often bypass the state. The Copenhagen Declaration contains ten Commitments:

(1) Enabling environment for social development, (2) eradication, (3)



full employment and secure and sustainable livelihoods, (4) social integration, (5) gender equity, (6) basic services and promotion of culture, (7) accelerated development of Africa (8) and least developed countries, (9) social dimensions in structural environment, (10) increased revenues for social development.

The follow-up World Summit for Social Development and Beyond – Achieving Social Development for All in a Globalizing World met in Geneva in 2000 and endorsed and strengthened these Commitments.

Cf. development, socio-economic survey, MDGs

**Coping capacity** For a country, the coping capacity is the degree of preparedness and adaptation of its population, of its institutions and its physical readiness, depending on the available resources, plans and abilities.

At the individual level, on impact or following a disaster, some persons demonstrate an acute stress reaction, which is a severe but rapidly transient episode in otherwise healthy conditions. Not all persons suffer such a disorder, as they have a better biological and mental response capacity. Increased coping capacity may also be demonstrated by groups or populations, amounting to resilience.

Cf. disaster preparedness, adaptability, resilience, burn out, post-traumatic stress

**Cor Unum** Cf. Caritas Internationalis

**Corium** In a nuclear reactor accident, designates the melted nuclear and metallic material that remains in the tanks.

Cf. nuclear accident

**Corn-soya blend** A nutritional mixture made up of:

69.7% cornmeal, processed, gelatinized

22% soya flour, defatted, toasted

5.5% soya oil, refined, deodorized, stabilized

2.7% mineral premix

0.1% vitamin antioxidant premix

Sn: CSB

Cf. food mixtures

**Corn-soya-milk** A nutritional mixture made up of:

59.2% cornmeal, processed, gelatinized

17.5% soya flour, defatted, toasted

15% non-fat dry milk, spray processed

5.5% soya oil, refined, deodorized, stabilized

2.7% mineral premix

0.1% vitamin, antioxidant premix

Sn: CSM

Cf. food mixtures

**Corrosion**

1. Burns: Synonym for chemical burn. The chemical agents that cause burns can be basically divided into alkalis and acids. Other agents are phosphorus and blister forming (mainly war) gases.

Cf. chemical burns.

2. Metallurgy: The gradual destruction or rusting of a metal or alloy due to oxidation and action of chemicals, causing weakness and metal fatigue that may result in equipment failure or building collapse.

**Corruption** Morally contemptible, unethical and socially unacceptable acts by commission or omission with the view to illegally obtaining and amassing, property, position, favours, false statements, advancement and wealth, mainly by extortion, coercion and undemocratic ways, in exchange of bribes, power, promotion, money,

personal favours, threats and unlawful actions. Very unfortunately, such condemnable acts are common and institutionalized in some countries or governments that have no concern for the real needs of their people and constitute causes of poverty and underdevelopment.

Cf. kleptocracy, deontology, ethics, Transparency International, man-conceived disaster

**Cosmic radiation** Beams of very high energy particles (protons, alpha particles and certain heavier nuclei) of solar, galactic or extragalactic origin.

Cf. ionizing radiation

**Cost-benefit** Cf. cost-benefit analysis

**Cost-benefit analysis**

1. Study of the various elements of a situation in order to determine the feasibility of an aid or action
2. Methods to compare alternatives of the price (costs) and advantages (benefits) of an operation in monetary terms with the view to determining the most desirable course of action.

Cf. cost-effectiveness analysis

**Cost-effectiveness analysis** A method of evaluation of programmes whereby the costs are quantified in monetary terms and the advantages in non-monetary terms of effectiveness in relation to the desired goal.

Cf. cost-benefit analysis, goal

**Council of Europe** Organization bringing together, at Strasbourg, all the States of Europe, to “achieve a greater unity for the purpose of safeguarding and realizing the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress”. Not to confuse with the European Union. Promotes the European Centre for Disaster Medicine, human rights.

Sn: CE

Cf. European Centre for Disaster Medicine, European Union

**Council on Health Research for Development/COHRED** Government-aided, non-profit international organization that promotes and facilitates health research, especially in developing countries, with priority for diseases in the poorest countries.

Cf. ten/ninety gap

**Counterfeit drugs** Medicaments that are fraudulently manufactured, or illegally mislabelled or mispackaged or fake concerning their origin and pharmacology, sold for gain and not for health benefits. Dangerous.

**Counterforce attack** Nuclear weapons deployed against the enemy’s military installations, as distinct from economic and industrial targets.

Cf. countervalue attack, nuclear war

**Countervalue attack** Nuclear weapons deployed against the enemy’s industrial and economic potential, as distinct from its military bases.

Cf. counterforce attack, nuclear war

**Country economic profile** Economic categorization of countries by the World Bank according to their gross national income, GNI (previously GNP, gross national product). For 2008 the grouping is (a) low-income countries: US\$975 or less, (b) lower-middle income: US\$976–3,855, (c) upper-middle income: US\$ 3,856–11,905, (d) higher income: US\$11,906 or more.

**Country health profile** Summary description of a country’s existing morbidity; mortality; endemic diseases; chronic conditions; nutritional state; demographic profile; health facilities as hospitals, outpatient clinics, health centres, pharmacies, mother and child facilities, care delivery

systems, ambulances; health resources, as physicians, nurses, primary health care personnel. May include Ministry of Health budget.

**Country of asylum** Country which offers some protection to a person who has fled his country of origin, of nationality or of usual residence.

Cf. asylum, protection of refugees, territorial asylum

**Country of first asylum** The first country where a refugee arrives and receives asylum after having left his own country.

Cf. refugee, territorial asylum

**Country of second asylum** Country, other than that of first asylum, that accepts a refugee for asylum and settlement.

Cf. asylum, country of first asylum, refugee, territorial asylum

**Covenant** A binding agreement. In international relations, it is often used for a treaty.

Cf. treaty

**Cranfield Mine Action** A unit at Cranfield University, UK, that supports UN and governmental activities in research, management and training for the improvement of anti-mine action.

Cf. mines, antipersonnel mines, Ottawa Treaty, Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining

**Crate** In transport or shipping, open case made of planks assembled, nailed and strapped, which show contents or their inner packing, as opposed to a closed case.

Cf. container

**Crater** The bowl-shaped cavity due to the eruption of a volcano, to an explosion or to impact. Usually the mouth of a volcano.

**Creep** In earthquake science creep refers to the fault displacement that occurs as slow aseismic slip, as in the San

Andreas fault in California. It is not clear whether changes in creep may be associated with earthquake precursors.

In disasterology, a creeping disaster refers to a slow-onset disaster, as in drought leading to famine.

**Creeping disaster** A disaster of insidious onset and slow progress, such as famine, drought, desertification, health deterioration or epidemic, that does not become manifest until damage and suffering reach extensive proportions in numbers and gravity and need massive emergency response.

There is also a kind of creeping earthquake.

Sn: slow onset disaster

**Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease** Subacute spongiform encephalopathy. A slow brain infection with progressive visual disturbances, dementia, neuromuscular disequilibrium (ataxia) and death. Caused by a new class of infectious agents close to proteins, called prions. It is a human variant of mad cow disease and bovine spongiform encephalopathy. Can spread in epidemic proportions by ingestion of infected meat, especially beef.

Sn: human spongiform encephalopathy

Cf. mad cow disease, prion, BSE, zoonosis

**Crime of aggression** In its revision of the Treaty of Rome the Kampala Conference of 2010 as well as the Princeton Process have defined “crime of aggression” for the International Criminal Court. The UN Charter defines it as “the gravest ...unlawful use of force”.

Cf. aggression, crime of

**Crimes against humanity** Crimes concerning the international community as a whole, carried out in widespread and/or systematic manner, and/or on

a massive scale and/or on specified grounds, in war or peacetime. According to the International Criminal Court, they include any of the following acts committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack: (a) murder; (b) extermination; (c) enslavement; (d) deportation or forcible transfer of population; (e) imprisonment or other deprivation of physical liberty; (f) torture; (g) rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, enforced sterilization or any other comparable sexual violence; (h) persecution against any identifiable group on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender or other grounds universally impermissible; (i) enforced disappearance of persons; (j) crime of apartheid; (k) other inhumane acts of similar character intentionally causing suffering – ICT. Such crimes are punishable by International Law.

Cf. human rights, extermination, genocide, International Criminal Court, man-conceived disaster, concentration camp, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Crisis** From the Greek *krinō*, decide; a low probability but high-consequent, crucial event, usually a harmful turning point, a dangerous and critical moment of decision in management, commerce, war, law, illness, personal or social relations that poses a grave challenge and requires immediate action.

Cf. crisis management, coping capacity

**Crisis management** The art, managerial skills, preparedness, provision of facilities, leadership capacity for rapid decisions, to assemble all

required aids and act appropriately at the right moment with the view to an appropriate solution, damage control or disaster response.

Cf. Health Action in Crises (WHO)

**Crisis relocation** Due to a disaster or other critical necessity, the planned and orderly evacuation and siting of individuals or populations to a safer and more appropriate area. This should under no circumstances be a deportation.

Cf. deportation, resettlement

**Critical facilities** The primary physical structures, technical facilities and systems which are socially, economically or operationally essential to the functioning of a society or community, both in routine circumstances and in the extreme circumstances of an emergency – UNISDR.

**Critical pathway(s)** In management, a road map or outline of step-by-step actions and processes to be followed to best achieve the desired goal.

**Crop rotation** Cultivation of successive different crops on the same land, over a number of seasons, in order to maintain the fertility of the soil.

**Cross-cultural study** An investigation and documentation in which populations from different cultural backgrounds in a given area are compared.

**Crowd** A multiple of persons fortuitously or voluntarily gathered in a particular place, with or without any obvious organization. Crowds can become an additional riot problem in disaster situations.

**Crush syndrome** A severe, life-threatening trauma caused by an extensive compression (crushing), e.g. by entrapment under rubble in an earthquake, resulting in massive destruction of muscle and bone, bleeding,

fluid loss, with release of toxins (myoglobin) in the circulation and kidney damage.

Cf. emergency medical services, trauma scale, shock

**Cultural relativism** A view according to which cultural differences should be taken into account and interpreted differently when certain principles (such as the fundamental values of human rights) are considered in different cultures. A doctrine that is opposed to the principle of universality of values, e.g. that all human rights are held by all persons and cultures without distinction, and makes way to differences.

Cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Culture** A combination of beliefs, traditions, customs, myths, practices, moral values, religious obligations and intellectual qualities that are associated with or recognized as the heritage of a group of people, citizens of a country or members of a national or ethnic community.

**Cumulative effect** The progressive increase, by summation, of the effects of an external agent on an organism, an individual or society.

**Custom** The usual way of doing things, behaving, reacting in face of a particular situation or appearing according to a tradition. In jurisprudence, custom is established usage having the force of law. Expatriate disaster responders must respect local customs and traditions even under emergency conditions, as directed by standard No. 5 of the Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief.

Cf. customary law, Code of conduct in disaster relief

**Customary Law** Customs that have been so much associated with a particular population or country and have been in practice for so long that they

have become binding and part of codified law.

In international law, customary law refers to the law of nations.

Cf. custom

**Cyanide** Hydrogen cyanide and cyanogen chloride, called blood gas, lethal chemical weapons.

Cf. chemical warfare, Geneva Protocol, WMD, CBW

**Cyberwar** The use of secret electronic computer-based viruses intruding from a distance in the opponent's military, economic or other competing system, by hackers intercepting, making it unusable or destroying it, e.g. Stuxnet.

Cf. Stuxnet, star wars, hacking, Strategic Defense Initiative

**Cyclone** A storm characterized by the converging and rising gyrotory movement of the wind around a zone of low pressure (the eye) towards which it is violently pulled from a zone of high pressure. Its circulation is counterclockwise round the centre in the northern hemisphere, clockwise in the southern hemisphere.

Cf. non-tropical cyclone, tropical cyclone, hurricane, typhoon, Beaufort scale, Saffir-Simpson scale

**Cyclone warning** Meteorological message intended to warn the population concerned of the existence or approach of a cyclone. It may be accompanied by advice on protective measures to take.

**Cyclonic rain** In the classification of rainfall, it denotes a violent heavy and continuous rain whose minimal intensity is rarely below 5–10 mm/h. The two other classes are "orographic" and "convective" rain.

**Cysticercosis** An intestinal helminth infection caused by the larvae (cysticerci) of *Taenia solium* (pork tapeworm) which also attacks the muscles.

Sn: tapeworm infection, taeniasis  
 Cy. neglected tropical disease, zoonosis

## D

**DALE/DALY** Acronyms for disability adjusted life expectancy and disability adjusted life years (Cf.)

**Dag Hammarskjöld Library/UN** The principal United Nations Library in New York, depository of all the documents, reports, publications in all the spheres of the UN and specialized agencies and other publications in the international field.

**Dam** A strong barrier structure built across a river basin to retain, divert or control the flow for such purposes as water supply, navigation, power production, flood control, irrigation. The resulting changes may have important socio-economic and environmental consequences.

**Damage assessment/analysis** Detailed evaluation and determination of the actual damages caused by a disaster. Sn: damage analysis

Cf. damage forecasting, damage probability formula

**Damage classification** Evaluation and recording of damage to the built environment, structures, objects or facilities according to categories.

1. "Severe damage": damage that precludes further use of the structure, facility or object for its intended purpose.
2. "Moderate damage": degree of damage to principal members that would preclude effective use of the structure, facility, or object for its intended use, unless major repairs were made short of complete reconstruction.

3. "Light damage", such as broken window, slight damage to roof and siding, interior partitions blown down and cracked walls; the damage not being severe enough to preclude use of installation for the purpose for which it was intended – OFDA.

Cf. damage assessment

**Damage control** Cf. damage mitigation, crisis management

**Damage forecasting** Study made prior to a disaster, of the situation, expected or eventual damage and probable effects of different types of disaster.; Cf. damage assessment, disaster preparedness

**Damage mitigation** Decisions and measures taken to attenuate or lessen the extent of damage, of hardship and of suffering caused by disaster.

Cf. disaster mitigation, crisis management

**Damage probability formula**

$$P_D = f(P_H)(H_{\text{man}} + H_{\text{nat}})(R_H) \\ (V_{\text{nat}} + a_1 + a_2 + b_1 + b_2)$$

where:  $P$  is the probability,  $D$  is the damage or disaster;

$P_D$  is the probability that an event will inflict damage on the society or environment at risk;

$H$  is hazard;

$R_H$  is the probability (risk) that this hazard will be converted into an event;

$f$  is a function of the relationship between all the variables contained within and between the brackets;

$P_H$  is the probability of an event occurring that may result in damage;

$H_{\text{man}}$  is the human component responsible for the hazard to exist;

$H_{\text{nat}}$  is hazard as given by nature;  $V$  is vulnerability;

$V_{\text{nat}}$  is the natural vulnerability;  $a$  is the sum of the actions before an event occurs;

$a_1$  is the augmentation of vulnerability;

$a_2$  is mitigation of vulnerability;  $b$  is the sum of the actions taken during or after an event occurs;

$b_1$  is counterproductive disaster response;

$b_2$  is the productive, alleviatory disaster response.

(The term  $f$  for function must be considered as a *generic* mathematical entity, not meant as a quantitative statement.)

The ultimate objective of disaster management is to bring the probability that damage will occur ( $P_D$ ) as close to zero as possible – WADEM.

Cf. damage assessment, damage forecasting, damage mitigation, human failure, Utstein, WADEM

**De facto refugee** A term used for two categories of persons:

- (a) Persons who fulfil the requirements of a refugee definition but who, for various reasons, such as a procedural delay in submitting the application within a specified time, have not been registered as refugees.
- (b) Persons who cannot prove a justified fear of persecution within the meaning of refugee definition, but who are considered, on similar grounds, to have valid reasons for not wishing to return to their country of origin.

Cf. refugee

**De jure refugee** Sn: statutory refugee; Cf. refugee

**Death rate** The ratio between the number of deaths in a given time and the total number of the population.; Sn: mortality rate

**Debris flow** A flow of dense concentration of mud, rocks, trees, construction remains and refuse, carried downwards.

Cf. mud flow

**Decedent** Person who has died. A dead individual.

**Deck cargo** In transport and shipping, under deck cargo means goods stowed inside the holds of a vessel; on deck cargo means goods stowed above the holds “on deck”, on the vessel, mostly because of their hazardous nature. On deck cargo will be the first to be jettisoned in case of emergency. Deck goods are always carried without any acceptance of responsibility by the carrier.

**Declaration of disaster** Official announcement made by the competent authorities declaring a state of emergency in the wake of a disaster and the need for special measures to cope with it. Certain donor countries and organizations cannot provide assistance unless a disaster has been officially declared by the stricken country and aid requested.

Cf. request for disaster assistance

**Decontamination** Bacteriology: Reducing the microbial presence and infection capacity to a safe level.; Nuclear: In the context of radiation contamination, all the physical and other measures taken to reduce radiation activity in terms of physical quantity, activity of waste and the radionuclide content.



**Defibrillator** A device that sends a strong electric charge to the myocardium, thus stimulating conduction tissue and restoring regular sinus rhythm to a heart in fibrillation or that has ceased to beat – Last.

**Deficiency disease** A general term that denotes physiological dysfunction due to the lack or insufficiency of a number of factors needed to ensure health and well-being. It may be due to lack of nutritional factors (nutritional deficiency, protein energy deficiency, vitamin deficiency), biological (iron deficiency, iodine deficiency), immunological deficiency (genetic or acquired), etc.

When not specified and especially in disaster situations, the term usually denotes nutritional deficiency.

Sn: deficiency syndrome

Cf. vitamin deficiency, goitre

**Deflation** The removal and erosion of soil by the wind.

**Defoliant** Chemical compound used as pesticide, especially against plant pests. Also used as a weapon in chemical warfare.

Cf. chemical warfare, pesticide, agent orange

**Deforestation** Destruction of forests or the clearing of an area of its trees and undergrowth, which can lead to a major deterioration of the environmental conditions, such as soil erosion, disturbance of the water table and catchment areas, scarcity of animal life, temperature changes, etc.

Cf. catchment basin, environment, erosion, soil erosion

**Degree of adaptability** The relative ability of a living organism, of a society or of a population to adapt to unfavourable changes in the environment. Cf. adaptation, environment

**Dehydration** Depletion of the body's water and fluid reserves, with disturbances of cellular salts, due to excessive fluid loss (diarrhoea, vomiting, heavy perspiration, fever) or insufficient intake (drought, malnutrition), or metabolic disease or a combination of these, causing cell damage, particularly serious in infants and in debilitated persons. A 10–15% water deficit constitutes moderate to severe dehydration. The maximum degree of loss compatible with life is about 20%. Provision of fluids and rehydration salts is vital.

Cf. cholera, diarrhoea, rehydration salts, water

**Delegate**

1. Representative of an international organization in a foreign country.
2. Title of the expert representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Cf. representative

**Delirium** An acute state of confusion, usually a consequence of intoxication by drugs, alcohol or other substances. May also accompany a high degree of fever, especially in children.

**Delta** Triangular configuration of a section of coast open to the sea, created by the alluvial deposits at the mouth of a river, often – but not always – traversed by its branches. Example: the Nile delta.

Cf. alluvium, mouth

**Democracy** From the Greek *demos*=people, and *kratein*=rule. Rule by the people, as opposed to rule by a person or autocrat. The form of government in which the sovereign power resides in the people, with equal rights for all, and exercised by free vote through their representatives.

Cf. autocrat, dictator

**Democratic Control of Armed Forces/ Geneva Centre for** A Swiss-led international foundation in Geneva with mission to assist the international community in pursuance of good governance and reform of the security sector by developing norms and standards, conducting policy research, promoting the rule of law and supporting democratic security governance.

Sn: DCAF

**Demographic concentration** The establishment of a population over a given territory.

Sn: population concentration

**Demography** The quantitative study of human populations and of their variations.

**Demurrage** In transportation and storage, the rent in railway sheds. Penalty for keeping containers longer than allowed. Penalty for immobilization of a vessel longer than allowed for loading/unloading and payable by owners of the goods.

**Dengue** An acute febrile illness of sudden onset, with headache, fever, prostration, swollen glands, joint and muscle ache and skin rash. Transmitted through the mosquito, it can cause epidemics in displaced settlements. A more serious form is dengue haemorrhagic fever. A neglected tropical disease.

Sn: dengue fever

Cf. dengue haemorrhagic fever, neglected tropical disease

**Dengue haemorrhagic fever** A severe form of dengue with sudden fever, bleeding and collapse, often fatal. Prevalent in Southeast Asia and India. Cf. dengue

**Denial** Cf. rejection

**Density factor** The ratio of the concentration of a radionuclide in an

organism (organ or tissue) to the concentration of that radionuclide in the environment.

Cf. radionuclide, maximum acceptable concentration

**Denudation**

1. Geology: Stripping or laying bare of rocks by removal of the topping soil or other ground cover.

Sn: stripping.

2. Medicine: Exposing a vein for intravenous infusion, e.g. for fluid loss.

Sn: cut-down

**Deontology** The study and application of a particular profession's ethics – in this case, the ethics and correct practices of the medical profession, disaster managers and the law.

**Deoxyribonucleic acid/DNA** The molecule that carries the genetic information for most living systems.

Sn: DNA

Cf. chromosome

**Dependence** Social: The situation of relying on someone else and needing personal support.

Societal: A community, e.g. refugees, flood victims, or a government depending on outside aid.

Medical: An addicted person dependent on drugs. Sn: substance abuse.

**Depopulation** A fall in the population of a region due to (a) emigration or (b) an excess of deaths over births.

Cf. birth rate, death rate, emigration

**Deportation** The forcible transfer of a population, forced displacement of the persons concerned by expulsion or other coercive acts, from the area where they are lawfully present, without grounds permitted under international law – ICC.

Cf. civil rights, human rights, International Criminal Court, UDHR, disappearance, genocide

## Depression

1. Atmosphere/climatology: Centre of an atmospheric pressure which is low in relation to the surrounding region at the same level. It is characterized by high winds that increase towards the centre and blow mainly anticlockwise in the northern hemisphere.  
Sn: non-tropical cyclone  
Cf. cyclone
2. Psychology: A state of gloominess, sadness, dejection, low spirits.
3. Economics: A period marked by \_ business downturn, high unemployment, low wages, gloomy finances. Its persistence and worsening may lead to an economic disaster.

**Desert** Region characterized by excessive dryness (WMO dryness ratio greater than 10), too little rainfall, extremely poor vegetation, no arable land, shifting sand, very sparse population and particularly difficult living conditions.

Cf. desertification, drought, famine

**Desertification** Processes whereby a semi-arid ecosystem loses the capacity of seasonal revival or repair and progresses towards becoming desert. As a result of climatic factors and human activity (excessive grazing, deforestation, bush fires, etc.), there is increase of bare soil, decrease of vegetation-covered soil, rise in reflection of solar light, excessive to permanent loss of plant life, soil erosion and impoverishment. Such degradation causes environmental damage well beyond its boundaries and is itself a combined natural and man-made disaster.

Cf. desert, drought, famine, savannah, semi-arid zone, Sahel

**Developing country** A country where the economic indicators show low levels of industrialization, low gross

national income (GNI, previously GDP), low literacy rate, health levels, life expectancy, students per capita and low levels of investment and saving.

Cf. country economic categories, development, emerging countries

**Development** A comprehensive economic, social, cultural and political process which aims at the constant improvement and well-being of the entire population and of individuals on the basis of their actions, free meaningful participation in development and in the fair distribution of benefits therefrom – UN: The Right to Development.

Cf. sustainable development, Millennium Development Goals

**Development Assistance Research Associates/DARA** An independent NGO based in Spain and Switzerland devoted to the effectiveness and quality of developmental aid to vulnerable populations affected by conflict, disaster or climate change. Provides objective quality analysis and evaluation of humanitarian operations and contributes to the improvement of donor assistance according to its Humanitarian Response Index and Good Humanitarian Donorship aims.

Sn: DARA International

Cf. good humanitarian donorship, humanitarian response index, HRI, international assistance, beneficiary, humanitarian charter

**Deworming** Eliminating pathological, infectious worms from the intestinal tract by the oral administration of appropriate medicines.

**Diamonds (corruption)** Cf. blood diamonds, conflict diamonds, Kimberley Process, kleptocracy

**Diarrhoea** Increased fluidity, frequency and volume of bowel movements per day. Usually endemic in developing countries, it can rise to alarming proportions, with dehydration, in unsanitary or disaster situations. Passing at least three liquid stools a day is generally considered to constitute diarrhoea. Cf. diarrhoeal diseases, oral rehydration

**Diarrhoeal diseases** Common gastrointestinal diseases caused by a variety of pathogenic agents – that most often remain unidentified – involving most often young, undernourished children, especially in developing countries. In disaster conditions, these diseases become more widespread and serious due to shortage of drinking water, lack of hygiene and insufficient food. Infantile diarrhoea is caused mainly by premature weaning and artificial feeding.

Cf. diarrhoea, hygiene, malnutrition, oral rehydration

**Diaspora** From the Greek, literally means dispersing the seed. The scattering of a large population from its usual, traditional habitat or country by massive departures, through socio-economic difficulties, coercion, persecution or deportation and dispersing or settling among other populations in other countries. Examples: the Irish diaspora in the United States, Ukrainians in Canada, Huguenots in South Africa, Armenians in France, Palestinians in the Middle East.

Cf. deportation, refugee, exodus, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Diet** The rational consumption of solid and liquid foods by a healthy or sick individual or by a population.

**Dietetics** The science and principles of food for the healthy and the sick person, with the aim of satisfying the energy and nutritional needs of the body.

Cf. health, needs, nutrition

**Dioxin** The chemical compound 2, 3, 7, 8, tetra chlorodibenzo-p-dioxin, an extremely toxic substance used in manufacturing some herbicides. The harmful effects are very persistent and capable of causing severe illness and chromosomal malformations. A major accident occurred in Seveso. Also known as TCDD.

Cf. transboundary pollution, Seveso, agent orange, man-made disaster, toxicological disaster

**Diphtheria** An acute contagious disease mainly of children, characterized by a fibrinous pseudomembrane on the nasopharynx and larynx. Transmitted usually by direct contact and preventable by immunization. One of the diseases in the WHO global vaccination programme.

Cf. contact case, communicable disease, Expanded Programme on Immunization, infectious disease, vaccination

**Diplomatic asylum** Asylum provided by a State in the premises of its embassy or diplomatic mission.

Cf. territorial asylum

**Diplomatic personnel/immunity** The heads and the personnel of an embassy, consulate (to a state) and diplomatic mission (to a UN agency), who by international convention enjoy diplomatic status, in particular personal inviolability, juridical immunity, tax exemption and free customs privileges. The diplomatic pouch cannot be inspected at customs crossings.

**Diplomatic pouch/bag** Official carrying bag of diplomatic personnel that by international convention can cross frontiers and enter countries, enjoying immunity and free from inspection.

**Dirty bomb** Bomb with usual explosive TNT content to which has been added radioactive material.

**Disability** Disability is a diminution of any kind in a person's ability or restriction or impairment in the performance of any activity that is generally considered normal within the manner or range of a human being. Such diminution may be temporary or permanent, of physical, mental, sensory or intellectual nature, congenital or acquired.

**Disability-adjusted life expectancy/Disability-adjusted life years**

In the assessment of health systems and burden of disease, two advanced methods of measuring goal achievements are used: (a) DALE (Disability-adjusted life expectancy) is used to assess how well the objective of good health is being achieved; and (b) DALY (Disability-adjusted life years) lost, combined with death rates, gives a measure of overall population health – WHO.

Cf. disability, burden of disease, death rate, health, World Health Organization

**Disappearance, forced disappearances** The arrest, abduction, forced detention and cutting off communication of persons against their will, by or without the approval of the State or of a political organization, accompanied by refusal of the latter to acknowledge that abduction has taken place and denial of information on the fate of those abducted, thereby

placing them outside the protection of the law. This is considered a crime against humanity. Example: disappearances in certain South American states during dictatorship.

Cf. crimes against humanity, human rights, deportation, man-conceived disaster

**Disarmament** The process and regulations concerning the reduction of a military establishment to levels defined by international agreement.

Cf. arms control

**Disaster** The result of a vast ecological breakdown in the physical and functional relations between man and his environment, caused by nature or man, a serious and sudden event (or slow, as in drought) on such a scale that available resources cannot meet the requirements, and the stricken community needs extraordinary efforts to cope with the damaging situation, often with outside help or international aid – Gunn.

Sn: catastrophe

Cf. natural disaster, man-made disaster, technological disaster, toxicological disaster, creeping disaster, fire disaster, environmental disaster, complex disaster, man-conceived disaster, humanitarian assistance

**Disaster act (law)** National legislation that provides the government or its appointed executive with special powers to mobilize the efforts and resources of the nation in face of a disaster or major emergency.

Cf. disaster legislation

**Disaster assistance** National or international aid, financial, technical or in-kind, to counter a particular or all phases of a disaster, from prevention and mitigation to immediate relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation.

Cf. technical assistance, technical cooperation, international assistance, humanitarian assistance, relief, disaster relief code of ethics

**Disaster assessment/analysis** Cf. assessment, disaster

**Disaster convergence** Cf. convergence in disasters

**Disaster damage probability** Cf. disaster damage formula

**Disaster epidemiology** The medical discipline, now extended to other fields, that studies the influence of such factors as lifestyle, biological constitution and other personal and social determinants on the incidence and distribution of disease, both under normal circumstances and in markedly changed disaster situations.

Cf. epidemiology, disaster medicine

**Disaster fatigue** A variety of emotional reactions and psychological problems and physical disorders can follow long-drawn emergency situations and disasters, including (a) under-reaction, confusion, stunned, unresponsive; (b) overreaction, unconnected hyperactivity; (c) deep grief with apathy, exhaustion, guilt; (d) physical disorders of diarrhoea, vomiting, immobility, limb paraesthesia and paralysis; (e) burn out; etc.

**Disaster health** Sn: disaster medicine

**Disaster health diplomacy** Negotiations, decisions and actions, usually undertaken under emergency conditions, based on long-term State and non-State preventive policies, alliances, available resources and organizational strategies with the view to ensuring the most effective response possible under adverse conditions.

Cf. humanitarian diplomacy, Surgeons OverSeas, global health diplomacy,

disaster legislation, disaster medicine, disaster management

**Disaster hospital capacity** Cf. mass casualty situation

**Disaster legislation** The body of laws that govern and designate responsibility for disaster management in the nation concerning the various phases of disaster. Attempts are currently being made to introduce international disaster legislation.

Cf. disaster act (law)

**Disaster management** The study and collaborative application, by the various pertinent disciplines and governmental authorities, of decision-making processes, management techniques and resource utilization, to the entire process and different phases of a disaster, from prevention and preparedness to planning, immediate response, damage reduction, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

Cf. disaster mitigation, disaster preparedness, disaster team, disaster epidemiology, disaster probability, coping capacity, crisis, measures of effectiveness, plan, Utstein

**Disaster medicine** The study and collaborative application of various health disciplines – e.g. paediatrics, epidemiology, communicable diseases, nutrition, public health, emergency surgery, social medicine, military medicine, community care, international health – to the prevention, immediate response and rehabilitation of the health and humanitarian problems arising from disaster, in cooperation with other disciplines involved in comprehensive disaster management – Gunn.

Sn: disaster health

Cf. Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), European Centre for Disaster Medicine (CEMEC), World Health Organization (WHO), humanitarian medicine, military medicine, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine (IAHM)

**Disaster mitigation** Separate and aggregate measures taken prior to or following a disaster to reduce the severity of human and material damage caused by it.

Cf. damage investigation, disaster management, disaster prevention

**Disaster phases** Cf. phases of disaster

**Disaster preparedness** The aggregate of measures to be taken in view of disasters, consisting of plans and action programmes designed to minimize loss of life and damage, to organize and facilitate effective rescue and relief and to rehabilitate after disaster. Preparedness requires the necessary legislation and means to cope with disaster or similar emergency situations. It is also concerned with forecasting and warning, the education and training of the public, organization and management, including plans, training of personnel, the stockpiling of supplies and ensuring the needed funds, personnel and other resources. Cf. emergency, relief, supplies

**Disaster prevention** The aggregate of approaches and measures to ensure that human action or natural phenomena do not cause or result in disaster or similar emergency. It implies the formulation and implementation of long-range policies and programmes to eliminate or prevent the occurrence of disasters. Based on vulnerability analysis of risks, it also includes legislation and regulatory measures in

the field of town planning, public works, environmental development and public awareness.

**Disaster probability formula** Cf. damage probability formula

**Disaster reduction** All decisions, actions, standards (preparedness, prevention), taken prior to relevant responses provided after a disaster, with the view to minimizing (mitigation) the damaging effects of a disaster. Cf. disaster management, disaster preparedness, disaster prevention, disaster mitigation

**Disaster Relief Code of Conduct** A Code of Conduct introduced in 1994 by the Red Cross and several NGOs to establish self-regulation and standards in the provision of humanitarian aid. They stipulate that (1) the humanitarian imperative comes first, (2) aid is given without conditions and priorities are set on the basis of needs alone, (3) aid will not be used for political or religious purposes, (4) aid workers will not be instruments of government policy, (5) the culture and customs of the victims will be respected, (6) disaster workers will favour local capacities and UN participation, (7) programme beneficiaries will be included in relief management, (8) aid must meet basic needs and future vulnerabilities, (9) relief workers will stand accountable both to the aid recipients and to donors and (10) in all press and promotions, the dignity of the victims must be assured as human beings – G-IDNDR.

Cf. disaster assistance, Sphere Project, equity, custom, accountability

**Disaster Research Center, Delaware** Major academic and operational centre at the University



of Delaware on all aspects of disaster.  
Important research and publications.

**Disaster risk** Cf. risk, risk management

**Disaster severity scales**

Disaster severity overall: de Boer (Cf.);

Disaster comparative magnitude: Bradford (Cf.);

Earthquake: intensity: Mercalli (Cf.); magnitude: Richter (Cf.);

European Macroseismic Scale (Cf.); Hurricane: Beaufort (Cf.);

Nuclear bomb: Megaton (Cf.);

Nuclear reactor accident: INES: International Nuclear Event Scale (Cf.);

Sea state: Douglas (Cf.); Forel (Cf.);

Tornado: Fujita-Pearson (Cf.);

Wind force: Beaufort (Cf.)

**Disaster severity score** An attempt at scoring the severity of a disaster by attributing a figure, from 0 to 13, to the various parameters that characterize a disaster, such as the number of wounded, number of dead, the extent of the disaster, site, rescue time, severity of injuries, nature of the disaster, etc. – de Boer.

**Disaster subculture** Mechanisms, systems, adaptive attitudes and a way of life that certain communities living in known disaster areas, such as near floodlands, at the foot of a volcano or in the path of repeated tornadoes, develop as coping behaviour in response to the potential impact and “live with the hazard”. Examples: Bangladesh, Caribbean, Mount Etna. Cf. coping behaviour, adaptability

**Disaster team** Multidisciplinary, multisectoral group of persons qualified to evaluate a disaster and to bring the necessary relief.

Cf. disaster medicine, disaster prevention, emergency relief, international assistance

**Disaster victim** Person or population stricken directly or indirectly by a disaster.

Cf. disaster

**Disastrology** The science, practice and management of all types of major natural and man-made emergencies or disasters.

Sn: oxyology (rarely used)

Cf. disaster

**Discrimination** A person’s, group’s or government’s negative view, intention and/or action based on the belief that a particular person, group or community is inferior, unworthy and undesirable due to a difference in race, religion, colour, nationality, conscience, political opinion, gender, facies, mental or physical handicap, socio-economic level or any imagined degradation. This is a violation of human rights.

Cf. human rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, xenophobia

**Disease monitoring** Sn: disease surveillance

**Disease surveillance** Health system used to monitor, observe and evaluate on a continuing basis the progress of a disease with the view to preventing or curing it.

Cf. disease monitoring, surveillance

**Disease transmission** Cf. transmission, communicable disease

**Disinfectant** Chemical substance used locally to destroy germs on the body or in the environment and to prevent their multiplication.

Cf. infection

**Disinfection** Destruction of germs or infectious agents outside the human body by chemical or physical means.

Cf. disinfectant, disinfestation

**Disinfestation** Technique or process used to destroy parasites, insects and other undesirable small animal species such as arthropods or rodents present on the person, on clothing, domestic animals or in the environment. Delousing is disinfestation against body lice.

Sn: disinsection

Cf. disinfection, fumigation, pesticide

**Disinsection** Cf. disinfestation

**Displaced person(s)** Persons who, for different reasons or circumstances – natural disasters, wars, conflicts or internal troubles – have been compelled to leave their homes. They may reside in their own country (internally displaced) or may not reside in their country of origin, but are not legally regarded as refugees.

Sn: DP

Cf. exodus, refugee, internally displaced person IDP

**DNA/Deoxyribonucleic acid** Abbreviation for deoxyribonucleic acid, present in chromosomes and carrier of genetic information. Used also for forensic identification of persons.

Cf. chromosome

**Doha Declaration** The health and trade Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement on public health made in Doha in 2001. Cf. TRIPS

**Donation** Material or monetary assistance extended without financial remuneration to a country, community or organization. Material, non-monetary assistance is called in-kind donation.

Cf. donor, donee

**Donee** Sn: beneficiary, recipient

**Donor** Disasters: A country, organization or agency that provides relief or, in different ways, comes to the assistance of a population in disaster.

Cf. aid, assistance, international assistance, technical assistance

Medicine: Blood donor, a person who agrees to the removal of a portion of his or her blood for transfusion to another person for therapeutic purposes.

Tissue donor: A person who agrees to give a portion of his or her body (other than blood or organ) to another person for therapeutic purposes, e.g. skin for burn treatment.

Organ donor: A person who agrees to the removal of an organ, e.g. kidney, for transplantation into another person for therapeutic purposes.

**Donor agency** Agency or organization that provides free emergency relief to a disaster stricken country or community without political or other considerations.

Cf. voluntary agency

**Donor assessment** Cf. humanitarian response index, good humanitarian donorship, DARA

**Dose**

1. In pharmacology, the strength or amount of medicament prescribed for each individual application.
2. In radioactivity, the amount of ionizing radiation absorbed by the exposed body.

Cf. absorbed dose, collective dose, lethal dose, LD50, maximum acceptable dose, retained dose

**Douglas scale** Numerical scale from 0 to 9, indicating the state of the sea. 0 flat sea, 1 ripples, 2 calm sea, 3 small waves, 4 choppy, 5 waves and swells, 6 large waves and swells, 7 heavy sea, 8 very heavy sea, 9 huge swell.

Cf. Beaufort scale, swell, wave, Forel scale

**Dracunculiasis** A helminth infection transmitted by contaminated water.

Can cause a metre-long worm from a leg ulcer. A neglected tropical disease.

Sn: Guinea worm disease

Cf. neglected tropical diseases

**Drainage** Gradual evacuation of excess water from the more common surface run-off of wetlands (surface drainage) or from the ground (subsurface drainage) generally to improve agriculture.

**Drainage basin** Region drained by a part or the whole of one or several water channels.

Sn: catchment basin

Cf. catchment area, river basin, watershed

**Dried full-cream milk** Sn: dried whole milk

**Dried skimmed milk** Powdered food product processed by industrial drying and pulverization of skimmed milk. Such milk may lack some nutritional elements such as vitamin A.

Sn: DSM, skimmed milk powder

Cf. dried whole milk, vitamin A deficiency

**Dried whole milk** Powdered food product processed by industrial drying and pulverization of full-cream milk. Such milk may lack some nutritional elements.

Sn: dried full-cream milk, full-cream milk powder, DFCM, DWM

Cf. dried skimmed milk, food mixtures

**Drift** Any uncontrolled displacement of a floating or submerged object through the action of the wind or currents.

**Drinking water** Water that is agreeable to drink, does not present health hazards and whose quality is normally regulated by legislation. Essential to life.

Sn: potable water

**Droit d'ingérence** French term for the right to intervene. R2P

**Drone** A pilotless distance-guided military aircraft used for targeting and for reconnaissance.

**Drowning** An acute life-threatening event in which a person's nasal and pulmonary airways are suddenly obstructed by being submerged in liquid (usually water), leading to serious impairment of breathing, which calls for immediate disobstruction and life support to avert death.

Cf. ALS, waterboarding

**Drought** Climatic period with prolonged absence of rain during which time the degree of rainfall, expressed in millimetres, is less than twice the mean temperature, expressed in degrees Celsius, causing a shortage in needed water supply. Drought can be a disaster. (a) Agricultural drought is the lack of adequate soil moisture needed for certain crops to grow and thrive after a meteorological drought. (b) Meteorological drought is a deviation of the normal conditions of precipitation over a period of time in a specific region. (c) Hydrological drought occurs when precipitation has been reduced for an extended period of time, and water supplies in streams, lakes, rivers and reservoirs are deficient. (d) Socio-economic drought occurs when physical water supplies are so low that they negatively affect the social and economic conditions in the affected community.

UNCCD is the United Nations Convention to Combat Drought and Desertification.

Cf. aridity, desertification, disaster, precipitation, Sahel

**Drug** In its normal connotation, it means a therapeutic medicine and a pharmaceutical product, and usually

druggists are pharmacists. But by deformed usage, drug has come to refer also to habit-forming, dependency-producing and often lethal, illegal substances.

The United Nations has established the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention.

Cf. narcotrafficking, mafia, dependence

**Drug resistance** The capacity acquired by microorganisms or parasites to survive, and eventually to multiply, in the presence of a medicament which would normally destroy them or prevent them from reproducing. By extension, drug-resistant disease. e.g. chloroquine-resistant malaria.

Cf. adaptation, habituation

**Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative/DNDi** DNDi is a non-profit product development endeavour that carries out research and development of new and better medicaments for neglected and rare diseases.

Cf. neglected diseases

**Dry season** In a tropical climate, period of the year characterized by very low or absence of rainfall.

Cf. drought, tropical climate

**Dune** A ridge or mound of sand or fine loose earth. Aeolian dunes are built up by the wind, hydraulic dunes by water currents.

**Durban Declaration – Racism** The World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held in 2001, South Africa, passed resolutions and decisions on these important issues.

Cf. racism, xenophobia, discrimination, human rights

**Durra** Black millet, grain of sorghum.

**Dust bowl** Ascending whirl of overheated air carrying with it fine particles which subsequently remain suspended in the air.

**Dust devil** Sn: dust whirl

**Dust whirl** Aggregate of particles of dust or sand, sometimes accompanied by small litter raised from the ground, in the form of a whirling column of varying height with a small diameter and almost vertical axis.

Sn: dust devil, sand whirl

**Dwelling** Any covered and sheltered space, such as a house, hut or tent, reserved to provide living quarters for one or more households.

**Dyke** A construction along a coast or river bank for the protection of people, port facilities or of water reservoirs.

Cf. levee

**Dynamic testing** Actual experimental testing and analysis of the response of structures subjected to simulated natural and varied other stresses.

**Dysentery**

1. A general term used for different kinds of unspecified diarrhoea or gastroenteritis.

2. Specific infection of the colon, such as shigellosis (bacillary dysentery) or amoebiasis (amoebic dysentery).

Cf. diarrhoeal diseases, enteric diseases, infection

**Dyspnoea** A respiratory symptom that may indicate shortness of breath, or breathlessness, tightness in the chest, feeling of suffocation, pain on breathing or feeling of not getting enough air.

Cf. asphyxia, respiratory distress

## E

**Early warning** Timely, understandable and useful information given to the population and institutions concerning a probable oncoming disaster, based on knowledgeable information and authoritative decisions, with the view to taking appropriate shelter, effective actions and relevant

responses in order to minimize the expected damage.

Cf. alarm

**Early warning system** The set of capacities needed to generate and disseminate timely and meaningful warning information to enable individuals, communities and organizations threatened by a hazard to prepare and to act appropriately and in sufficient time to reduce the possibility of harm or loss – UNISDR.

A warning system comprises knowledge of the risks, monitoring and forecasting of the hazards, dissemination of the alerts and local capacities to respond to the warning.

Cf. alert, warning

**Earth flow** Mass of water-logged earth, sliding by gravity along a slope at a relatively slow speed of a few kilometres per hour.

Sn: mudslide

**Earth station** Communications station situated either on land (or ship or on an airplane), with the purpose of communicating with one or several stations and linked with other earth stations through a space network.

Cf. geostatic station

**Earth Summit, Rio** United Nations conference held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 that established the principle and need of sustainable development.

**Earthquake** The violent shaking of the ground produced by deep seismic waves, beneath the epicentre, generated by a sudden decrease or release in a volume of rock of elastic strain accumulated over a long time in regions of seismic activity (tectonic earthquake). The magnitude of an earthquake is represented by the Richter scale, the intensity by the Mercalli scale.

Cf. epicentre, Mercalli scale, Richter scale, European macroseismic scale,

seismic sea wave, seismic sounding, seismograph, seismoscope, quake, tsunami

**Earthquake scales** Cf. Richter scale, Mercalli scale, European macroseismic scale

**Earthquake swarm** A series of minor seismic shocks limited in time and space but which cannot be identified as a principal shock.

**Eating unit** A group of persons gathered together and sharing food prepared by the same kitchen or in several communal kitchens.

**Ebb** Receding movement of the sea water or reflux of the tide.

Sn: recession

**Ebola fever** Very serious and highly contagious disease caused by the very virulent Ebola virus. Closely related to the Marburg virus.

Sn: African haemorrhagic fever

**Echinococcosis** Sn: hydatid disease  
Cf. neglected tropical disease

**ECHO** Acronym for European Community Humanitarian Office. A major source of humanitarian aid, the European Union provides emergency relief to victims of both natural and man-made disasters and helps in preparedness and prevention projects, not limited to Europe.

Cf. European Union, OCHA

**Ecology** The science that studies the relationships of living organisms between themselves and with their environment.

**Economic development** Increase in monetary terms in the national product of a country and in the resultant material and social well-being and individual income of its population.

Cf. development, country economic categories, sustainable development, MDGs

**Economic refugee(s)** Persons or groups of people who decide to migrate internally or leave for another country because of poverty, low incomes or difficulty in subsistence and in the hope of better incomes and improved quality of life. Juridically, they are not recognized as refugees.

Cf. environmental refugee, refugee

**Economy class syndrome** Deep vein thrombosis of the lower legs and/or pulmonary embolism (which can be fatal) that develops in air passengers in cramped (economy class) conditions during or following a long flight.

Has also been observed among disaster victims cramped for long periods in crowded shelters, without exercise – Ukai.

**Ecosystem** Contraction for ecological system. Basic ecological unit formed by the biotope (living environment) and the animal and vegetable organisms naturally living there and interacting as a single functional entity.

Cf. ecology, environment

**Ecotoxicology** Study of the effects and potential adverse events caused by chemical agents on the environment and on the general ecosystem, including – but not necessarily – on human health – after WHO.

Cf. ecosystem, ecology

**Effective life/radionuclide** The time needed for the quantity of a given radionuclide to be reduced by half, either through loss of radioactivity or by biological elimination.

Cf. half-life, radioactivity

**Effectiveness** Measure of the extent to which planned activities are realized and planned results obtained – ISO 9000 (2000).

Cf. efficient

**Efficient** A health plan or action is efficient if the effort expended on it is as good as possible in relation to the resources devoted to it. – HFA

**Effluent** Residual waters, treated or not, of agricultural, industrial or urban provenance.

**e-Health** A system of electronic management of health information and services. (Not to be confused with mHealth.)

Cf. mHealth

**El Niño** A climatic phenomenon of the southern oceans with global and long-term meteorological and agricultural repercussions. It occurs every 2–7 years in an 18-month sequence of events extending across the entire Pacific and Indian Oceans. It begins with an anomalous warming of the upper part of the ocean off the west coast of South America, which can lead to drought, monsoon failure and disastrous winds in areas as scattered as Indonesia, the Amazon valley, Australia or Melanesia. The opposite phenomena are referred to as La Niña. In recent years, with climate change, the pattern is showing unusual changes.

Cf. global warming

**Electrical burn** Burn damage to the tissues by passage of an electric current which is converted into thermal energy. This energy is proportional to the square of the current intensity in amperes and to the resistance of the conductor in ohms. The effects caused by electric energy depend on the type of circuit, voltage and amperage of current, resistance, route of the current and duration of contact. Electrocutation is a most severe electrical burn with the strong current passing through the body, often causing death.

Cf. burns, electrocutation

**Electrocution** Cf. electrical burn

**Electromagnetic pulse** The very brief and intense pulse of electromagnetic radiation emitted following a high-altitude nuclear explosion, causing extensive interference over a vast area at ground level, resulting in neutralization of telecommunications, radio broadcasts, electronic controls, electrotechnical equipment, hospitals, transport or at home.

Sn: EMP

**Electron** The elementary particle of negative charge in all atoms.

Cf. ionizing radiation, proton

**Elements at risk** The population, buildings and civil engineering works, economic activities, public services and infrastructure, etc., at risk in a given area – UN.

Cf. risk, risk indicator, risk map, specific risk

**eLENA** e-Library of Evidence for Nutrition Actions (WHO). Strives to clarify electronically the vast and often conflicting evidence, information and advice that exist on effective, preventive and therapeutic nutrition interventions.

**Emaciation** The exhaustion of essential cellular elements, mainly in muscle and adipose tissue, following privation of food and often associated with infections and debilitating illnesses.

**Embargo** An order forbidding certain activities, often accompanied with certain penalties or sanctions in case of non-compliance. Article 41, Chapter VII of the UN charter provides for embargoes on a country that may pose a threat to peace, a breakdown of peace or an act of aggression, e.g. Iraq against Kuwait. Usually goods considered humanitarian, such as food and medicine, may be exempted.

In journalism, an embargo is a request not to publish a certain declaration or news item before a specified date.

**Emergency** A sudden and usually unforeseen event that must be countered immediately to minimize the consequences. If the event is major, the term disaster is often used. With rational planning, emergencies can be tackled with less “surprise” and more effectively.

**EmergencyEventsDatabase** EM-DAT, a compilation created by CRED that gives direct access statistics through its website. Has information on natural disasters from 1990 onwards.

Cf. CE-DAT, Centre for Research in Epidemiology of Disasters

**Emergency feeding** Distribution of food to communities, families and individuals who are cut off from their normal food supplies or are unable to prepare their own food as a result of a natural or man-made disaster such as famine, flood, earthquake, war.

Cf. famine, food, food relief, relief, supplies

**Emergency health kit** Basic drugs and medical equipment calculated for the emergency needs of a population of 10,000 persons over three months. One pre-packaged kit contains 10 identical smaller kits, each for 1,000 persons.

Sn: WHO Emergency Health Kit (the previous name)

Cf. stockpile, supplies, World Health Organization

**Emergency life support** Urgent measures taken to keep a critically ill patient alive, usually in a hospital critical care unit.

Cf. basic life support, advanced life support, cardiopulmonary-cerebral resuscitation, survival chain



**Emergency management** The organization and management of all resources and responsibilities for addressing all aspects of emergencies, in particular preparedness, response and initial recovery – UNISDR.

**Emergency medical services** The system of various resources, organization, facilities and personnel necessary to deliver the needed medical care to those with an unpredicted immediate need outside a hospital and continued care once in an established emergency facility.

Sn: EMS

Cf. first aid, life support, oxyology, prehospital medicine

**Emergency Risk Management and Humanitarian Response/WHO ERM**, department at WHO for emergency humanitarian management, now expanded to include Health Action in Crises (HAC), Polio Eradication and Country Collaboration (PEC) clusters.

**Emergency relief**

1. Urgent aid given to relieve suffering and hardship arising from a sudden or unexpected event.
2. Immediate assistance given to persons who are deprived of the essential needs of life following a natural or man-induced disaster.

Cf. disaster, relief

**Emergent country** An imprecise term denoting a developing country that is relatively advanced (or advancing) towards becoming a full-fledged developed or industrial country as measured by its economic progress.

Cf. country economic category, BRICS

**Emigrant** Person who moves to another country for personal, economic, social or political reasons. Distinguish from migrant, immigrant and refugee.

Cf. immigrant, migrant, refugee

**Emigration** The act of leaving one's country or place of residence with the intention of settling in another country or place. Emigration from a country does not imply the loss of nationality of that country, and it does not confer refugee status.

Cf. exodus, immigration, migration

**Empowerment** Enablement by education or by law, giving authority where it was previously lacking. In medicine, it means facilitating and recognizing in persons or patients their right and ability to control their own health problems and health-care decisions.

Cf. ethics in health

**Encephalitis** Serious neurological disease caused by inflammation of the brain elements due to viral, microbial or parasitic infection.

Cf. cerebrospinal meningitis, bovine spongiform encephalopathy

**Endemic disease** The usual presence or prevalence of a disease in a given geographical area. Hyperendemic expresses a persistence in excess of expected endemicity. Pandemic is the presence of a disease, at the same time, in important proportions, throughout the world. Example: AIDS.

Cf. endemicity, epidemic, pandemic

**Endemic treponematoses** A group of chronic bacterial infections – yaws, pinta, endemic syphilis (bijel) – caused by treponemes that mainly affect the skin.

Cf. neglected tropical diseases

**Endemic(ity)** Habitual presence or recurrence of a disease, e.g. cholera, or other phenomena, e.g. cyclones, in a given population or region. Example: both are endemic in the Bay of Bengal area.

Cf. endemic disease

**Energy assessment** Comparative study of the sum of calories provided by food and of their utilization for such biological requirements as tissue maintenance and growth. Assessment can be established for an organism, an individual or a population.

Cf. energy requirements

**Energy requirements** Quantity of energy required to maintain the weight equilibrium of an average individual of given sex and age in good health.

Cf. energy assessment, health, needs.

**Energy problem** The impact of the aggregate patterns and extents of energy consumption upon the environment and the capacity of that environment and society to meet the energy needs for an equitable and sustainable development.

**Enriched food** Sn: fortified food

**Enriched uranium** Sn: U308

Cf. uranium

**Enteral** Medication given via the alimentary tract, by mouth or by rectal introduction. Not by injection.

**Enteric diseases** A general term for a variety of infectious intestinal diseases due to a number of known causes (amoebae, intestinal parasites, worms, bacilli, vibrio cholerae) or unknown causes transmitted through various mechanisms (food, water, direct contact). Can be of sudden diarrhoeal onset, chronic or in carrier state, all with danger of transmission. Disaster conditions facilitate and aggravate the disease with risk of epidemics, especially among children.

Cf. amoebiasis, cholera, diarrhoeal diseases, dysentery, oral rehydration, typhoid

**Environment** The aggregate, at any given time, of the physical, chemical

and biological agents and social factors that can have a direct or indirect, immediate or late effect on living organisms and on human activities.

**Environmental change** Modification, favourable or unfavourable, of the ecological state and environment.

Cf. ecology, environment, environmental impact assessment

**Environmental degradation** Cf. environmental pollution

**Environmental disruption** Any physical, chemical and/or biological changes in the ecosystem – or the resource base – that render it temporarily or permanently unsuitable to support human life – UNEP. Such deterioration is a cause of environmental refugees.

Sn: environmental impact

Cf. environment, environmental refugees, refugee

**Environmental health** The science and measures that aim at creating the environmental conditions most conducive to health.

Cf. environmental hygiene, public health, sanitary engineering

**Environmental hygiene** The measures that aim at creating favourable environmental conditions for health and disease prevention.

Cf. environmental health, environmental pollution, public health

**Environmental impact** Cf. environmental change

**Environmental impact assessment** Investigation of the eventual positive or negative effect of any new factor on a given environment and its ecological equilibrium.

Sn: EIA

Cf. environmental change

**Environmental pollution** Unfavourable changes and degradation of one or more aspects or elements of the

environment by noxious biological, industrial, chemical or radioactive wastes, from debris of man-made, especially non-biodegradable products and from mismanagement and inconsiderate use of ecological resources.

Sn: environmental degradation

Cf. air pollution, atmospheric pollution, environment, environmental disruption, environmental refugee, man-made disaster, oil pollution, oil slick

**Environmental refugees(s)** People who have been forced to leave their original habitat, temporarily or permanently, because of marked disruption of the environment through natural or man-made causes that jeopardized their existence and/or seriously affected the quality of their lives – UNEP.

There are broadly three categories of environmental refugees: (1) people who have been temporarily displaced because of environmental stress and who return when the disruption is over, (2) people who become permanently displaced and must resettle in a new area because of permanent changes in their original habitat, such as the establishment of huge dams and (3) individuals or groups of people who emigrate internally or abroad, temporarily or permanently, in search of a better quality of life, e.g. leaving a drought-hit area for more fertile land.

Cf. environment, environmental disruption, refugee, economic refugee

**Environmental sustainability index**

A scale from 0 to 100 that rates the environmental performance of a country or region, based on the total scores of about 60 variables covering the following five categories: (a) human vulnerability to environment, e.g. disease and available potable water, (b) social institutional capacity, e.g.

to respond to or promote environmental issues, (c) societal stresses on the environment, e.g. pollution, urbanization, (d) global conscience, e.g. the community's efforts to diminish global warming, and (e) level of environmental facilities, e.g. water quality systems.

Sn: ESI

Cf. environment, sustainable development

**Epidemic**

1. An unusual increase in the number of cases of an infectious or parasitic disease which already exists in an endemic state in the region or population concerned.

2. The appearance of a more or less important number of cases of an infectious disease introduced in a region or population that is usually free from that disease.

Cf. communicable disease, endemic, pandemic, infectious disease, potential epidemic, threatened epidemic

**Epidemic/pandemic alerts** Cf. WHO epidemic alert degrees, potential epidemic, threatened epidemic

**Epidemiology** The medical discipline that studies the influence of such factors as the lifestyle, biological constitution and other personal or social determinants on the incidence and distribution of disease.

Cf. disaster medicine, disaster epidemiology

**Epizootic disease** Affecting simultaneously many animals of the same kind in the same region and rapidly spreading. Also refers to an extensive outbreak of an epizootic disease. Examples: mad cow disease, rabies. The World Organization for Animal Health (OIE – Organisation Internationale des Epizooties) is concerned with these problems.

Cf. bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, mad cow disease, zoonosis, OIE

**Equal access** The social and legislative mechanisms that provide equal opportunity of obtaining available care and services for equal needs, based on a study of such needs, with a fair distribution throughout the country for easily reachable access without social, financial or other barriers.

Cf. access, equity

**Equatorial climate** Climate characterized by a twin season of rain during May–June and October–November, with a short dry season towards the month of August (in the northern hemisphere).

Cf. dry season, rainy season

**Equatorial depression** Zone of relatively low pressure situated between the subtropical anticyclones of the two hemispheres.

Cf. anticyclone, atmospheric depression, depression

**Equity in health** The policy and practices that provide everyone, without distinction, a fair opportunity to equal access to available care for equal need, equal utilization for equal need and equal quality care for all – (after WHO).

Cf. humanitarian medicine, ethics, World Health Organization

**Erosion** The degradation and transformation of the soil and of the earth's crust due to the action of water, wind and other atmospheric agents.

Cf. anthropic erosion, continental erosion, wind erosion

**Eruption** The sudden surfacing of solid and gaseous material from the depths of the earth.

Cf. volcano

**Essential bodily needs** The normal body has certain physiological needs for which minimum health standards

have been established and which must be provided even under the most difficult circumstances, e.g. in wars, refugee camps, disaster situations

Cf. water, shelter, sanitation, space requirements

**Essential medicines** The WHO model list of essential medicines. Contains a core of 325 medicaments for the minimum needs of basic health care, listing the most efficacious, safe and cost-effective medicines for priority conditions. A complementary list presents essential medicines for priority diseases for which specialized diagnostic and/or investigative facilities and/or specialist training are required.

A separate list of essential medicines and equipment for disaster situations is the WHO Emergency Health Kit. (Cf.)

**Essential surgery** Surgical investigations and procedures that can be carried out in rural or district first referral or remote hospitals, mainly in developing and poorer countries with less advanced facilities, by low-level paramedical and nursing staff trained for such events or by doctors experienced to work under such shortages. The facility strengthens primary healthcare services for injuries, pregnancy-related complications, fractures, debilitating hernias, abscesses and other essential or life-saving interventions.

IFSC/SCES.

Cf. GIEESC, surgical conditions humanitarian surgery

**The Ethical Globalization Initiative**

Cf. Realizing Rights

**Ethics** Relating to morals, treating of moral principles, rules of personal and societal conduct, respect for the person, equitable, humane and fair action.

Cf. disaster relief code of ethics, ethics in health care

**Ethics in health care** In the practice and administration of health care, covers (a) moral principles of behaviour, (b) professional standards guiding and expected of all involved in health care, (c) patient respect and empowerment and (d) abidance by therapeutic deontological precepts.

Cf. empowerment, humanitarian medicine, equity in health

**Ethnic cleansing** New term for an age-old and decidedly unclean policy of some totalitarian governments aiming at removing through hatred, intimidation, deportation, killing, genocide or any other form of force, certain groups or minorities within the country in order to homogenize the national population, acquire land, pamper to extremist pride and ensure control.

Cf. deportation, disappearances, discrimination, ethnic group, minorities, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, man-conceived disaster, genocide

**Ethnic group/population** An organic group of individuals sharing distinctive common traits, customs, language and culture that distinguishes them from others in the same or different country. The term sometimes refers to such groups as a minority in a larger population.

**EU 501/82 Rules** European Union Regulations and emergency plans for any industrial activity that may be “a major accident hazard”.

Cf. Seveso, toxicological disaster

**Euro** The currency unit of the European Union.

The Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization.

**Europe-Third World Centre** Cf. Centre Europe-Tiers Monde/Université de Lausanne

**Euro-Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disaster** Expanded activity and new name of the Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters (Cf.)

**European Centre for Disaster Medicine/CEMEC** Intergovernmental centre established in San Marino under the aegis of the Council of Europe, to promote prevention and mitigation of the effects of natural and technological disasters through research, training programmes and international collaboration, in particular among European countries. Known under its Italian acronym, CEMEC.

Cf. Council of Europe, disaster medicine

**European Commission** The executive arm of the European Union. (Do not confuse with the Council of Europe.) Cf. European Union

**European Commission Humanitarian Operations** Commonly known as ECHO, the important disaster prevention and emergency response system of the European Union, very active and not limited to Europe.

**European Convention on Human Rights** Established by the Council of Europe, a fundamental international instrument that defines in 18 articles the inalienable rights and freedoms of every person everywhere. The European Court of Human Rights ensures the observance of these engagements.

Cf. Council of Europe, human rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**European Humanitarian Personnel Network** In response to the recurrent difficulty of recruiting trained health personnel in emergency situations and for disaster response, this network tries to recruit, train and

maintain a registry of relevant health personnel for emergency humanitarian work.

Cf. EURO, EU, JICA

**European Macroseismic Scale (EMS-12)**

A summary and simplified scale of the Council of Europe with 12° of earthquake intensity:

Intensity I: not felt, II: scarcely felt, III: weak, IV: largely observed, V: strong, VI: slight damage, VII: damage, VIII: heavy damage, IX: destruction, X: heavy destruction, XI: devastation, XII: complete devastation. – G.IDNDR

Sn: EMS-12

Cf. Richter scale, Mercally scale

**European Union/EU** The institutional arrangements bringing together the European Communities, with open borders (Schengen accord) and a common currency (Euro), with the ultimate goal of gradually integrating their economies and moving towards political unity. It is currently comprised of 27 European states. Formerly known as the Commission of European Communities or Common Market, the EU includes the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Court of Justice, Europol and other instruments, in Brussels. The European Commission is EU's executive arm.

Major role in disaster prevention and response (ECHO). Do not confuse with Council of Europe.

Cf. Council of Europe, United Nations,

**Euthanasia** Allowing the death of a terminally or hopelessly sick or injured person (passive euthanasia) or causing the death of such a suffering person as an act of mercy (active euthanasia).

**Evacuation** An operation to clear a region of its inhabitants, generally under threat (e.g. conflict) or following a disaster.

Cf. disaster, evacuee, prevention

**Evacuee** A person temporarily displaced from one place to another, within the same area or another country, to safeguard his health and security.

Cf. evacuation, displaced person

**Evaluation** The process of determining the worth or significance of an activity or programme; an assessment as systematic and objective as possible, of a planned, ongoing or completed intervention – OECD.

**Evaluation of disaster** Detailed post-impact assessment of the disaster situation taking into account all aspects of the damage, including the physical site, built structures, disrupted social system, remaining health facilities, shelter, water supplies, food availability, mortality, communications, transport, disposal of the dead. Evaluation also points to the remaining needs and facilities for immediate reconstruction.

**Evidence-based medicine** The practice of medicine and the assessment of its efficacy based on criteria of preventive, diagnostic, therapeutic and comparative methods of scientifically proven evidence, with the goal of providing the best possible management of health and disease in the patient.

**Excision (in genital mutilation)** In female genital mutilation, the practice of ablating the prepuce and hood of the clitoris and the labia minora.

Sn: clitoridectomy

Cf. female genital mutilation, infibulation, introcision

**Exodus** The massive displacement of a population for various reasons, usually due to political and social conflict, civil or military strife, persecutions and other violations of human rights. Cf. displaced persons, emigration, refugee, diaspora

**Expanded Programme on Immunization** The continuing programme of WHO for the systematic vaccination of all children against the following six diseases: diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus (DPT vaccine), poliomyelitis (P), tuberculosis (BCG vaccine) and measles.

Sn: EPI

Cf. immunization, vaccination, diphtheria, measles, poliomyelitis, tetanus, tuberculosis, whooping cough

**Expatriate** A national of a country who lives in another country and abides by the laws of the host country.

Sn: expat (colloquial)

**Expert** A qualified and experienced agent who, in his special field of competence, carries out operational, advisory, training or managerial tasks for or within a government or institution with the view to assisting in development or other national activity, such as disaster management.

Cf. delegate, technical assistance, representative

**Explosivity index** In volcanology, the percentage of pyroclastic ejecta within the total eruption product.

Cf. volcanic eruption, pyroclastic flow

**Exponential growth** Growth that is a simple function of the size of the growing subject, such that the larger the population, the faster its growth.

Cf. arithmetic growth

**Exposure:** Radiation: The radioactive contamination of a living or inanimate object by accident or design.

**Environment:** The long and damaging contact of a living being with the harsh elements of the environment, such as extremely cold weather.

**Pollution:** The undesirable contact of living and inanimate objects with pollutants in the atmosphere.

**Fire:** Structures that are at risk of catching fire by extension from a fire in the vicinity.

**Extermination** Intentional infliction of unacceptable conditions of life, inter alia deprivation of food, medicines, etc., calculated to bring about the destruction of part of a population – ICC.

Cf. genocide, International Criminal Court

**Eye (of the storm)** The calm central zone of low pressure (eye) of a cyclone. The violent wind circulation around it gyrates counterclockwise in the northern hemisphere and clockwise in the southern.

Cf. cyclone, hurricane, tropical cyclone, typhoon

**Exxon Valdez** On 24 March 1989, a huge oil tanker called Exxon Valdez ran aground at Prince William Sound, Alaska, spilling 38,000 tons of crude oil, affecting 1,200 miles of coastline, with extensive marine ecological damage and wiping out some 20 communities, though no human life was lost. Very serious technological, social, environmental and financial disaster.

Cf. oil spill, Bhopal, Chernobyl

## F

**Façade democracy** A tendency to add qualifying adjectives and epithets to the concept of democracy, such as disciplined democracy, guided democracy, protected democracy,



etc., when the essential elements are missing and in effect diminishing the value of democracy.

Cf. democracy

**Facies** Appearance, of usually facial aspects, that may be associated with racial origin, creating unjust negative interpretations, bias and discrimination.

Cf. discrimination, racism

**Failure** The diminution or end of the capacity of a structure, item or system to perform its required function.

Cf. reliability

**Falciparum malaria** Malaria due to *Plasmodium falciparum*, the most dangerous form of malaria in children.

Cf. malaria

**Fall** Water – in liquid or solid state – precipitated from the atmosphere onto the ground.

Sn: precipitation

**Falling cloud** Volcanic cloud composed of the same elements as in glowing cloud, but projected almost vertically and falling back to earth. Example: the St. Vincent eruption of 1902.

Cf. glowing cloud, ash fall

**Fallout** In radioactivity: The deposition of radioactive materials in the atmosphere and on the earth. Such radioactivity in the atmosphere may arise from natural causes, from nuclear bomb explosions or from atomic reactor accidents inducing radioactivity and fission products.

Nuclear cloud is the deposition of nuclear material in the atmosphere, where it may move according to the winds or may be precipitated to earth with rain.

Global fallout is the deposition on the ground of radioactivity from a nuclear weapon exploded in the stratosphere.

Intermediate fallout is the deposition on the ground of radioactivity from a nuclear weapon exploded in the troposphere.

Local fallout is the deposition of radioactivity from a nuclear weapon, downwind at ground level, during the first 24 h after explosion on the ground.

Sn: radioactive fallout

Cf. ionizing radiation, nuclear war, nuclear winter, environmental refugee

In general: The unplanned and usually unexpected secondary effects of some human action. Example: overgrazing creating food shortage that causes population displacement.

**Family (household) unit** A dwelling inhabited by one household and providing the family atmosphere.

Sn: household unit Cf. dwelling, household

**Family planning** A way of thinking and living adopted voluntarily, on the basis of knowledge, attitudes and responsible decisions, by individuals and couples, in order to promote the health and welfare of the family group and thus contribute effectively to the social development of a country – WHO, 1975.

Cf. UNFPA

**Famine** A disastrous shortage of food affecting large numbers of people. It may be due to poor harvests following drought, floods, earthquake, war, social conflict, etc. A slow-onset disaster.

Cf. drought, food, food shortage, hunger, famine management

**Famine management** The aggregate of studies, information, planning and action to foresee, prevent, alleviate and manage a famine disaster. The joint WHO-CRED project of Consolidated Information System for Famine Management in Africa is a useful approach to such management.

- Far-field** In a nuclear incident, designates the area away from the immediately involved ground or zero zone (“near-field”) and considered less dangerous but still bearing the contamination and damaging effects of the accident.  
Cf. near-field, nuclear accident, ground zero, zone zero
- FARC** Hispano-American acronym for Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, the anti-government rebel political movement that controls a part of Colombia and is an important illicit base of coca production and cocaine trafficking that constitute a regional security problem.  
Cf. drug trafficking, UN Office on Drugs and Crime
- Fatality** The severity of a disease as judged by the frequency of the deaths that occur among the patients of that disease in relation to the total number of sick persons. This concept is commonly employed to calculate the ratio of the number of fatal cases in a specific clinical or epidemiological experience. The ratio is disease specific: Thus, fatality in diphtheria is about 5%.  
Sn: mortality  
Cf. case fatality rate
- Fatwa** Arabic term for a formal Islamic religious legal opinion.  
Cf. sharia
- Fault (geological)** In geology and seismology, the planar or gently curving fracture in the earth’s crust across which displacement and sliding occur.  
Cf. sliding fault, transform fault, fracture zone
- Favela** A disorganized collection of disorderly, unsanitary, paupers’ dwellings.  
Cf. shanty town (South American), slum
- Fédération Dentaire Internationale/World Dental Federation/FDI** The world’s major federation of national dental associations that promotes better oral health as a basic part of general health. Dental records are a fundamental element in forensic science and disaster medicine for identifying persons.
- Female circumcision** A euphemistic term for female genital mutilation.  
Cf. female genital mutilation
- Female genital mutilation** Cruel and medically unnecessary modification of the female genitalia, practised in certain countries, especially in Africa, under the guise of cultural, religious or traditional obligation. May include incision/excision of the labia, clitoris, infibulectomy and other mutilations. Also called female circumcision. Condemned by WHO, the UN and women’s organizations.  
Cf. excision, infibulation, introcision
- Filariasis** A group of diseases in tropical and subtropical countries due to filarial worms and transmitted by mosquitoes and flies. Bancroftian filariasis may produce elephantiasis of the limbs, causing invalidity.  
Cf. parasitic diseases
- Fireball** The tremendously hot and brilliant sphere of burning gases immediately following a nuclear explosion in the air.  
Cf. conflagration, firestorm, superfire, nuclear war
- Firebreak** A natural or constructed discontinuity in a fuel bed utilized to segregate, stop and control the spread of fire or to provide a control line from which to suppress a fire – FAO.  
Cf. barrier
- Firebug** Popular term for pyromaniac, an arsonist. Psychologically unstable and abnormal person with compulsive

desire to set a fire and taking pathological pleasure out of it.

Cf. arson, forest fire

**Fireproof** The quality of a structure or object to resist fire either by its own nature or imparted to it by treatment with retardants so as to reduce the danger of fire starting or spreading.

**Fire resistant** The quality of a material or device to maintain its properties and function against exposure to fire under certain conditions.

Cf. fireproof, flameproof, fire retardant

**Fire retardant** Any physical or chemical substance – other than water – that is used to slow down or reduce a fire or flammability of a fuel.

Sn: retardant

Cf. fireproof, flameproof

**Firestorm** The coalescing of many fires into a single big fire creating a convective column, with very high temperatures. Firestorms and superfires are now believed to be the cause of the greatest number of casualties following nuclear war.

Cf. conflagration, fireball, superfire

**Fire foam** A physico-chemical extinguishing foamy material that, when applied to the flaming object or sea surface, blankets and adheres to the fuel, reducing the combustion.

**Fire hazard** A fuel source, identified by its nature, type, locality and accessibility, that determines the ease with which it can catch fire or the difficulty with which it can be put out.

Cf. fire, fireproof, forest fire, class of fire

**Fire, natural** Any fire started by natural causes, such as lightning, spontaneous combustion or volcanic activity. Thus, lightning fire, spontaneous fire, volcanic fire.

Cf. forest fire

**Fire, Wildland** Sn: Wildfire

**First aid** Immediate and temporary simple care given to the victim on the site of an accident or sudden sickness in order to stop bleeding, lessen pain, diminish suffering, avert complications and comfort the person until competent help or a physician is obtained.

Cf. Emergency Medical Services, prehospital medicine, rescue

**First strike** A pre-emptive attack using nuclear weapons.

Cf. nuclear war

**Fissile** Refers (1) to a nuclide capable of undergoing fission by interaction with slow neutrons. (2) Material containing one or more fissile nuclides – ISO.

**Fission bomb** Nuclear weapon in which the explosive power is derived from the fission of atomic nuclei, with liberation of energy and radiation. It is the basic nuclear weapon, popularly referred to as the atomic bomb. The bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were fission bombs.

Sn: atom bomb

Cf. atomic bomb, fusion bomb, nuclear energy, nuclear war, kiloton

**Fission (nuclear)** The splitting (fission) of a heavy nucleus into two parts, with release of energy and neutrons.

Cf. fission bomb, fusion bomb, nuclear war, reactor

**Fission-fusion-fission (F-F-F) bomb** A nuclear weapon with energy release in three stages: (1) fission, acting as the trigger; (2) fusion, occurring at the high temperature created in the first stage; and (3) fission, by the neutrons emitted at fusion, in a uranium tamper – Rotblat.

**Flameproof** The property of a material or assemblage not to burst in flames during a lapse of time in a fire. Flame is ignited gas.

Cf. fireproof, fire resistant, retardant

**Flammable/Flammability** The characteristic and degree of ease with which any material will burn.

Sn: inflammable (attention, in UK English, flammable and inflammable are synonymous. As the latter – inflammable – may erroneously give the idea of non-flammable, it is safer to use the US term flammable rather than inflammable.)

**Flash flood** A local flood of sudden rise and short duration with great volume that causes inundation, generally due to very heavy rainfall in the vicinity.

Cf. precipitations, swell

**Floating barrier** A portable, inflatable device placed as an emergency on the surface of a water mass where oil spill has occurred, with the aim of controlling and barring the spread and aspirating the oil to limit further environmental pollution.

Sn: floating barrage, isolator, oil boom

Cf. environmental pollution, oil slick

**Flood** Overflow of areas which are not normally submerged, with water or stream that has broken its normal confines, and/or accumulated due to lack of drainage.

**Flood control** The management of water resources and prevention of accidents through construction of reservoirs, dams, embankments, diversion channels, etc., to avoid floods.

**Flood tide** Sn: rising tide

**Floodplain** An area adjacent to a river, formed by the repeated overflow of the natural channel bed – OFDA.

Cf. flood, precipitations, zoning

**Floodway** A bypass channel built from an upstream point in order to divert the flooding waters downstream in a controlled way.

**Fluoridation** Addition of certain prescribed quantities of fluoride to drinking water as a preventive measure against dental caries.

**Focal depth** In seismology, the vertical distance from the surface of the earth to the focus or point of origin of an earthquake.

Cf. earthquake, focus, ground zero

**Focus** In seismology, the point beneath the surface of the earth where an earthquake rupture originates – hypocentre – and from where seismic waves radiate.

Cf. earthquake, focal depth, hypocentre

**Food** Edible substance containing nutrients which, on ingestion, maintain the vital functions of a person or other living organism.

Cf. conventional food, fortified food, protective food, staple food

**Food additive** Substance intentionally added to food, generally in small quantities, to improve its physical or chemical properties (appearance, aroma, consistency, flavour) or preservation capacity, but not its nutritional value. Examples: colourant, emulsifier, stabilizer.

Cf. fortified food

**Food aid** Assistance rendered on an organized basis, free or on concessional terms, to provide food to a population group, community or country suffering from food shortage or insufficient development.

Cf. food relief, supplementary feeding programme

**Food and Agriculture Organization/FAO** The UN specialized agency that aims to raise the levels of nutrition, to improve the production and distribution of all agricultural and food products from farms, forests and

fisheries and to eliminate hunger. It promotes improved soil and water management, better crop yields, healthier livestock and sound agricultural investment. Has an Office of Special Relief Operations (OSRO) for disaster situations and mobilizing resources. Coordinates with the World Food Programme (WFP).

Sn: FAO

Cf. drought, rural development, United Nations, World Food Programme

**Food and nutrition indicators** Quantified data that indicate the quantity and quality of foodstuffs available to a population. Examples: calories or proteins available per person and the need/availability ratio of a foodstuff.

Cf. nutritional state indicators, needs

**Food availability indicators** Cf. food and nutrition indicators

**Food chain** The sequence of transfer of matter and energy in the form of eatable material from organism to organism in ascending or descending trophic levels – WHO.

**Food consumption survey** Survey designed to elicit qualitative and quantitative information on food consumption in a given community or country.

**Food enrichment** Sn: food fortification

Cf. fortified food

**Food fortification** Food fortification and food enrichment are used interchangeably or synonymously.

Cf. fortified food

**Food habits** The ways in which an individual or group utilizes foods and consumes them in response to physiological, psychological, cultural, social and geographic influences.

**Food hygiene** That part of the science of hygiene that deals with the principles and methods of sanitation applied to the quality of foodstuffs, to their processing, preparation, conservation and consumption by man.

Cf. hygiene

**Food ionization** Treatment of foodstuffs by ionizing radiation with the view to improving their preservation.

**Food mixture(s)** Processed ready to use nutritional food mixture(s) for use in nutritional emergencies.

Cf. corn-soya blend (CSB), corn-soya milk (CSM), instant corn-soya milk (ICSM), K-2 mix, soya-fortified bulghur (SFB), soya-fortified sorghum grits (SFSG), wheat-soya blend (WSB), wheat-soya milk (WSM), yoghurt

**Food pattern** Data on, or the profile of, the foods consumed by a given community, showing the kinds and amounts of the principal foods eaten at any given time.

Cf. food habits

**Food poisoning** A general term describing the intestinal and other troubles caused by the ingestion of food or water contaminated by germs, toxic substances and other pathogens, or by an allergic reaction to certain proteins and substances in the food.

Cf. botulism, contamination, toxin

**Food ration** Cf. ration (food)

**Food refrigeration** Method of food conservation by maintaining positive temperatures near 0°C, which has the effect of temporarily slowing down microbial and enzymatic processes.

Cf. cold chain

**Food relief** The provision of foodstuffs on a national or local scale to relieve sudden food shortage and combat malnutrition in a disaster.

Cf. emergency feeding, food aid

**Food resources** The inventory and stock of foodstuffs available and, in particular, required in an emergency, including the system of storage, warehouse facilities, markets, distribution centres, emergency sources and other food facilities that can be used by the stricken population.

**Food safety** The component of food hygiene which deals with the measures necessary to ensure the innocuity, cleanliness, salubrity and intrinsic value of foodstuffs.

Cf. food hygiene, foodstuffs, hygiene, food security

**Food security** Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life – World Bank.

Do not confuse with food safety.

**Food shortage** Situation in which supplies of food available in a country or region are insufficient for the needs. The opposite of food security.

**Food taboo** A social and/or religious interdiction concerning the handling and consumption of certain foods.

**Food-borne disease** A general term for disease of infectious bacterial or toxic nature caused by eating a food. Cf. food-borne intoxication

**Food-borne intoxication** Disease caused by ingestion of the toxins produced by bacteria.

**Food-borne trematode infections** A group of parasitic worm infections of liver and lung acquired by eating raw fish, crustaceans and vegetables. Neglected tropical diseases.

**Foodstuff** Food. Any raw or prepared product which can be consumed by man as food.

**Force** Meteorology: A numerical expression of the speed of the wind (wind force), or the agitation of the sea (sea force) or of the height of waves.

Cf. Beaufort scale, Douglas scale, wind, wind force, wave

### **Forecast**

1. Description of the meteorological conditions predicted for a given time and over a given zone. Important in disaster prevention.

Sn: weather forecast

2. A statistical estimate or statement concerning a future event (WMO).

Prognosis, prediction and other similar terms are used with varying meanings in various disciplines.

**Forel scale** Numerical scale indicating the colour of the sea, extending from 0 (deep blue) to 10 (potassium chromate yellow).

Cf. Douglas scale

**Forensic geography** A field of investigation and detection using legal and technological methods to search and uncover clandestine mass graves (or old historical burial grounds).

Cf. forensic medicine

**Forensic medicine** The medical specialty that studies and covers all aspects of pathology, disease and death that may possibly, directly or indirectly raise legal issues which need investigation.

Sn: legal medicine

**Foreshock(s)** Small shakings of the earth's crust preceding the main earthquake in a given area. Also called precursors. The opposite of aftershocks.

Cf. aftershock, earthquake

**Forest/vegetation fire(s)** Fires in forest, grassland, bush and bushland that usually cover a widespread area and cause extensive damage to property and the environment. They may be due to natural causes, such as lightning or volcanic eruption, may be started illegally by arsonists or carelessly by campers

and smokers or may accidentally spread from an intentionally started fire for clearing a forest area.

Disastrous forest fires are quite seasonal in hot, dry regions such as the Mediterranean basin during summer. Widespread and serious air pollution has been caused by huge forest fires in Southeast Asia, with intense accumulation of fine particles that provoke grave respiratory problems.

Sn: vegetation fire(s)

Cf. burn disaster, Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters

**Forestation** Establishment of a forest or plantation of trees, natural or man-made, in an area where a forest was not previously present.

Cf. deforestation, desertification, reforestation, afforestation

**Fortified food** Food in which the nutritive elements have been intentionally increased or added with the view to improving its nutritional value or to prevent deficiency diseases. Examples: thiamine added to white flour, vitamin D to milk, iodine to salt.

Sn: enriched food

Cf. deficiency disease, food additive, food enrichment, food fortification

**Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics/FIND** A Swiss non-profit but also internationally funded organization that works to develop and implement affordable, robust and accurate diagnostic products and technologies.

**Fracture** Medicine: A break or discontinuity of a bone in the body.

Geology: Fracture zone: Abrupt and massive submarine dislocation of the earth over a long narrow band, where the continuity of the solid structures is interrupted by a transform fault.

Cf. transform fault, sliding fault, earthquake

**Fragile State(s)** Countries where there is a lack of political commitment, weak governance and/or suffering from violent conflicts that are not conducive to develop and implement needed pro-poor policies. About 50 countries can be thus defined as fragile, its population bearing a disproportionately heavier burden of disease and mortality.

Cf. least developed countries

**Fragmentation bomb** Bomb that explodes just above ground level, spreading a multiple number of smaller explosives that cause multiple explosions with extensive injuries. Prohibited by international law (Oslo Treaty) and humanitarian standards. Unexploded “bomblets” can persist for a long time, causing a continuing threat.

Sn: cluster bomb

Cf. cluster bomb, law of war, Oslo Treaty

**Fratricide effect** In nuclear war, the inhibiting effect by X-rays, blast, thermal waves that a nuclear detonation has on the power of a second nuclear weapon on the same target.

Cf. nuclear war

**Free pratique** In International Health Regulations terminology, it means permission for a ship to enter port, embark or disembark, discharge or load cargo or stores; permission for an aircraft, after landing, to embark or disembark, discharge or load cargo or stores and permission for a ground transport vehicle, upon arrival, to embark or disembark, discharge or load cargo or stores – IHR.

**Freedom of opinion** Cf. freedom of the press



**Freedom of the press** Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression,... to receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers”. The Declaration of Windhoek, 1991, calls for free, independent and pluralistic media worldwide characterizing free press as essential to democracy and a fundamental human right.

Sn: freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression

Cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Windhoek Declaration

**Freedom of speech** Cf. freedom of the press, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Freighting** Cf. chartering

**French doctors** A popular term in English for Médecins sans Frontières, MSF, (Doctors without Borders), a predominantly French voluntary organization of physicians and nurses active in disasters and emergencies throughout the world. Received the Nobel Peace Prize, 1999.

Cf. Médecins sans Frontières, humanitarian medicine, international assistance

**Frontal thunderstorm** Thunderstorm which occurs at the passage of a climatic front of two air masses.

**Frost** A fall in the temperature of the air to 0 °C or below, causing freezing on the ground or in the air.

**Fujita-Pearson tornado scale** A 3-digit scale devised by Fujita (F-scale) and

Pearson (PP scale) that indicates a tornado’s intensity (0–5), path length (0–5) and path width (0–7). Abbreviated as FPP scale.

Cf. tornado, Beaufort scale

**Fukushima earthquake and nuclear accident** On 11 March 2011, at 14:46 h the most powerful earthquake in Japan’s history, of over Richter 9 magnitude, shook the Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear power plant area, 250 km northeast of Tokyo, with its epicentre off the east coast of Japan, creating widespread destruction and damaging the complex of six reactors. This was very soon followed by a gigantic tsunami with waves over 20 m, obviously generated by the same tectonic fracture, that reached the Sendai coast and reactor plant site, devastating the surrounding towns and lowlands over many miles. Reactor buildings were further destroyed, caught fire and fuel rods exposed, with partial meltdown. Damage estimated at INES maximum, level 7. Some 30,000 residents were dead, thousands missing or evacuated.

Cf. compound disaster, Three Mile Island, Chernobyl

**Fukushima effect** At the very time when there was considerable confidence in the safety of nuclear reactors and the nuclear power industry, the disastrous explosion and breakdown of the reactors at Fukushima, Japan, on 11 March 2011, with extensive damage and persistent radioactivity, shook that confidence and has had the effect of several countries rethinking their nuclear projects and exploring other sources of energy. Many have decreed a moratorium

Switzerland and Germany have decided, by law, to abandon further plans and to dismantle and decommission all their existing plants by about 2030.

Cf. Fukushima nuclear disaster, nuclear dismantling/decommissioning, disaster legislation, technological disaster

**Full-cream milk powder** Sn: dried full-cream milk, dried whole milk, DFCM, DWM

**Full-scope safeguards** In the nuclear industry, supervision by the International Atomic Energy Authority of all nuclear facilities in a State with the aim of ensuring that fissionable material is not utilized for weapon's manufacture and that it is also otherwise safe.

Cf. arms control. IAEA

**Fumigation** The process of dispersion of fine gaseous particles of chemical agents used to kill harmful animal species, such as insects.

Cf. disinfection

**Fund for Armenian Relief/FAR** Emergency fund raised in the USA to aid the victims of the 1988 devastating earthquake at Spitak, Armenia, great numbers of whom continue needing neurosurgical, orthopaedic, general social and health assistance and rebuilding still insufficient. Hundred and eleven nations have responded to this exceptional disaster.

Cf. Spitak earthquake

**Fund raising** Appeal soliciting contributions and seeking money for a humanitarian cause.

Cf. donor agency, request for disaster assistance

**Fundamentalism** Extremely strict observance of traditional principles and tenets of holy scriptures of a faith, e.g. the Bible, Talmud or Quran, held and interpreted by certain adepts of that faith to be fundamental and beyond any challenge.

**Fungicide** Medicament or chemical compound used to treat fungal infections and to kill fungus.

Cf. pesticide

**Fusion bomb** Nuclear weapon in which the explosive power (other than the triggering by fission) is derived from the fusion of the light nuclei, liberating energy and radiation. There are also nuclear weapons which use a three-stage release of energy – fission, fusion, fission (Cf. FFF bomb).

Sn: hydrogen bomb, thermonuclear bomb

Cf. atom bomb, fission bomb, nuclear war

**G**

**G-20 countries** Twenty of the richest, industrialized and emerging countries, representing about 90% of the gross national product of the world.

Cf. developing countries

**Gabion** An anti-erosion device consisting of a wire box filled with stones, retaining the soil in slope while allowing the water to drain away.

Cf. erosion

**Gale** Violent wind of force 8 or 9 on the Beaufort scale. Between 34 and 40 knots.

Cf. Beaufort scale, cyclone, hurricane, storm, typhoon

**Gale warning** Meteorological message intended to warn those concerned of the existence or expected occurrence of a wind of Beaufort force 8 or 9 over a specified area.

Cf. Beaufort scale

**Gamma rays** Electromagnetic radiation of very short wavelength and high energy, composed of photons emitted by the nuclei of certain radio-nuclides and accompanying many nuclear reactions, such as fission.

Cf. fission, radionuclide

**Gates Foundation** Cf. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

**Gender** In humans, generally refers to the masculine or feminine sex. In society, however, gender refers to the socially established sex roles, values, attributes, customs and expectations that society ascribes to one or the other sex in the community. There should be no gender discrimination.

Cf. gender mainstreaming

**Gender mainstreaming** The process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate aim is to achieve gender equality – ECOSOC.

**Generic drug** Non-proprietary medication prescribed and sold under its chemical name rather than a trade brand name. Usually cheaper than a proprietary mark.

**Genetic effects/aberration** Abnormal changes in the germ cells caused by toxic pollutants or radiation.

Sn: chromosomal aberration

Cf. Chernobyl, chromosome, radioactive contamination, Seveso, technological disaster, thalidomide

**Genetics** The field of biological science that deals with the phenomena and mechanisms of heredity. Genetic problems may occur following toxic and radioactive disasters.

Cf. radioactive contamination, technological disaster.

**Geneva Conventions (Red Cross)** The body of international agreements consisting of four Conventions (1949) and two Additional Protocols (1977), concerning humanitarian treatment of victims of armed conflict and put under the responsibility of the International Committee of the Red Cross. The first Protocol regulates the care of the wounded and sick soldiers on the battlefield; the second is about the care of the wounded, sick and shipwrecked in naval warfare; the third on the treatment of prisoners of war and the fourth on the protection of civilians in time of war. Additional Protocols I and II ensure more humane consideration not only in international conflicts but also in national strife, such as the treatment of guerrilla fighters. (Note: Possible additional protocols are being considered to meet the changing needs in the twenty-first century.)

Cf. International Humanitarian Law, Red Cross, human rights, humanitarian medicine

**Geneva Protocol (chemical and bacteriological weapons)** Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (1925). It prohibits the use in war of asphyxiating poisonous or other gases and of bacteriological weapons. While prohibiting the use, it does not, however, forbid the development, production, stockpiling or deployment of chemical or biological weapons. Another weakness is that it provides no procedures against violations.

The 1975 Biological Weapons Convention complements the 1925 Geneva Protocol in that besides the previous prohibitions, it goes a step further in mandating the destruction of such weapons and their conversion to peaceful purposes.

Cf. biological warfare, chemical weapons, biological weapons, BCW

**Geneva summit (Cold War)** The meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1985, between Ronald Reagan, President of the United States, and Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR, a historic encounter between two enemies and opposing political systems that marked the beginning of the end of the post-World War II Cold War.

**Genital mutilation** Cf. female genital mutilation, excision, infibulation, introcision

**Geneva University/Geneva city** By history, tradition and by proximity to the UN, Red Cross and other international institutions, the city, the University and the Geneva Hospitals (HUG) have long been involved in international work, with a Division of International and Humanitarian Health, a Foundation for Education (GFMER), an annual Health Forum (GHF), GIPRI, Graduate Institute, etc.

**Genocide** Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, national, ethnic, racial or religious groups, e.g. (a) killing members of the group, (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to the group, (c) deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to cause the group's total or partial destruction, (d) imposing measures to prevent births and (f) forcibly transferring children

to another group. The following shall be punishable: genocide; conspiracy, attempt and incitement to commit genocide, complicity in genocide – ICC. Examples: Armenians by Turks in 1915, Nazi extermination of Jews 1938–1944, Tutsis by Hutus in Rwanda 1994 – J. Last.

Cf. crimes against humanity, deportation, ethnic cleansing, human rights, International Criminal Court, man-conceived disaster, torture, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Geodetic** A geographic and mathematical science that seeks to define the shape of the earth and that determines the areas and different points on the earth's topographic surface in relation to a reference system.

Cf. topography

**Geographic information systems** Traditional maps and more elaborate computer programmes that reflect relevant data and analyses on a part of the earth that is being investigated for communication and disaster management purposes.

Sn: GIS

**Geographic longitude** Angular distance of any point on the earth's surface, longitudinal lines east or west of a standard meridian (0 °) situated at Greenwich.

Sn: longitude, terrestrial longitude

Cf. latitude

**Geological hazard(s)** Earth movements or unstable natural land phenomena that may constitute a risk or cause damage to property, the built environment, the socioeconomic fabric or injury and death.

**Geomorphology** The science concerned with the earth's surface and the evolution of the globe's relief features.

**Ghetto/Ghettoization** Originally a restricted area in fifteenth-century Venice, it now denotes an unpopular, circumscribed slum or poor section in a city. Ghettoization is the forceful confining of a minority group into a designated area.

Cf. slum, favela, discrimination

**Glasgow coma scale/GCS** Coma is unconsciousness. The scale is a practical means of assessing changes in the level of responsiveness in the unconscious, comatose or severely injured person. Three systems are monitored; in the eye, the result may be (a) no response, (b) response to pain, (c) to verbal command, (d) opens eye spontaneously. The total score for a positive degree of consciousness is between 3 and 15.

Cf. trauma score

**Glasnost** Russian word for transparency. An attempt to reform and democratize the secretive Soviet regime towards the end of its reign. Cf. transparency, Transparency International

**Glasshouse effect** In addition to natural heat release from the earth into the atmosphere, there is increasing industrial, man-made heat production (combustion of coal, petroleum and natural gas) releasing the gas carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) into the atmosphere. While CO<sub>2</sub> is essentially transparent to incoming solar energy, it is not transparent to re-radiated energy emitted by the earth itself. Thus, a heating process referred to as the "glasshouse" or "hothouse" effect is produced, with wide-scale environmental consequences. Sn: hothouse phenomenon, greenhouse effect

Cf. atmospheric pollution, ozone depletion, chlorofluorocarbons,

global warming, Kyoto protocol, climate change, CO<sub>2</sub>

**GLAWARS Commission Report** The extensive investigation carried out by the Greater London Area War Risk Study Commission on the likely effects of modern warfare on a major metropolitan centre like London. Published under the title "London Under Attack", its conclusions have been found applicable to most modern urban centres, translated into Italian under the title of "Attacco alla Città". Cf. WHOPAX Report, armed conflict, civil defence, nuclear war

**Global Academy of Tropical Health and Cultural Development/GATH** Organization promoting and involved in total health care in tropical areas with a particular view of cultural factors.

**Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition/GAIN** Child malnutrition is a global problem, especially in developing countries. This non-profit organization fights against malnutrition, for food fortification and improved infant and child nutrition for better health.

**Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization/GAVI** An international, interagency enterprise to promote vaccine development and delivery, particularly in low-income countries. A coalition of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, World Bank, WHO, UNICEF and NGOs.

Cf. global compact

**Global compact** United Nations partnership with business and the private sector as legitimate and fruitful partners particularly in the public health field, e.g. with Roche Pharmaceuticals or the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Cf. global alliance

**Global Earth Observation System of Systems/GEOSS**

A mainly inter-governmental technical partnership of GEO (Group on Earth Observations) for an international system to reduce damage from disasters, to better understand the weather and environmental effects on health, to support agriculture and combat desertification.

**Global fallout** Cf. fallout

**Global Forum for Health Research/GFHR**

Affiliated but not a part of WHO, the independent Global Forum strives to narrow the financing gap that disadvantages research for diseases of poor countries. The 10/90 gap.

**Global frequency** Term used for prevalence, but not recommended.

Cf. prevalence

**Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

An extensive, long-term multimillion dollar fund initiated primarily by WHO, UNAIDS and the Gates Foundation to provide long-term medication and sustained treatment for AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. It is an innovative, cooperative funding approach aiming at increasing the finances and resources against global, devastating diseases, initially beginning with the three mentioned above.

Sn: referred to as the Global Fund

Cf. global health partnership

**Global health** More than international health, global health refers to health issues both at the geographic global level and the disease global level, in that it considers health and disease not limited to borders or nations, and disease not limited to bacteriology or other pathologic considerations only. It transcends these and takes into account also such non-medical

economic and political interactions and interdependence as poverty and mortality, GDP and disease, level of education and health.

Cf. international health, Health for All, Millennium Development Goals, World Health Organization

**Global Health Cluster/WHO**

An aggregate of international, national and organizational experts working at the global, regional and country levels to strengthen the humanitarian action of WHO.

**Global health diplomacy**

Policy-shaping processes through which States, intergovernmental organizations and non-State actors negotiate responses to health challenges or utilize health concepts or mechanisms in policy shaping and negotiation strategies to achieve other political, economic or social objectives – Carleton University GHD.

**Global health partnership**

Various forms of cooperative work with the view to scientifically, financially and organizationally tackling a specific or a variety of health problems. Example: GAVI

**Good Humanitarian Donorship/GHD**

In 2003, donor governments proclaimed a Declaration of Good Humanitarian Donorship outlining a series of criteria concerning the timeliness, quality and effectiveness of their humanitarian assistance policies, funding and practices.

Cf. humanitarian response index, development assistance research associates, aid

**Global Observing System**

An extensive system of techniques and facilities of World Weather Watch for recording weather observations on a worldwide scale.

Syn: GOS

Cf. WWW, World Meteorological Organization

**Global Public Health Intelligence Network** A collaborative network between Canada and WHO involving an Internet-based international early warning system for communicable disease outbreaks (GPHIN).

Cf. pandemic

**Global public good** A public service with benefits that is strongly universal in terms of countries (more than one group of countries), people (benefiting several, preferably all population groups) and generations (both current and future, without limiting options for future generations) – GFHR/WHO.

**Global warming** General warming of the earth's surface temperature by small but significant degrees, due, besides natural phenomena, to such man-made factors as industrial gas emissions, petroleum production, ozone depletion, atmospheric pollution, resulting in harmful effects that disturb the global climatic equilibrium and can lead to disaster. A global warming of between 1.5 and 4.5 °C is expected to result in sea level rises of up to 20–40 cm, leading to an increase in severity and frequency of floods, submerging of coastal areas and inundation of productive lands.

Cf. chlorofluorocarbons, El Niño, glasshouse effects, Kyoto protocol, ozone depletion, World Meteorological Organization, CO<sub>2</sub>

**Globalization** The expansion worldwide, through a liberal market economy model, of the infrastructures of commerce, communication, information and other sectors of societal organization, making the globe

“smaller” but with varying (positive and negative) effects on the social, health and developmental activities of people throughout the world.

**Glowing avalanche** A form of ash flow, resulting from incandescent tephra streaming along the slopes of the volcano.

Cf. ash flow, tephra, volcano

**Glowing cloud** Burning mixture of volcanic gas and suspended solid particles falling by gravity and by pressure of gases along the flanks of the erupting volcano.

Sn: “Nuée ardente”

Cf. ash flow, volcano, falling cloud

**Goal** A defined aim towards which to strive and the actions taken to achieve it. Example: The goal may be to have an environment that is conducive to health or to have primary health care available to everybody in a refugee settlement. A global effort is the United Nations programme of Millennium Development Goals 2000–2015 (Cf.)

Cf. objective, plan, target, MDGs

**GOES satellite** Cf. SMS/GOES satellites

**Goitre, goiter** Benign and diffuse enlargement of the thyroid gland due to lack of iodine, endemic in certain areas of the world.

Cf. basal metabolic rate, endemic disease, deficiency disease, iodine, Lugol's iodine, thyroid

**Gonorrhoea** Sexually transmitted disease due to *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*, usually manifested by urethritis in men, vaginitis or cervicitis in women and ophthalmia in infants.

Cf. sexually transmitted disease

**Good manufacturing practice** WHO guidelines and model “designed to



ensure that products are consistently produced and controlled according to a specific set of quality standards to avoid contamination, incorrect labeling and inappropriate levels of active ingredients” – GMP/WHO.

**Governance** Term usually interchangeable with government, but recently increasingly used to denote the mechanisms, manner, system, strong points, weak points and functioning of governing in action.

Cf. government

**Government** Body or office of persons, elected or non-elected, and the rules, authority and responsibility attached thereto that makes decisions for, governs or administers a State.

Cf. governance, democracy, dictatorship

**Graduate Institute, Geneva** More correctly, the Graduate Institute of International Development Studies (Institut de Hautes Etudes Internationales et du Développement, IHEID), a higher academic institution that carries out studies and provides courses on international law, political science and development, as well as on global health and health diplomacy.

**Gray** The SI unit of radioactive absorbed dose. Has replaced the rad.

Sm: Gy

Cf. radioactivity radiation absorption, rad, sievert

**Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake** Extensively devastating earthquake that struck the Kobe (Japan) area on 17 January 1995, killing over 6,400 people and injuring about 40,000.

Cf. also the Fukushima earthquake.

**Green Cross International/GCI** Humanitarian organization initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev, Nobel Peace

Laureate, to promote conflict resolution, healthy environment, peace and upholding human values in society.

**Greenhouse gas** A gas, such as carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and hydrochlorofluorocarbons, (HCFCs) that absorbs and re-emits infrared radiation, warming the earth’s surface and contributing to climate change. – UNEP. Abbreviated as GHG.

Cf. greenhouse gas, hothouse phenomenon, climate change

**Greenpeace** Independent worldwide organization that upholds respect for – and exposes breaches of – action by industries, governments or people that pollute and degrade the environment, e.g. the deterioration of the oceans, destruction of ancient forests, global warming, nuclear threat. Also active in promoting peace and human rights.

Cf. environmental pollution, climate change, nuclear war

**Greenwich Mean Time** Universal coordinated standard reference time based on the time at the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, England, at 0° longitude. Usually referred to as GMT. To the West of Greenwich, the hour is –GMT, and to the East, +GMT.

Sn: GMT, universal coordinated time, Zulu time

**Gross domestic product** The total value of all goods and services produced within a given country, irrespective of ownership. Abbreviated as GDP. The term is being increasingly replaced by Gross National Product, GNP.

Cf. Gross national product

**Gross national product** The total value of all goods and services produced in a

country during a given period, usually a year, expressed in monetary terms, at current prices, produced and owned by the nation's citizens. Abbreviated as GNP.

Cf. Gross domestic product

**Ground level concentration** Sn: concentration (of a toxic or radioactive material) at ground level.

**Ground swell** Popular expression describing solitary high wave(s).

**Groundwater level** The level at which underground water saturates the overlying rock and soil.

**Ground zero** Sn: hypocentre (nuclear explosion)

Cf. zone zero

**Groupe de Bellerive** An independent forum for rational and unbiased discussion by socially conscious, highly respectable scientists, statesmen and thinkers, on major issues facing humanity, such as peace, security, nuclear risk, disarmament, environment, international terrorism, renewable energy or human interdependence.

**Guardian** A person who has or has been entrusted with the legal authority and decisional power over a child, minor, seriously sick patient or incompetent person, for the advantage of that person.

Cf. unaccompanied minor

**Guerrilla** Literally "small war", which takes on a different meaning or interpretation according to whether it is justified or unjustified, struggle for independence, liberation, resistance or insurrection, destruction and subjugation. In International humanitarian law, the Geneva Conventions and United Nations instruments have difficulty in dealing with such situations.

Cf. International humanitarian law, Geneva Conventions, conflict, armed conflict, kamikaze, civil war

**Gulbenkian Foundation** Primarily founded to rescue and alleviate the sufferings of the Armenian people from the massacres of 1915–1917, this benevolent organization has now expanded into education and the prestigious fields of art (G. Museum), music (G. Orchestra) and human welfare, based in Portugal.

**Gulf War syndrome** Condition observed in soldiers who served in the Gulf War, 1961, characterized by general fatigue, pain in the limbs and general depression. Exposure to chemical weapons and depleted uranium has been suspected.

**Gust** Sn: squall

**Gypsies** Cf. tziganes, Roma, nomad, population mobility, racism

## H

### Habitat

1. The ecological frame and dwelling place to which a species or community is adapted.
2. The space occupied by man for his domestic life and related activities.
3. Shortened name for the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements.

**Habituation** The process by which an organism (or society) becomes gradually accustomed and insensitive to certain changes in the environment.

The term is also used for addiction, substance dependence and excessive drug consumption.

Cf. environment, society

**Hacking** The secret, unauthorized, illegal penetration by unobtrusive cyberelectronic means into a computer data base, telephone or other network with the view to disrupting, damaging, destroying or acquiring information.

**Halal** Arabic word for lawful. Food that is permissible to eat according to Islamic law. Opposite of Haram.

Cf. sharia, custom, kosher

**Half-life** Cf. radioactive half-life

**Ham radio** An amateur radio used for two-way communications usually as a private hobby, but the international network of which can be quite useful in disaster situations.

Cf. International Telecommunication Union

**Handicap** A congenital or acquired diminution of varying degrees, in a person's ability to perform a mental, physical, occupational or social function.

**Harassing agents** Chemical substances that are used to temporarily harass crowds or control riots, as with tear gases. Risky as they are, these chemicals are not considered as lethal weapons in conventional war and their use is not prohibited. For example, they are often used by the police.

Cf. tear gas, lethal agent, incapacitating agent, chemical weapons, war

**Harnessing** Cf. water harnessing

**Hawaiian type eruption** Nonexplosive volcanic action producing a creeping lava flow with low gas pressure, solidifying in layers as it creeps and sometimes forming an incandescent lake.

Cf. volcano, creep

**Hazard** The probability of the occurrence of a disaster caused by a natural phenomenon (earthquake, cyclone) or by failure of man-made sources of energy (nuclear reactor, industrial explosion) or by uncontrolled human activity (overgrazing, heavy traffic, conflicts) – UN.

Potential source of harm – ISO.

Some authors use the term in a broader sense, including vulnerability, elements at risk and the consequences of risk.

Cf. elements at risk, natural hazard, risk, vulnerability, secondary hazard

**Hazard analysis** Investigation, study and monitoring of a hazard with the view to identifying its origin, behaviour, characteristics and damage potential.

**Hazard classification** Cf. UN hazard classification

**Hazard mapping** Cf. zoning

**Hazardous area** An area, building or facility with more than usual fire risks, structural collapse, flooding, chemical contamination, etc. It may also refer to a particular part of a building, such as the radiation laboratory in a hospital.

**Hazardous material** A substance, gaseous, liquid or solid, such as a toxic chemical, that has been designated by the appropriate authorities as being potentially dangerous to health, safety or property, and the handling and transport of which are subjected to strict legislation.

Sn: hazmat

Cf. UN hazard classification, Basel Convention, hazard analysis

**Hazmat** Abbreviation for hazardous material.

**H-bomb** Sn: hydrogen bomb

**Health**

1. The state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity – WHO.
2. The state of an individual or a community free from debilitating conditions and harassing circumstances, demonstrating a reasonable resistance to diseases and living in a salubrious environment.

**Health-care levels** Cf. Primary health care, secondary health care, tertiary health care

**Health centre** A facility from which health care is delivered to a defined

community or area. It is a centre that carries out promotive, protective, preventive, diagnostic, curative and rehabilitative activities for ambulant people. Normally, it has no beds – WHO. In some countries, the scope of such a centre may be wider.

**Health development** The process of continuous, progressive improvement of health status of a population – WHO.

And all the activities undertaken in respect of such improvement.

**Health diplomacy** Cf. global health diplomacy, diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy

**Health education** The approaches and techniques used to promote sanitary living habits in the community and to inculcate knowledge and practices of hygienic behaviour in individuals as the basic element of primary health care within personal and national development. Not to be confused with medical education.

**Health in all policies principle** In strengthening the philosophy of Health for All, a new emphasis based on the principle that peoples' health can be improved through policies that are mainly controlled by sectors other than health.

Cf. Millennium Development Goals, health diplomacy

**Health promotion** The aggregate of educational, advocacy, informative and demonstration processes to encourage and enable people to increase their control over and ameliorate their health.

Cf. health diplomacy

**Health research** Systematic qualitative and quantitative investigation to enhance the understanding of health and its application both in the field of disease-causing pathogens as well as

in the wider determinants of global health, including environmental, social, economic and political elements.

**Health resources** Inventory of medical and related personnel, of health workers, services, hospitals and clinics, public and private medical and drug supplies, pharmaceutical distributors with records of stocks of medicines and vaccines and other health facilities.

Cf. health workers

**Health sustainability** Providing a system of health that responds to current needs, maintains that level and does not encroach upon the health needs of future generations.

Cf. sustainability

**Health system** A system that consists of organizations, people and actions whose primary intent is to promote, restore and maintain health, with the goals of improving health and health equity in ways that are responsive, financially fair and make the best or most efficient use of available resources – WHO.

**Health transition** In a given population, variations in the underlying causes of disease and death that stem from changes in the interrelated elements of demographic structure, epidemiological patterns, geographic changes and transition risk factors.

**Health workers** All persons engaged in actions whose primary intent is to enhance health – WHO.

**Heat illness** Exposure to high temperatures can cause heat-related illness in the form of heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, exertional heat sickness, skin injury due to extreme sunburn, etc. Heat illness occurs when the body generates, or is exposed to, more heat than it can dissipate.

In tropical countries and open refugee communities, the people suffer less as their body is adjusted to such temperatures, while expatriate relief workers can be quite ill from heat and humidity. Heat stroke. (Not to confuse with burn disease.)

**Heavy water** Deuterium oxide, or water containing a high proportion of deuterium atoms, HDO or D<sub>2</sub>O

**Heimlich manoeuvre** An emergency, on site non-invasive manoeuvre to liberate an obstructed airway by applying immediate, sudden and firm pressure on the upper abdomen that helps eject the blocking object.

**Helminthiasis** A variety of diseases caused by the presence of parasitic worms (helminths) in the body. Usually soil-transmitted. Common in poor and crowded conditions.  
Cf. parasitic diseases

**Helsinki Conference 2005** International conference held in 2005 in Helsinki, Finland, with the aim of engaging parliamentarians to foster accountability in global institutions, to meet the promises of the UN Millennium Development Goals and to formulate effective measures to tackle global health crises.  
Cf. accountability, Millennium Development Goals

**Helsinki Declaration** A formal statement made in 1964 by WHO and the World Medical Association (WMA) that establishes 12 ethical principles to all scientists and health personnel on research and experimentation involving human subjects. In particular, it imposes the necessity of informed consent by the patient and extends the Nuremberg Code.

Cf. Nuremberg Code, informed consent, ethics

**Hepatitis** Any inflammation of the liver due to infection, allergy or toxic substances. Includes acute viral hepatitis (A, B) and other types (C).  
Cf. viral hepatitis (A, B, C).

**Herbicide** Chemical compound used to kill undesirable plants and weeds. In chemical warfare, it is used as a weapon to kill vegetation.  
Cf. chemical warfare, defoliant, pesticide, agent orange

**Hero** Acronymic term for hazard of electromagnetic radiation to ordnance.  
Cf. electromagnetic pulse/EMP

**Heroism** Courageous conduct beyond the call of duty, often putting one's life in danger in the process of helping another. Noble act, not infrequently seen at the site of a disaster and in humanitarian work.

**High Commissioner for Human Rights** Cf. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations

**High-income countries** The World Bank categorizes (2008) according to gross national income (GNI, previously GNP) per capita: high-income countries: US\$11,906 or more.  
Sn: developed countries, industrialized countries  
Cf. upper-middle income countries, low-income countries, country income classification

**High-pressure area** Sn: anticyclone

**High-pressure ridge** Extension of a high-pressure zone in a less elevated zone.  
Cf. atmospheric pressure, anticyclone

**High seas**

1. That part of the sea that is out of vision from the coast.
2. Waters situated beyond the territorial sea and free of any sovereignty.

The “Boat people” were attacked on the high seas outside Vietnam.

Sn: open sea Cf. piracy

**Hijacking** An illegal violent action committed mainly in an airplane, sometimes on the highway, for private, criminal or political ends.

Cf. piracy

**Hiroshima/Nagasaki** Industrial cities in Japan. Hiroshima was the first ever human settlement to be attacked with an atomic bomb, at 8:15 a.m., on 6 August 1945, towards the end of World War II, resulting in massive destruction, radioactive fallout, immediate massacre with 80,000 civilian deaths, more than 210,000 victims and long-lasting health and radioactivity consequences that are still continuing. The bomb was of uranium type, equivalent to 13,000 tons of TNT.

Nagasaki was targeted on 9 August, with a plutonium type bomb. The only two cities to date to have been subjected to atomic attacks.

Cf. atom bomb, nuclear war, uranium, plutonium, crimes against humanity

**Holistic medicine** A health and disease perception of good medicine based on the principle that the whole (wholistic) person in his environment should be treated rather than merely the disease or injured part.

**Holistic recovery (disaster)** A holistic recovery from disaster is one in which the stricken locality systematically considers each of the principles of sustainability in every decision it makes about reconstruction and redevelopment – Nat. Hazard.

**Holocaust** Literally means burning to complete destruction. Historically a horrible and totally condemnable policy of certain governments against

target populations, with intent to annihilate them, e.g. the Spanish colonizers against the Maya and Aztec, Nazis against Jews.

Cf. genocide, human rights, man-conceived disaster

**Homosexuality** The biological sex instinct normally induces attraction and attachment between man and woman (heterosexual). A small minority feel differently, to a person of the same sex (homosexual) or to either sex (bisexual). The usual term for men is “gay” and for women is “lesbian”. These should not be discriminated against.

**Hookworm** Sn: ankylostomiasis

**Horizontal transmission** Disease transmission from one person to another in the same generation, as opposed to transmission from one generation to another, e.g. HIV transmission from mother to baby.

**Hospice** A well-intentioned institution or other facility that provides palliative care for the incurably sick, terminally ill or the dying.

**Hospital capacity (in mass casualty situation)** In a mass casualty situation, with many patients arriving at the same time, the theoretical capacity of a hospital would be its ability to admit or manage a number of victims amounting to approximately 20% of its normal bed capacity.

Cf. mass casualty situation, casualty

**Hospitalization in disasters** Cf. mass casualty situation

**Host country** Country or its government where a refugee, asylum seeker or disaster victim is accepted and receives humanitarian assistance.

**Hostage** Person abducted by force and held against his will, usually for political pressure or monetary gain.

**Hothouse phenomenon** Sn: glasshouse effects, greenhouse effect

Cf. global warming, ozone depletion, climate change

**Hotline** A telephone number or other direct communication method accessible during emergencies or for other useful information, such as police, fire, civil defence.

Cf. civil defence, alarm

**Household** A family or several persons forming a domestic commonalty, living under the same roof.

Sn: household unit

Cf. community

**Household survey** Any study or enquiry which is based on household samples. For example, food consumer surveys, preference surveys, demographic surveys.

Cf. food consumption survey, socio-economic survey

**Housing** The act of providing a person with shelter or temporary lodgings.

Sn: sheltering

**Human development** Progress of individuals – and by extension of their community – towards fulfilment of their manual, intellectual and cultural capacities and of their personal potentialities.

Cf. development, sustainable development

**Human failure (accident/error/disaster)** A disaster caused or aggravated by a human deficiency or due to a human factor. “It is estimated that as a direct loss-causing agent human failure accounts for about 15% of all accidents”, the rate varying according to several parameters. The main parameters controlling human failure are the aggregate of (a) the ability, qualification and awareness of the participating expert(s); (b) the residual

chance of human failure; (c) knowledge of the problem; (d) training received by the person(s) concerned; (e) experience of the person(s) concerned; (f) risk awareness of the person(s) concerned; (g) motivation of these persons to prevent accident and (h) the personal risk to the individual should an accident occur. The effects of these parameters often overlap – Tiedemann, Swiss Re.

**Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)** The causal organism of AIDS.

Sn: HIV Cf. AIDS, immunodeficiency

**Human rights** The inalienable rights of every human being, based on the recognition by all of the inherent dignity and equality of each person, as codified and guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention européenne des Droits de l’Homme, and other international instruments.

Sn: sometimes called the Rights of Man (especially in French).

Cf. High Commissioner for Human Rights, humanitarian medicine, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, International Criminal Court, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, humanitarian, absolute human right, UNHCHR

**Human Rights, Universal Declaration of** Cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Human security** A desirable and essential condition in which man’s freedom from fear and from want are ensured. Safety from disease, hunger and violence are corollaries.

**Human settlement** An organized system of varying size – from village to



metropolis – which englobes in one functional whole the community, its habitat and its activities.

Cf. habitat, community, HABITAT/UN

**Human shield** The use of a person as a safety shield, whether that person is a man, woman or child, civilian or soldier, injured or healthy, prisoner-of-war or health worker.

Holding a human shield constitutes a crime of war.

**Humane** Possessing the higher human qualities of compassion, love, benevolence, caring and sharing, as befits a finer person.

**Humanitarian** Concept: The view that a person's and humane society's beliefs and actions should benefit mankind, its advancement and its benevolent values.

Action: Work and services undertaken for the advancement and the welfare of humanity without regard to race, religion, politics or profit.

Adjective: Relating to or of a beneficial action or humanitarian aims. Compassionate.

Under some conflict circumstances, allowable humanitarian aid may be limited to basic needs of food, health and shelter.

Cf. International Humanitarian Law, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UNHCHR, OHCHR, IAHM

**Humanitarian action** Any work, service, advocacy or assistance of moral, legal, professional, social or physical nature, provided to a person or community, within the concepts of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations actions, to safeguard and uphold the fundamental rights of a person and human society. Also any action

needed to fight against the breach of human rights.

Cf. humanitarian, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, UNHCHR, humanitarian health action, OCHA

**Humanitarian assistance/relief** Aid or relief of any kind, extent or amount, offered voluntarily to persons or communities suffering from any cause, in the spirit of compassion, humanity, impartiality, neutrality and without any consideration of gain. Funding gives precedence to people-focused survival and basic needs programmes, with special consideration to the human rights dimension of health, especially in vulnerable groups.

Cf. aid, humanitarian, humanitarian medicine, international assistance, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, Red Cross, relief

**Humanitarian assistance by governments. Efficacy score in 2011** Out of 23 donor countries, the following ten proved the most effective in their humanitarian aid in 2011, as based on the DARA criteria: (1) Norway, (2) Denmark, (3) Sweden, (4) Ireland, (5) the Netherlands, (6) Switzerland, (7) European Commission, (8) United Kingdom, (9) Finland, (10) Australia – *Le Temps*.

Cf. development assistance research associates, humanitarian response index, good humanitarian donorship

**Humanitarian Charter and Standards** Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response. A declaration of principles by several non-governmental organizations (the Sphere Group) aiming at

increasing the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance and making humanitarian agencies more accountable in disaster response. The Charter affirms the fundamental importance of (a) the right to life with dignity, (b) distinction between combatants and non-combatants and (c) the principle of non-refoulement. The Standards also set minimal (but not exclusive) requirements for (a) water supply and sanitation, (b) nutrition, (c) food aid, (d) shelter and (e) health services.

Cf. humanitarian, humanitarian medicine, humanitarian assistance

**Humanitarian corridor** A temporary combat-free passage agreed to by belligerents for safe humanitarian access to evacuate the wounded and besieged and provide food.

**Humanitarian diplomacy** The process of persuading decision-makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles – IFRC Red Cross.

Cf. global health diplomacy, humanitarian medicine, IAHM

**Humanitarian health action** A single or aggregate of actions performed towards the fulfilment of the principle of the right to health and actions in situations where health is in jeopardy.

Cf. humanitarian assistance

**Humanitarian intervention** Cf. right to intervene, le droit d'ingérence

**Humanitarian Law** Correct appellation: International Humanitarian Law (Cf.). Refers principally to the Red Cross Conventions law of armed conflict or law of war, not to be confused with other humanitarian legislation, the UNHCHR or OHCHR.

Sn: law of war

Cf. law of war, International Humanitarian Law, Red Cross Conventions

**Humanitarian medicine** While all medical intervention to reduce a person's sickness and suffering is in essence humanitarian, humanitarian medicine goes beyond the usual therapeutic act and promotes, provides, teaches, supports and delivers people's health as a human right, in conformity with the ethics of Hippocratic teaching, the principles of the World Health Organization, the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Red Cross Conventions and other covenants and practices that ensure the most humane and best possible level of care, without any discrimination or consideration of material gain – Gunn.

Cf. humanitarian, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, International Humanitarian Law, Geneva Conventions, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, World Health Organization

**Humanitarian principle** The principle that all men are equal and that all human beings shall enjoy the basic necessities of life, adequate health and security, prevention and alleviation of suffering, protection of well-being, their human rights and respect for dignity.

Cf. basic needs, human rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Humanitarian response criteria** Cf. humanitarian response index, good humanitarian donorship, DARA, humanitarian assistance by governments, Sphere Project

**Humanitarian Response Index**

**(HRI)** Humanitarian assistance may be assessed in different ways. One method is that of the Sphere Project (Cf.). DARA International has set a Humanitarian Response Index based on five criteria: (1) responding to needs; (2) prevention, risk reduction and recovery; (3) working with humanitarian partners; (4) protection and international law; (5) learning and accountability.

Cf. Development assistance research associates, Sphere Project, aid, humanitarian charter, good humanitarian donorship, humanitarian assistance by governments

**Humanitarian surgery** The provision of any or all of the following surgical services by a person or group: the occasional surgical actions needed unexpectedly and provided *pro bono* and without personal advantage or a long-term action dedicated to charitable surgical efforts rather than routine surgical practice, a career devoted to missionary surgery, the provision of surgical care to the underserved or of essential surgery to developing countries under difficult conditions, or of educational programmes with the view to strengthening the surgical capacity in such countries.

Cf. humanitarian medicine, essential surgery, Surgeons Overseas, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, American College of Surgeons, Royal College of Surgeons of Canada

**Humanitarian war** An unacceptable, illogical term, sometimes used for humanitarian intervention or the right to intervene. Term not to be used.

**Hunger** The physical and mental complex of unpleasant sensations provoked

by deprivation of food and relieved by the ingestion of food. Food shortages result in mass hunger.

Cf. famine, food, the Hunger Project

**Hunger strike** An extreme expression of protest by self-imposed starvation, prolonged refusal of any food, usually to obtain release, acceptance of one's cause or promote a political ideology.

**Hurricane** A tropical cyclone of wind force 12 on the Beaufort scale, i.e. more than 58 knots. Hurricanes of the West Indies, Western Pacific typhoons and Bay of Bengal cyclones are essentially the same phenomenon; now, all tend to be called tropical cyclones. (Sn.)

Cf. Beaufort scale, Saffir-Simpson scale, cyclone, gale, typhoon, tropical cyclone

**Hurricane warning** Meteorological message intended to warn those concerned of the existence or expected occurrence of a wind of Beaufort force 12 over a specified area.

Cf. cyclone warning, gale warning, storm warning, typhoon warning

**Hydatid disease** Intestinal and liver (sometimes pulmonary) infection, often clinically silent, caused by the larvae or cysts of the *Echinococcus* tapeworm, which uses sheep, cattle and especially the dog as host. The Casoni test is usually indicative.

Sn: echinococcosis, hydatidosis, hydatid cyst

Cf. enteric diseases, parasitic diseases

**Hydatidosis** Sn: hydatid disease

**Hydrogen bomb** Nuclear weapon in which the explosive power is derived from fusion which liberates energy and radiation.

Sn: H-bomb, fusion bomb, thermonuclear bomb

Cf. fusion, nuclear war, fission bomb

**Hydrogeological map** The synthetic map of a given territory showing the extent of its hydrological structure and characteristics, the distribution and dynamics of its underground water and useful indications regarding the evaluation and harnessing of its subterranean water resources.

Cf. water harnessing

### Hydrography

1. Science that deals with the complex system of variations in the water covering the earth's surface. The instrument is the hydrograph.
2. Applied science which compiles and cartographically presents the navigable depths of the oceans and of the surrounding areas to help safe navigation.

**Hydrological basin** Sn: river basin

**Hydrology** The science that deals with the hydrosphere. Depending on the field of application, there is marine hydrology (oceanography) and continental hydrography (potamology, limnology, hydrogeology, glaciology, etc.).

Cf. hydrosphere

**Hydrosphere** The complex of all the waters of the globe existing between the atmosphere, the lithosphere, the continental waters, the oceans and the seas.

Cf. atmosphere

**Hygiene** Science that deals with the principles, methods and practical aspects of disease prevention, sanitation and improvement of health. It is usually divided into such fields as personal hygiene, domestic hygiene, food hygiene, industrial hygiene.

**Hyogo World Conference on Disaster Reduction** In January 2005, the WCDR at Hyogo, Japan, set important standards for the improvement of risk and disaster management. Inter-

alia UNISDR developed a useful basic list of disaster terminology, some reflected in this Dictionary.

Cf. ISDR, OCHA

**Hypernutrition** The opposite of undernutrition, resulting in a pathological state due to excessive intake of food, rich in calories, leading to obesity.

Sn: overnutrition, gluttony

Cf. malnutrition

### Hypocentre

1. Ballistics: The point of the ground vertically beneath an air explosion of a nuclear bomb.

Sn: ground zero

2. Seismology: The focus of earth crust movements directly beneath the point of an earthquake.

Cf. epicentre

**Hypovitaminosis** Deficiency in a given vitamin, leading to disease.

Sn: vitamin deficiency

**Hypoxia** A fall in the physiological level of oxygen to the tissues despite adequate supply of blood, constituting a health hazard.

**Hysteria** A psychological disturbance with uncontrollable emotional outbursts, convulsions, anaesthesia, fear, etc. May be triggered by unusual crises, such as a disaster.

## I

**Iatrogenic illness** Illness or accident that can be related to the actions of a physician, nurse or pharmacist or that may result from a stay in a hospital. The latter is called nosocomial illness.

**Ice break-up** The fall of ice walls and the disappearance of the ice cover in polar and semi-arctic regions due to climate change and hydrogeological phenomena. This is increasing due to global warming.

**Ice pack** The masses of ice in the polar regions formed by freezing of sea water. Examples: coastal ice pack, floating ice pack. This is decreasing due to global warming.

Sn: barrier, pack ice

**Ice storm** Intense formation of frost and ice on objects by the freezing of drops of rain or drizzle on impact.

Sn: glaze storm

**Icterus** Sn: jaundice

**Identity theft** A serious fraudulent act when an unauthorized person steals and transfers one's key identifying information, such as name, address, social security number, tax and bank numbers, and other personal information illegally to obtain advantages, credit or other services in the name of the victim.

Cf. hacking

**Illegal immigrant** An undocumented alien, who has entered a country irregularly with the aim of residing there temporarily or permanently. Asylum seekers are usually not treated as illegal immigrants.

Cf. migration, territorial asylum

**Immigrant** Person who arrives in a new country for personal, economic, social or political reasons and who plans to reside there.

Cf. emigrant, immigration, migrant

**Immigration** The massive arrival of persons in a country other than their own, usually following a disaster or political upheaval, and the process of their settling in the host country.

Cf. displaced persons, emigration, exodus, migration, refugee

**Immunity** Medical: The condition of being non-susceptible to an infectious disease. (Cf. immunization).

Diplomatic: The international status of being free from foreign legislation,

to cross frontiers and to carry diplomatic pouch without search or customs restrictions. (Cf. diplomatic immunity)

**Immunization** Rendering a person or animal immune to certain infections by the process of injecting either an antigen or a serum containing specific antibodies.

Cf. vaccination, immunity, Expanded Programme on Immunization (WHO)

**Immunodeficiency** Defective or deficient immunological mechanisms of the body due to insufficiency in one of the components of the immune process or to a defect in the B-lymphocyte or T-lymphocytesystems. Immunological deficit may result from infection, as AIDS, or excessive radiation, as in nuclear war, or toxic substances.

Sn: immune deficiency, immunological deficit

Cf. acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

**Impact** Refers to strong contact between two elements or events. The influence can be positive or negative. In disasters, it refers to the immediate damage and continuing harmful effects or results of the event. In society, a positive impact may be the effects of equitable legislation on the people.

**Impairment** A physical, mental or psychological deficiency in a person, or a specific organ or function, momentary or lasting, that interferes with or decreases the ability of thinking, performance or function, resulting in a handicapped, disabled or otherwise diminished person.

**Impartiality** Action, position or belief that makes no distinction of nationality, race, religion, colour, wealth, social

condition or political conviction and in assistance applies only to the service of relief in measure of the needs of the victim's suffering – Red Cross.

**Imprescriptible** Right: A right that cannot be taken away or abrogated under any circumstances. Inalienable.

Cf. human rights

Crime: The absence of time limit for the investigation or sentencing of certain very serious crimes, e.g. war crimes, crimes against humanity.

Cf. impunity, transparency

**Impunity** The objectionable capacity of escaping legitimate punishment, or creating the conditions of avoiding and exemption from legal indictment. Corrupt persons conceiving disastrous acts or acts against humanity should be brought to justice before the International Criminal Court. The primary aim of the Rome Statutes of the International Court of Justice that came into effect on 1 July 2002 is “to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators ... of the most serious crimes”. Cf. High Commissioner for Human Rights, International Criminal Court, man-conceived disaster

**Incapacitating agent** In chemical and biological weaponry, an agent that is intended to cause temporary disease to induce temporary mental or physical disability, the duration of which greatly exceeds the period of exposure – WHO.

Cf. lethal agent, harassing agent, chemical weapon, biological weapon

**Incest** Sexual abuse occurring within the family. Usually accomplished by physical force or coercion with grave psychological consequences – WGVAW.

Cf. violence against women

**Incidence** The number of new cases of a disease or injury or of sick persons

or casualties, in a given population, in a specified period of time. It should not be confused with prevalence.

Cf. prevalence

**Incident/Accident** Although different in meaning and consequences, these two terms are often misused interchangeably in emergency management. Incident is a sudden, unexpected occurrence that happens by chance and is usually without very serious consequences. Accident is also a sudden, unforeseen event, but more serious, usually with some resulting damage, injury or death. Whence, accident prevention and accident department in a hospital.

Cf. accident/incident

**Incident command system** The aggregate of plans, procedures, equipment, human resources, communications and management operating within a unified organizational structure under responsible direction with the view to accomplishing the stated objective related to a disaster incident (ICS).

Cf. action plan

**Incineration** Controlled disposal of wastes by burning of domestic garbage, hospital used matter and industrial waste. Can also apply to cadavers, especially in disaster situations.

**Income-based country categorization** Cf. country income classification by the World Bank, 2008

**Income-based mortality** Poverty, riches and income differences affect peoples' health differently. Percentage of deaths in 5 main causes of disease in women aged 60 and over by country income group showed (2004), in descending order: (a) high-income developed countries: ischaemic heart disease, stroke, Alzheimer's and dementia, lower respiratory

infections, lung and bronchial carcinoma; (b) middle-income countries: stroke, ischaemic heart disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, hypertensive heart disease, lower respiratory infections; (c) ischaemic heart disease, stroke, lower respiratory infections, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes mellitus – WHO.

Cf. country income classification, low-income country

**Incubation period**

1. The interval between the time of infection of a person or animal and the appearance of the first sign or symptom of the disease.
2. In malaria, the time needed for the completion of sporogony in the mosquito, until the stage of its becoming infective.

Cf. carrier

**Indicator** In management, a quantitative or qualitative benchmark or signal that shows whether an expected standard, result or impact has been attained and where corrective measures may be needed.

**Indicators/Standards in disasters** Cf. standards/indicators, Sphere Project

**Indignez Vous!/Time for Outrage**

French term that can be understood as be indignant, speak out, get involved, time for outrage. A 2010 pamphlet *Indignez Vous*, under the English title of *Time for Outrage*, by Stéphane Hessel, encouraging all citizens, particularly the youth, to stand up for human rights, social values, equity and moral principles and speak out against egoism, indifference, monetarism, materialism and injustices. The term has become an internationally popular slogan for social movements, e.g. in Madrid or

Cairo. The author was one of the original signatories in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

**Induced seismicity** Earth tremors and seismic phenomena resulting from excessive man-made activity, such as atomic explosions, underground bombs, overmining, reservoir construction, oil drilling.

**Industrial complex** The large aggregate of physical facilities and interdependent economic activities grouped around a base industry.

Cf. rural, military-industrial complex

**Inequity** The opposite of equity. Inadequate services, unhygienic conditions, social inequalities, lack of access to care facilities and disdain for people's rights are not only unnecessary and avoidable in health but, in addition, are unfair, unjust and inequitable.

Cf. equity in health

**Infection** The entry and development or multiplication of an infectious agent (virus, bacteria, fungus, parasite) in the body of man or animal.

Cf. communicable disease, infestation, parasitic disease

**Infectious disease** Sn: communicable disease

**Infectious hepatitis** Cf. hepatitis

**Infestation** The penetration and development of arthropods and parasites on the body or in clothing. Cf. disinfection, disinfestation, infestation, parasitic disease

**Infibulation** One of the three forms of female genital mutilation, consisting of the complete ablation of the clitoris, the labia minora and the labia majora at the vaginal opening. The opening is then sewn together leaving



only a small passage for menstrual flow and urination.

Sn: pharaonic circumcision

Cf. female genital mutilation, FGM, female circumcision, excision, introcision

**Informed consent** In health care, consent must be given not only voluntarily but also such consent must be informed, the patient being well aware of what (operation, experiment, treatment or other action) he is consenting to. Special legal obligations concern the consent of (for) minors and for unconscious patients.

Cf. consent, Nuremberg Code, Helsinki Declaration

**Injury** Any bodily harm or organic lesion, lethal or non-lethal, caused by a mechanical, thermal, electrical, chemical or radiation agent, of such magnitude that exceeds the victim's threshold of physiological tolerance. Injury may also result from the lack of one or more vital elements, such as oxygen.

Injuries are usually classified as unintentional (e.g. traffic trauma, cuts, poisoning, fires, falls, drowning) or intentional (e.g. self-inflicted wounds, suicide, violence, fights, war injuries). Cf. casualty, trauma, traumatic injury classification, trauma scale

**Insecticide** Chemical compound used for the destruction of insects harmful to man, animals and plants.

Cf. pesticide

**Instant corn-soya-milk** Nutritional food mixture consisting of:

59.2% cornmeal, processed, gelatinized

17.5% soya flour, defatted, toasted

15.0% non-fat dry milk, spray processed

5.5% soya oil, refined, deodorized, stabilized

2.7% mineral premix

0.1% vitamin, premix antioxidant

Sn: ICSM

Cf. food mixtures, nutrition

**Insurance – disaster damage** The detrimental effects of flood damage, fire or other disaster, including collateral and other unfavourable outcomes, evaluated and expressed in monetary or other terms for appropriate compensation.

**Integration** The unconscious processes or planned operations whereby separate elements, individuals, people or communities assemble to form a whole, in which the varying characteristics are less marked or where the resulting system acquires new characteristics.

Cf. acculturation, absorption, assimilation, minorities

**Intensity (seismic)** The degree of shaking or of vibrations, signifying the intensity of an earthquake as measured numerically on the Mercalli scale.

Cf. earthquake, magnitude, Mercalli scale, Richter scale

**Intensive care unit** A specialized medical care facility where there are physicians, surgeons, nurses, anaesthetists and other appropriate skills and the necessary equipment to provide emergency, acute and continuing care to critically ill persons.

Sn: ICU

**Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change/IPCC** Established in 1988 following growing concern on the effect of human activity on climate, IPCC carries out scientific, technical and socio-economic assessments of climate change, its impact and options for mitigation. The subsequent UN Framework Convention on Climate

Change has become the principal institution on climatic issues.

**Internally displaced person(s)** Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular, as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or man-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border – UNHCR. According to established principles, these persons have the right to seek safety in another part of the country, to leave their country, to seek asylum in another country and the right to be protected against forcible return or unsafe resettlement. But these are not refugees in the juridical sense.

Cf. displaced person, refugee, IDP

**International assistance** Assistance provided by one or more countries or international or voluntary organizations to a country in need, usually for development or for an emergency. The four main elements of assistance within the international community are as follows:

- a. The intergovernmental agencies – United Nations, European Union
- b. Non-governmental organizations
- c. The Red Cross
- d. Bilateral agreements

Cf. bilateral cooperation, donor, non-governmental organizations, Red Cross, technical assistance

**International Association for Humanitarian Medicine Brock Chisholm/IAHM** A professional, non-profit, non-governmental organization that promotes and delivers health care on the principles of

humanitarian medicine and named after Dr. Brock Chisholm, the first Director-General of the World Health Organization. In particular, it provides medical, surgical, nursing and rehabilitative care to patients in or from developing countries deficient in the necessary specialized expertise; brings relief to victims of disasters where health aid is lacking; mobilizes hospitals and health specialists in developed countries to receive and treat such patients free of charge; promotes the concept of health as a human right and bridge to peace and advocates humanitarian law and humanitarian principles in the practice of medicine.

Cf. humanitarian medicine, human rights, disasters, non-governmental organization, World Health Organization, World Open Hospitals

**International Atomic Energy Agency/IAEA**

UN specialized agency for the peaceful uses of atomic energy; promotes the contribution of this energy to peace, health and prosperity and ensures that it is not used for military purposes.

Supervises the safety and monitors accidents of nuclear installations, but is not involved in non-peaceful nuclear (weapons) questions. Was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Cf. Chernobyl, environmental pollution, nuclear reactor, transboundary pollution, United Nations, INES

**International Bank for Reconstruction** Cf. World Bank

**International Bill of Human Rights** High international legislation concerning human rights, composed of:

- 1. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- 2. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- 3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- 4. The Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – UN.

**International Centre Ettore Majorana for World Laboratory of Scientific Culture** Important centre in Erice, Sicily, that promotes and organizes scientific discussion, cultural activities and research into fundamental questions on humanity and society.

**International Centre for Migration and Health/ICMH** A non-profit organization involved in all humanitarian, educational and operational aspects of migration, population movement and welfare and health-related problems of people displaced by disasters.

Cf. migration, refugees

**International Civil Defence Organization/ICDO** Inter-governmental organization for society’s response to serious emergencies. It develops, strengthens and coordinates civil protection for all people in different countries, collaborates with governments and other organizations in preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters and promotes safer environment conducive to development.

Cf. civil defence, civil protection

**International Committee of the Red Cross** Sn: ICRC  
Cf. Red Cross, International Humanitarian Law

**International community** A poorly defined popular term in international relations that, on the world scene,

loosely refers to the aggregate of the different governments, populations, cultures and groupings that share a commonality in a multinational globalized world.

At a local scene, e.g. in the international city of Geneva, it refers to the varied population of diplomats and their families, foreign missions, the UN agencies and their staffs, non-governmental organizations, international schools, multinational companies and others in international activity.

Cf. community

**International crimes** Cf. Nuremberg Charter

**International Criminal Court/ICC** A permanent international tribunal based in the Hague, established in 1998 by the United Nations but independent of it, with jurisdiction on only “the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole” and complementary to national criminal jurisdiction. Crimes within its jurisdiction include crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes.

Includes the War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (1993), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (1994).

Cf. crimes against humanity, crime of aggression, genocide, human rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, war crimes, International Humanitarian Law, Nuremberg Charter

**International Criminal Tribunal(s)**  
The Security Council has established Criminal Tribunals for specific serious breaches of International Humanitarian Law.

In 1993, the ICT for the former Yugoslavia was established to prosecute

such violators in the former Yugoslavia since 1991.

In 1994, the ICT for Rwanda was mandated to prosecute perpetrators of genocide in that country.

The first ever conviction for genocide by an international court was handed down in 1998 by the ICT Rwanda in Arusha.

Cf. genocide, crimes against humanity, International Court of Justice, Nuremberg Charter of 1945

**International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda/ICTR** In 1994, the UN Security Council established the ICTR at the request of Rwanda to identify and prosecute persons responsible for genocide and other violations of International Humanitarian Law during the Tutsi-Rwandan conflict.

Cf. TRC, compare with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, genocide, IHL

**International Federation of Health and Human Rights Organizations** IFHHRO brings together individual and organized health workers with other rights workers for the realization of a rights-based healthy atmosphere for everyone. It recalls the responsibility of governments to reduce health and rights inequalities.

**International Federation of Medical Students' Associations/IFMSA** Independent federation of national medical students' organizations which, besides being concerned with standards of medical education, public health and relevant medical curricula, promotes prevention of nuclear war, training in disaster medicine and programmes for refugee health. NGO in official relations with WHO and the UN system.

**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** Sn: IFRC (Federation, previously League)

Cf. Red Cross

**International Federation of Surgical Colleges/IFSC** The senior surgical confederation in the world that promotes the attainment of the highest standards in surgery, teaching, ethics and surgical practice worldwide; assists developing and emerging countries in raising their professional standards and encourages essential surgery within the WHO concept of primary health care. Advisor to the World Health Organization and to ECOSOC on all matters surgical.

Cf. World Health Organization

**International health** Study and systematic comparison of the multiple and variable factors that influence the health of human populations in different countries, the transmission of disease across boundaries and the resulting regulations and measures that need to be taken for improvement of global health.

Cf. global health, epidemiology, International Health Regulations, World Health Organization

**International Health Regulations/IHR** A set of globally applied rules, revised and updated in 2005 by the World Health Assembly, concerning national and international health. The purpose and scope of the Regulations are "to prevent, protect against, control and provide a public health response to the international spread of disease in ways that are commensurate with and restricted to public health risks, and which avoid unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade" – IHR.

Cf. World Health Organization, international health, global health, quarantine

**International Humanitarian Law/ IHL** Humanitarian legislation comprised mainly of the four Geneva Conventions (1949) and its two additional protocols (1977), intimately associated with the responsibilities of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the National Red Cross or Red Crescent Societies. Its main purpose is to provide a codified set of rules for the protection and assistance to victims of armed conflict. Also referred to as the Law of War, the Law of Geneva.

Cf. Geneva Conventions, humanitarian, Red Cross

**International Labour Organization/ ILO** UN agency of tripartite composition representing governments, employers and workers; ILO is concerned with setting and monitoring labour standards within economic and social development, promoting better working conditions and employment opportunities, with particular care to occupational health and human rights.

**International law** The corpus of principles, rules, treaties and procedures that govern the conduct, relationships and exchanges between and among States and juridical institutions. Laws that concern health include, *inter alia*, the International Health Regulations, the Geneva Protocols, human rights laws, environmental and climate laws, International Humanitarian Laws, relevant UN protocols.

**International Medical Products Anti-Counterfeiting Task Force** Counterfeit drugs and unapproved medicines have become a very large

illegal business that not only deters from effective medication but also constitutes health hazards. IMPACT is a task force for the detection and suppression of such practices.

Cf. Medicines transparency alliance

**International Monetary Fund/ IMF** United Nations agency that promotes international financial cooperation, facilitates trade and stability, helps poor nations meet their programmes and assists in financial crises. IMF

**International Nuclear Event Scale/ INES** A 7-level logarithmic scale introduced in 1990 by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to describe the comparative magnitude of a nuclear event. It comprises 4 accident and 3 incident levels, as follows: 7 – major accident, 6 – serious accident, 5 – accident with wider, off-site consequences, 4 – accident with local consequences; 3 – serious incident, 2 – incident, 1 – anomaly, 0 – deviation, without safety implications. The Chernobyl disaster (1986) was of level 7; Mayak accident (1957) level 6; Three Mile Island (1979) level 5; Sellafield (1955) level 4; Sellafield (2005) level 3; Forsmark (2006) level 2; Gravelines (2009) level 1; Hyderabad (2002) level 0.

Cf. International Atomic Energy Agency, nuclear disaster, accident, incident

**International Organization for Migration/IOM** Founded in response to massive migrations after World War II, IOM is the principal intergovernmental organization involved in all issues of migration management, policies, health, facilitation and regulation.

Cf. migration, emigration

**International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War/**

**IPPNW** International non-governmental association of physicians that strives to mobilize the moral and social responsibility of the medical profession in face of nuclear war and encourages actions and decisions for the prevention of nuclear war. Received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Sn: IPPNW

Cf. nuclear war, GLAWARS Report, WHOPAX Report

**International Programme on Chemical Safety/IPCS**

A United Nations initiative, IPCS is managed jointly by the World Health Organization, the UN Environment Programme and the International Labour Organization, with the aim of providing an internationally evaluated scientific basis on which countries may develop their own chemical safety measures, to strengthen national capabilities for prevention and treatment of harmful effects of chemicals and to manage the health aspects of chemical emergencies. It runs the INTOX network which facilitates rapid toxicological information among some 120 centres.

Cf. chemical accident, environmental disaster, Bhopal, Seveso, UN hazard classification

**International protection**

Protection of refugees undertaken by the High Commissioner for Refugees on behalf of the international community.

Cf. refugee protection, UNHCR

**International Recovery Platform**

Forum created following the Hyogo Framework for Action to facilitate the integration of risk reduction factors in post-disaster recovery operations.

**International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims/IRCT**

An independent, international health professional organization that promotes and supports the rehabilitation of torture victims, works for the prevention of torture worldwide and teaches values and accepts shared responsibility for the eradication of torture. Publishes the journal *Torture*.

Cf. torture, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**International Social EMS**

In French, SAMU Social International, institution that aims (a) to provide emergency social assistance in insalubrious big cities to all who are homeless, lonely, hungry, friendless or in other mental or physical distress and (b) to promote and establish similar comprehension, facilities, institutions and resources for emergency social assistance in all urban centres worldwide – Emmanuelli.

**International Strategy for Disaster Reduction/ISDR**

The United Nations designated the years 1990–1999 as the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), when extensive studies and action were carried out in all aspects of disasters. At the completion of the decade, from 2000 onwards, the programme continues as the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR), through OCHA, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Cf. disaster, disaster management, United Nations, OCHA

**International Telecommunication**

**Union/ITU** UN specialized agency for international cooperation in the rational use and improvement of all

telecommunications, including radio, television, Internet, telegraph, telephone and satellite space communications. Important activity in early warning systems for disasters.

Cf. satellite, space station

**International traffic** For the purposes of the International Health Regulations, the term means “the movement of persons, baggage, cargo, containers, conveyances, goods or postal parcels across an international border, including international trade”.

These may be subject to inspection to determine if a public health risk exists.

**International treaty/Treaty** Agreement formally ratified between States, or between States and international organizations, aiming at establishing international order in a specific domain. Treaty is one of the instruments that confer legal status to the rights and obligations of the signatory States.

Cf. treaty, convention, protocol, declaration, charter

**Interpol** Full name: International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO), founded in 1923, with the purpose of mutual assistance between and among the law enforcing authorities of all the different states across boundaries in the suppression of ordinary law crimes and coordination and documentation regarding international crime.

**Intertidal** The coastal strip between the highest and the lowest levels of the tide.

Cf. tide

**Intertropical convergence zone** An atmospheric area above the Atlantic ocean roughly midway between South America (Brazil) and Africa (Senegal) where strong meteorological turbulences are common, with

very high winds, storms and lightning that can cause aeronautical disturbances. The most catastrophic event was on 1 June 2009, resulting in the disappearance of a civilian aircraft with the death of all 228 passengers and crew, without aerial warning. Sometimes referred to as the Bermuda Triangle

**Intestinal diseases** Sn: enteric diseases

Cf. diarrhoeal diseases

**Intifada** Arabic word approximately meaning uprising. The Palestinian freedom uprising against Israeli forces, mainly in 1987–1993, repeated over several years.

Cf. guerrilla

**INTOX network** A programme of the IPCS that links about 120 centres in some 70 countries for rapid electronic access to toxicological, analytical and clinical expertise on dangerous and military chemical agents.

Cf. International Programme on Chemical Safety, chemical weapons

**Intrauterine device/IUD** A small medical device inserted into the uterus for contraception.

**Introcision** Widening of the vaginal opening by tearing it downwards using three fingers bound with string.

Cf. female genital mutilation, female circumcision, excision, infibulation

**Inviolability** That cannot be violated, transgressed, infringed. Inviolability refers to three notions: (a) the fundamental human rights that are inalienable and cannot be violated under any circumstances, (b) personal inviolability of a diplomat or diplomatic courier, making it impossible and illegal to be submitted to any form of arrest or detention and (c) inviolability of the premises



of an embassy or mission or of a diplomatic pouch.

**Iodine** An essential micronutrient and important for normal basal metabolism. Its deficiency results in goitre. Used also prophylactically against nuclear radioactivity.

Cf. Lugol's iodine, goitre, thyroid, nuclear accident

**Iodine-131** Radioactive iodine. Following a nuclear accident or atomic explosion, the released radioactive isotope risks to be absorbed by the thyroid, or be dissolved in water, with serious biological consequences in man. The administration of stable iodine can prevent such absorption and is used prophylactically.

Cf. Lugol's iodine, iodine

**Ion** An originally neutral atom which has become electrically charged by losing or acquiring electrons. Loss of an electron results in a positive ion (cation) and acquisition in a negative ion (anion).

Cf. ionizing radiation, ionosphere

**Ionizing radiation** Any electromagnetic radiation that, when passing through matter, can produce ions. Includes X-rays, alpha-beta-gamma rays, neutrons, protons.

Cf. ion, cosmic radiation, radiation injury, kerma

**Ionosphere** The zone of the atmosphere, from about 70 km to 500 km, in which charged particles, ions and electrons are formed by photoionization under the effect of the sun's radiation.

**Ionospheric sounding** Determination of the vertical profile of the electronic density of the ionosphere, by measuring the echo of multiple frequency radioelectric signals.

Cf. ionosphere, meteorological sounding, sounding

**Irrigation** In agriculture, the watering of land to compensate for a lack or shortage of rainfall in certain areas and periods.

**Isobar** On a map or chart, the line drawn joining the points that have equal barometric pressure.

**Isohyet** On a map or chart, the line drawn joining the points that have equal amounts of precipitation.

**Isotherm** On a map or chart, the line drawn joining the points that have the same temperature.

**Isotope** Each of the nuclides having the same atomic number (electrons) and thus sharing identical chemical properties. (The number of neutrons differs.)

**Istituto Nazionale sui Diritti dell'Uomo** International Institute on Human Rights, situated in Trieste, Italy, for study, research and promotion of human rights. Associated with the Council of Europe.

Cf. human rights

## J

**Japan Medical Team for Disaster Relief/JMTDR** Supported by the medical profession and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), JMTDR is a major organization providing emergency medical response worldwide as well as studying and advising on disaster management problems.

Cf. Asia-Pacific Conferences on Disaster Medicine, international assistance

**Jaundice** A yellow discolouration of the skin, the sclera of the eyes and other tissues due to excess bile in the circulation. May be caused by several diseases, including hepatitis, malaria, haemorrhagic fever, yellow fever,

wrong blood transfusion, haemolysis, drugs.

Sn: icterus

Cf. hepatitis, yellow fever

**Jettison** In transport and shipping, it means washing overboard. Voluntary throwing of cargo overboard in emergencies to prevent further damage to the ship or to other cargo. In cases of general average, the value of jettisoned goods enters into the calculation of expenses.

Cf. average

**Jihad** Arabic term for a holy war undertaken by Muslims against unbelievers. Literally means "effort" in Muslim struggle on behalf of God and Islam.

**Johannesburg Summit** World Summit conference held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002, consecrated to sustainable development.

**Jus cogens** Latin legal term indicating customary law and its validity according to the Vienna Convention of 1969.

**K**

**K-2 Mix** High-protein food mixture containing casein hydrolysate, sucrose and milk.

Cf. food mixtures

**Kala-azar** Sn: visceral leishmaniasis

**Kamikaze** Japanese word for suicide bomber. An attack in which, for idealistic, military or other reasons, the attacker plans or accepts to die in the process of his/her suicidal attack.

Sn: suicide bomber

Cf. suicide attack, self-molestation

**Kerma** Acronym for Kinetic Energy Released in Matter, the measure of intensity of ionizing radiation at a given place. The dose is expressed in grays (Gy).

Cf. ionizing radiation

**Kidnapping** Abduction, forced disappearance or unlawful carrying away of a child or other person to use as hostage, for gain, political pressure, torture or any other purpose. From kid=child, nap=to steal.

Cf. abduction, disappearance

**Kiloton** A measure of the explosive power of nuclear arms, equivalent to 1,000 tons of TNT. The bomb on Hiroshima was of 12.5 kt, on Nagasaki 22 kt.

Sm: kt

Cf. megaton, nuclear war, TNT

**Kimberley Process** Kimberley Process Certification Scheme to control the rough diamond trade.

Cf. blood diamonds, conflict diamonds, kleptocracy

**Kleptocracy** Literally, government by thieves. The unethical and illegal practice of certain presidents, rulers and autocrats to amass and store in secret accounts and foreign properties enormous personal wealth derived from illicit appropriations, corruption, coercion, threats and occult stealing (klepto) from the nation's treasury and citizens' taxes, often leaving their own country in poverty. President Mobutu of Zaire, Marcos of the Philippines, Duvalier of Haiti, Sani Abacha of Nigeria, Suharto of Indonesia and Gaddafi of Libya are recent examples of the many kleptocrats.

Cf. man-conceived disaster, corruption, blood diamonds

**Knowledge translation** The exchange, synthesis and ethically-sound application of knowledge within a complex of interactions among researchers and users to accelerate the capture of the benefits of research for the

people through improved health, more effective services and products, and a strengthened health care system – CIHR.

**Kobe earthquake** Cf. Great Hanshin earthquake of 1995

**Kosher** Hebrew word for food that is fit to eat and conforms to Jewish religious prescriptions.  
Cf. custom, halal

**Kwashiorkor** A serious form of protein-calorie malnutrition that occurs most frequently in infants and young children about the time of weaning. Presents with oedema, wasting, dermatitis, hair changes, anaemia, diarrhoea, lethargy, apathy and stunted growth.  
Cf. anaemia, malnutrition, protein-calorie malnutrition, marasmus

**Kyoto Protocol** United Nations Framework on Climate Change, undertaken in 1997 in Kyoto, Japan, calling on all countries, particularly the industrialized states, to reduce their emissions of gases that cause global warming (CO<sub>2</sub>, CFC, methane, etc.) by 5.2% by the years 2008–2012 in relation to the 1990 levels. Ratified in 2005. Partly extended in 2012.  
Cf. glasshouse effect, global warming, chlorofluorocarbons, ozone depletion, atmospheric pollution

## L

**Laerdal pocket mask** A folding pocket mask with oxygen insufflation nipple for assisted mouth-to-mouth ventilation, applied to the injured in emergencies by trained personnel.

**La Hague** Town in Northern France, site of an important nuclear waste processing plant. (Do not confuse with The Hague in the Netherlands). Receives

uranium, plutonium, nuclear spent material and reprocesses them, sending the extracted product to other plants and the mud débris for disposal. Much controversy surrounds these dangerous operations and nuclear waste.

Cf. Sellafield, nuclear wastes

**Lahar** Acid ash flow, generally enrobing volcanic blocks as a result of imbibition of the ash with water.

Cf. ash flow, volcano

**Landmine Treaty** Cf. Ottawa Convention, ICBL

**Landmines** Sn: antipersonnel mines  
Cf. mines, Ottawa Convention, ICBL, Cranfield Mine Action

**Landslide** A massive and more or less rapid sliding down of soil and rock, causing damage in its path.  
Cf. avalanche, mudslide

**La Niña** The opposite of El Niño.  
Cf. El Niño

**Laser** Acronymic name for “light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation”, a device that uses focused light beams to provide powerful directed force for a wide variety of applications, from medical therapeutic instruments, sophisticated machinery, to lethal beams and weaponry.

**Lassa fever** A viral disease of wild rodents, highly contagious and fatal to man. Sporadic cases of outbreaks occur mainly in West Africa.  
Cf. haemorrhagic fever

**Latitude** In the geographical system of spherical coordinates, the angular distance of point from a fundamental plane, computed from this plane 0–90° towards the (positive) North Pole and 0 to –90° towards the South. The equator marks 0°.  
Cf. geographic longitude

**Latrine** A simple toilet facility dug in the ground for the disposal of human excreta, to minimize spread of disease and contamination of the water and environment. Various forms are used in disaster situations and refugee communities. Some types are deep trench latrines, bore hole, shallow, straddle and bucket latrines. The Oxfam emergency sanitation unit is a good model.

Cf. chlorine, environmental hygiene

**Lava flow** The residual molten magma and ash that, after a volcanic eruption, flows down rather slowly over the mountain side.

**Law of Geneva** Cf. law of war, International Humanitarian Law

**Law of the sea** The system of international laws and regulations governing the marine areas and their utilization and the persons associated with such activity.

**Law of War** The law of armed conflict, the corpus of rules which in wartime prescribe and limit methods and means of warfare, protect the health providers in the field and spare from attacks the persons who are not, or no longer, participating in hostilities. These are codified in the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols.

Sn: International Humanitarian Law, law of Geneva

Cf. International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva Conventions, crimes against humanity, International Criminal Court

**Lawfare** A new term denoting the manipulation or exploitation of the international legal system with the veiled purpose of supplementing military and political objectives of aggression or aggressive war.

Cf. warfare

**LD50** Lethal dose 50. The amount of a toxic substance or of radiation that is needed to kill 50% of the persons in a population in a given time.

Cf. dose, lethal dose 50

**Lead time** The length of time elapsed between the announcement of a particular hazard and its arrival.

Also used for the time allowed between a disaster and mobilization of resources against it

**Least developed countries/LDC** A category of States that according to United Nations criteria are deemed structurally handicapped in their development process and in need of the highest degree of attention from the international community for development. ECOSOC uses three criteria for this categorization: (a) low income, GDP per capita under \$900; (b) human resources: low index of nutrition, health, education and adult literacy; (c) economic vulnerability: instability of agriculture, exports of goods and services, non-traditional activities, merchandise exports and handicap of economic smallness. LDCs constitute 49 States, 10.7% of the world population and 0.5% of the world GNP – UNCTAD, 2001.

Term less and less used; prefer low-income country.

Cf. developing countries, low-income countries, Millennium Development Goals, G-20

**Legionnaire’s disease** A form of bronchopneumonia caused by the *Legionella pneumophila*, transmitted man to man and in steamy and moist conditions, as through air-conditioning ducts.

**Leishmaniasis** An infectious group of protozoan diseases caused by *Leishmania* and transmitted by the sandfly.

Cf. cutaneous leishmaniasis, kala-azar, visceral leishmaniasis, neglected tropical disease

**Leptospirosis** An infectious and potentially serious disease (with meningitis, liver failure) caused by a variety of *Leptospira*, transmitted from animals through contaminated water, vegetation and food. Can cause jaundice (Weil's syndrome). Heavy floods in 1988 caused an epidemic of leptospirosis in Brazil.

Sn: Weil's disease, infectious jaundice

Cf. epidemic, jaundice, zoonosis

**Lethal agent** A chemical or biological weapon that is intended to cause death when man is exposed to concentrations well within the capability of delivery for military purposes – WHO.

Cf. incapacitating agent, harassing agent

**Lethal dose 50** The radiation dose that kills 50% of the exposed people in a given time.

Sn: LD50

**Levee** Water-retaining earthwork along a river or coastline to prevent flooding from waves or tides.

Sn: dike, embankment, bank, bund

**Life expectancy** The probability of the average duration of life in a community, statistically based on death rates.

Cf. death rate, mortality rate

**Life support** Emergency: Immediate help, specialized techniques and apparatus applied in assisting a seriously injured person or a disaster victim to maintain the vital functions.

Sn: cardiopulmonary resuscitation, CPR

Global: The Earth's naturally balanced ecosystem necessary to maintain human life.

Cf. ecosystem

**Lifelines** The community facilities and public systems, such as potable water, sanitation, energy, shelter, transport and communications, that ensure the basic life support services, especially in emergencies.

Cf. primary health care, survival chain

**Lighter** Barge that comes alongside a vessel on which cargo is unloaded or loaded, when this cannot be done at a quay or wharf.

**Littoral** Coastline where the sea, land and atmosphere meet.

Sn: coast

**Livelihood** The general capacity of sustenance and living. The World Food Programme defines it as a person's or community's capabilities, assets and activities that are required to ensure a means of living.

Cf. sustainable livelihood, development, World Food Programme, hunger

**Lixiviation** Degradation of the soil or of certain superficial layers by the downward flow of earth mixtures in solution.

**Logistics** The strategies and range of operations concerned with supply, storage, handling, distribution, transport and evacuation of material and people.

**Longitudinal study** Prospective study. Study of a population over a period of time starting with the present.

**Louse infestation** Skin condition caused by the invasion of the body by lice. Can lead to secondary infection.

Sn: pediculosis

**Low birth weight** A baby weighing less than 2,500 g (5 pounds 82 ounces) at birth. Very low birth weight: less than 1,500 g.

**Low-income/Lower-middle-income countries** The World Bank categorizes (2008) according to Gross National Income (GNI, previously GNP): low-income country: US\$975 or less; low-middle income country: US\$976–3,855.

Cf. upper middle income, high income, country income categorization, developing country, least developed country

**Lugol's iodine** A pharmaceutical solution of iodine and potassium iodide. Its ingestion saturates the thyroid gland which takes up the iodine in the blood, a property that is used as a prophylactic measure in exposure to radioactivity, and its administration blocks further iodine uptake by the thyroid.

Sn: Lugol's solution

Cf. basal metabolic rate, goitre, iodine, thyroid

**Lymphatic filariasis** A debilitating and stigmatizing disease due to worm infection that blocks the lymphatic circulation.

Sn: elephantiasis

## M

**Macroclimate** The general large-scale climate covering a wide area or country, as distinguished from mesoclimate and microclimate that cover smaller, even specific areas.

Cf. climate

**Macronutrient/Micronutrient** Cf. nutrients

**Mad cow disease** An infectious brain damage in the cow believed to be caused by a new class of infective agents, called prions. Can be transmitted to other animals and man, causing visual disturbances, neuromuscular disequilibrium and inevitable death. Can spread in epidemic

proportions among animals and men over several years. The human variant is called Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

Sn: bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE

Cf. Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, zoonosis

**Mafia** Organized, secret, criminal association of wrongdoing persons carrying out illegal acts, violence, blackmail, murder, kidnapping, etc., with the view to group or personal gains and enrichment.

Cf. Palermo Convention Against Organized Crime, narcotraffic

**Magma** The molten stratum beneath the earth's crust.

**Magnetic storm** Unforeseen and sudden storm with a variation of the declination by up to 2–3° in a few hours and lasting for several days.

**Magnitude of earthquake** The "size" of an earthquake, expressing the amount of energy released in the form of elastic waves as measured by a seismograph, on a scale such as Richter's.

Cf. earthquake, intensity, Mercalli scale, Richter scale

**Major accident hazard** A chemical, biological or radioactive substance that has the potential of giving rise to a major accident or disaster. The subject of the European Directive 501/82 and of the UN class of hazardous substances.

Cf. chemical accident, hazard, Seveso, UN hazard classification, IPCS

**Major hazard installation** A stockpile or store of large quantities of dangerous, hazardous substances and energy in one place, e.g. refineries, petrochemical plants, chemical production factories, LPG stores, water treatment plants – ILO.

Cf. major accident hazard, major technological accident

**Major technological accident** Serious technological emergency, such as a major emission, fire or explosion resulting from uncontrolled developments in the course of an industrial activity, leading to serious danger to man, immediate or delayed, inside or outside the establishment, and to the environment and involving one or more dangerous substances – ILO.

Cf. major accident hazard, major hazard installation, technological disaster

**Malabsorption syndrome** A malnutritional condition, mainly in children, with defective absorption of fluids and other nutritive substances, presenting with weakness, wasting, fatty diarrhoea, anaemia and neurological disorders.

Sn: sprue, tropical sprue

Cf. kwashiorkor

**Malaria** A parasitic infection characterized by cycles of chills, fever, sweating, anaemia, enlarged spleen and chronic relapsing course. Four types of parasites – *plasmodium vivax*, *P. falciparum*, *P. malariae* and *P. ovale* – affect man, through infection by the anopheles mosquito. Most malarious areas are in the tropics. Disasters, like floods and refugee encampments, and poor environments are conducive to the propagation of the disease.

Cf. endemic, parasitic diseases

**Malaria, uncomplicated** Uncomplicated malaria is defined as asymptomatic malaria without signs of severity or clinical or laboratory evidence of vital organ dysfunction. The signs and symptoms are non-specific, and malaria is suspected

clinically mostly on the basis of fever or a history of fever – WHO.

Cf. malaria

**Malnutrition** A general or specific pathological state, resulting from an absence or deficiency in the diet of one or more essential nutrients, and either clinically manifest or detectable only by examination or physiological tests. Malnutrition can also be due to an excess of the wrong food.

Cf. nutritional deficiency, kwashiorkor, protein-calorie malnutrition, under-nutrition

**Managed care** A system of providing health care in which the providers do not receive direct reimbursement for their specific services, instead, they work for a fixed sum of money to cover the costs of care of each patient. This, mainly American system, is expected to encourage resource savings and diminish health-care costs.

Cf. health promotion

**Management** Cf. disaster management, emergency management

**Man-conceived disaster** Distinct from a man-made disaster, man-conceived refers to disastrous actions like genocide, death camps, ethnic cleansing, forced disappearance, pauperization, torture and other acts against humanity that are obscenely conceived, cold-bloodedly planned and indecently perpetrated with impunity by evil rulers, dictators or kleptocrats with the aim of inflicting maximum suffering, death and destruction, in full violation of personal, social and cultural rights of humanity. While the response to man-made disasters is scientific, humanitarian and managerial, the response to man-conceived disasters must be through the International Criminal Court – Gunn.



Cf. crimes against humanity, deportation, ethnic cleansing, forced disappearance, genocide, human rights, International Criminal Court, impunity, kleptocracy, mafia, man-made disaster, torture, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Mandate** Power or authorization given by a superior authority, legal body or international institution to another party to execute, supervise or control specified functions.

**Mandate refugee** Person who is considered to be a refugee according to the criteria of the statutes of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Cf. refugee, UNHCR

**Manifest** In transport and shipping, list of the consignments placed on board an aircraft or ship.

**Manioc** Meal made from the roots of the cassava plant. The staple food in many tropical countries.

Cf. cassava, staple food

**Man-made disaster** A disaster caused not by natural phenomena but by human or society's action, involuntary or voluntary, sudden or slow, directly or indirectly, with grave consequences to the population and the environment. Examples: technological disaster, toxicological disaster, desertification, environmental pollution, conflicts, epidemics, fires.

Sn: human-made disaster

Cf. disaster, natural disaster, technological disaster, man-conceived disaster

**Mantoux test** A skin test using tuberculin to show whether a person has or has had infection with the tuberculosis bacillus.

Cf. tuberculosis

**Marasmus** Cf. nutritional marasmus

**Marburg disease** A highly lethal disease prevalent in Central Africa, caused by a filovirus. Also in epidemic form.

Sn: African haemorrhagic fever

**Marginality** The position of an individual or group of persons who stand on the boundary between two groups, feeling marginalized and uncertain about their status in either.

Cf. absorption, acculturation, ethnic group, minorities, discrimination

**Maritime climate** The climate of the regions adjacent to the sea, characterized by small diurnal or annual (or both) amplitudes of temperature and by high relative humidity.

Cf. continental climate, equatorial climate, monsoon climate, mountain climate, tropical climate

**Mass casualty situation** In an emergency or disaster with a great number of victims or injured, a situation where their numbers and needs far outweigh the ability of the existing system to handle, where the demand for medical care is greater than the facilities available. In a mass casualty situation, the capacity of a hospital is considered to be its ability to manage a load of patients approximately in the range of 20% of its normal bed capacity.

**MAST** Acronymic name for military antishock trousers, also known as PASG, pneumatic antishock garment. A double-layer pneumatic suit inflated with a foot or bicycle-pump and used for a patient in shock. The principle is to raise the blood pressure, control bleeding and promote haemostasis in emergency situations. It is now being used less frequently as it is not free from complications. Cf. emergency medical services, first aid

**Maximum acceptable concentration**

The presence of a pollutant or potentially harmful agent in the air, in food, in water to a degree that, on absorption by an organism, it will remain below the maximum allowed dose.

Cf. absorbed dose, maximum acceptable dose

**Maximum acceptable dose** The maximum quantity of a substance or energy which, in the present state of scientific knowledge, does not seem to provoke appreciable disturbances in the receiving person or his descendants.

Cf. absorbed dose, maximum acceptable concentration, nuclear energy

**Mayak nuclear accident** A town in Russia, site of the Kyshtym military nuclear reactor where, on 29 September 1957, the cooling system failed, causing a steam explosion releasing 70–80 tons of radioactive material into the atmosphere; rated as serious accident level 6 on the INES scale.

Cf. Chernobyl, Three Mile Island, nuclear accident, fallout, Fukushima, International Nuclear Event Scale

**Measles** A highly contagious acute disease of childhood, characterized by a spreading skin rash, fever, cough, coryza, conjunctivitis, eruption of the buccal mucosa (Koplik's spots) and prostration. Overcrowding and disaster conditions are conducive to outbreaks, with high mortality, especially among the malnourished.

Cf. Expanded Programme on Immunization

**Measures of effectiveness/MOE** In assessment techniques, the qualitative and quantitative criteria used to predict or correlate the value or measure

of an organization or a system, such as disaster management. Such measures must be appropriate, quantifiable, sensitive, timely, cost-effective and meaningful – Burkle.

Cf. disaster management, damage probability

**Médecins sans Frontières**

(MSF) Doctors without Borders. Important and efficient international organization originally started in France, to provide medical assistance in disasters and conflicts, even when claims of State sovereignty put difficulties for their humanitarian work. MSF's acknowledged and persistent action spearheaded the "right to intervene" concept, and its continuous humanitarian services won it the Nobel Peace Prize, 1999. Colloquially also referred to as "French Doctors".

Cf. international assistance, humanitarian medicine, right to intervene

**Media factor** Cf. CNN effect

**Medicaid** The American programme that provides "safety net" health-care coverage to the poor and disadvantaged people in the United States.

Cf. Medicare, national health system

**Medical act** Any intervention or effort by a medically qualified person to bring health assistance to a patient.

In health economics, it is the measurement unit for calculating health-care costs, health expenditure and for quantifying a health professional's remuneration.

Cf. managed care

**Medical audit** A thorough examination and evaluation by qualified persons of a selection of representative medical records of a health establishment with the view to assessing the quality of its health care.

**Medical care quality** The degree to which health services for individuals and for populations increase the likelihood of desired health outcomes and are consistent with current professional knowledge – Inst. Med. US.

The three main elements of quality are structure, process and outcomes.

**Medical tourism** Travel by a patient across international borders for the express purpose of seeking and receiving medical or surgical care.

**Medicare** In the predominantly private-liberal system of health care in America, a system of health service for people over age 65. Funded and administered by the Federal Government.

Cf. Medicaid, national health service

**Medicines Transparency Alliance** An organization that, within the spirit of good governance for medical programmes, focuses on affordability and availability of good quality medicaments through country-led actions that promote efficiency in the drug purchasing chain, notably through transparency and accountability.

Cf. essential drugs

**Medicus Mundi** Humanitarian organization that carries out important studies, research, publications and field work on the health of disfavoured populations and developing countries.

**Mediterranean Council for Burns and Fire Disasters (MBC)** Started by surgical burn specialists to raise regional standards and improve response to burns and fires, the organization has grown in its field of action and geographically. Designated by the World Health Organization as scientific Collaborating

Centre on Burns and Fire Disasters and by the United Nations Economic and Social Council as a specialized NGO, it has pioneered links between burns as a clinical problem and fires as a societal disaster management problem. It carries out research, studies, prevention, emergency missions and helps developing countries in these fields. Now expanded as the Euro-Mediterranean Council. It has close ties with the International Association for Humanitarian Medicine Brock Chisholm.

Cf. burn, fire disaster, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, United Nations, MBC

**MEDLARS/MEDLINE** Acronymic name for Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System, superseded by Medline, the US National Library of Medicine's extensive international computerized online system for international and systematic medical literature search.

**Mefloquine** A quinine derivative medicament used against malaria when there is chloroquine resistance.

Cf. chloroquine, malaria

**Megatonnage equivalent** A measure of the explosive power of nuclear arms, equivalent to  $4.187 \times 10^{15}$  J, or about the equivalent of one million tons of TNT.

Sm: Mt, MTE5

Cf. fission bomb, fusion bomb, nuclear war, kiloton

**Melamine** A chemical used extensively for dishware and kitchenware that leaves traces in food. No health problems in normal use but toxic at high levels. The Codex allows max.2.5 mg/kg in animal feed.

**Meltdown** A major disastrous event in a nuclear facility caused by the over-

heating of the nuclear rods in the reactor.

Cf. Chernobyl, Three Mile Island, Fukushima

**Meneghetti Foundation** The Antonio Meneghetti Foundation encourages, finances and awards scholarships for scientific, humanistic and international developmental endeavours based on an ontological interpretation of ethics and human values.

**Mercalli scale** Numerical scale from 1 to 12, indicating the intensity of an earthquake:

1. No movement felt
2. Felt by a few people
3. Felt indoors, slight swaying of hanging objects
4. Vibration felt, squeaking of wooden buildings
5. Felt by almost everyone, awakening from sleep
6. Felt by everyone, fright and flight
7. Difficulty to stand up, objects and chimneys fall
8. Driving difficult, partial collapse of buildings
9. General panic, considerable damage
10. Destruction of buildings and some bridges
11. Few structures remain standing; railway tracks lifted; water pipelines burst
12. Total damage, large displacements of earth

Cf. earthquake, Richter scale

**Mercenary** A person recruited to fight in an armed conflict mainly for personal gain, who is neither a national nor a resident of the conflicting countries and is not a member of the armed forces of one of the countries.

**Mercy Ships** International humanitarian organization providing itinerant

medical, surgical and social services through ships that call at ports for aid delivery and health services.

Cf. Peace Boat

**Meta-analysis** A mathematical statistical approach that synthesises the results of two or more independent primary studies that addressed a given problem or hypothesis in the same way.

**Meteorological sounding** Determination of the profile of the atmosphere at different altitudes, usually by means of radio or satellite signals.

Cf. ionospheric sounding, remote sounding, WMO, World Weather Watch

**Meteorology** The science of the atmosphere and of the phenomena that occur in it. Meteorological forecasting can help prevent or mitigate disasters.

Cf. atmosphere

**Meteosat** The European Geostationary satellite, located above the equator on the prime meridian from where it can observe and transmit images of the meteorological conditions over the whole of Africa, much of Europe and the Atlantic and part of South America. Other operational systems include TIROS-N (USA), METEOR (Russia) and, for hydrology and oceanography, the LANDSAT.

Cf. International Telecommunication Union, meteorology, World Weather Watch, World Meteorological Organization

**mHealth** An advanced communication technique that harnesses the mobility and timeliness of wireless information and communications technology for health, including instant data transfer between health service providers and patients in

various localities – BCMJ. (Not to be confused with eHealth.)

Sn: also m-health, M-health

Cf. eHealth, telemedicine

**Microcredit/Microfinance** An imaginative and socially conscious financial system that allows poor clients to take out loans at low interest rate that can be used to generate income or to pay for services, such as starting a small business, attending school, skill building, etc. A service used to great advantage in developing countries. Was awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize.

**Microzoning** Subdividing or mapping of a region into areas or zones where similar hazards or related effects can be expected.

Cf. zonation

**Migrant** A person who voluntarily moves from one country to another for personal, economic, social, security or political reasons. (Distinguish between emigrant and immigrant.)

Cf. emigrant, immigrant

**Migration** Movement of people across national regions or international boundaries for the purpose of finding better agricultural or living conditions, or as a result of natural catastrophes or political upheavals.

Cf. emigration, immigration, IOM

**Military-industrial complex** Powerful economic-industrial-military conglomerate that politically promotes a country’s military arms production mainly on the basis of financial gain rather than on defence needs.

Cf. industrial complex

**Military conflict** A situation characterized by hostilities that bring into opposition two or more organized armies. It constitutes a major man-made disaster.

Cf. Geneva Conventions, International Humanitarian Law, conflict war

**Military medicine** The art and science of medicine, including in particular, critical care, emergency surgery and traumatology, as applied to mass casualty situations, battlefield conditions, the needs of soldiers and, increasingly, of civilian disaster victims.

Cf. disaster medicine, biological warfare, chemical warfare, nuclear war, triage, GLAWARS Report, WHOPAX Report, CIMIC

**Millennium Declaration/UN** Cf. Millennium Development Goals

**Millennium Development Goals/MDGs** To usher the twenty-first century and improve the developmental process for all peoples, the UN General Assembly adopted the significant 2000 Millennium Declaration and its Millennium Development Goals, to be attained by 2015. The eight specific MDGs represent perceived needs and international commitments to combat poverty and the inequities of underdevelopment. They aim to (1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, (2) achieve universal primary education, (3) promote gender equality and empower women, (4) reduce child mortality, (5) improve maternal health, (6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, (7) ensure environmental sustainability and (8) create partnerships for development. The Goals represent a dynamic process and do not terminate in 2015.

Sn: MDGs, UNMDGs

**Millennium Development Project** Cf. United Nations Millennium Development Project, Millennium Development Goals

**Mines/landmines/antipersonnel**

**mines** Treacherous explosive devices used in war, guerrilla strife and terrorism, hidden superficially on roads, passageways and fields and made invisible by covering them with earth. Walking or driving over them triggers a powerful explosion that causes extensive trauma, disability and death. Their existence in millions and the difficulty in defusing them constitute a chronic disaster. The Ottawa Convention prohibits their production and use. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, 1997.

Cf. Ottawa Convention, ICBL, Cranfield Mine Action

**Minorities** Community or large group of persons characterized by a sense of separate identity that sets them apart from the larger group in which they live and from which they differ on ethnic, religious or linguistic grounds.

Cf. ethnic group

**MIRV** In nuclear warfare, acronymic term for Multiple Independently Targeted Re-entry Vehicle, where one missile can carry several warheads directed to different targets.

**Missiles/long-range, short-range** Cf. antiballistic missiles

**Missiles/strategic, non-strategic** Cf. antiballistic missiles

**Miticide** Chemical substance used to destroy mites and other arthropods.

Sn: acaricide

Cf. pesticide

**Mitigation** A general term for severity reduction, risk diminution, appeasement, alleviation, moderation.

In the context of the wide spectrum of disasters, it describes different

approaches to different risks, ranging, inter alia, from general and specific preparedness to citizen education to structural engineering, climatic approaches, planned adaptation, socio-economic measures, empowerment, etc.

Cf. disaster mitigation, abatement

**Mob** A tumultuous, disorganized, rowdy assemblage of persons or crowd, with little consideration for law and order. May need to be dispersed by police or other authorities.

Cf. tear gas

**Mobile land station** Mobile communication station that can move about within a given territory.

Cf. Mobile Satellite Communication System, space station

**Mobile Satellite Communication System** Communication of necessary detailed information by disaster managers using satellite exchange when other communication facilities have broken down due to the disaster.

Sn: SATCOM

Cf. mobile land station

**Molotov cocktail** General term for a rather makeshift incendiary device that can be produced easily, cheaply and operated by untrained fighters who cannot afford hand grenades or other weapons. It is roughly produced in a bottle containing a mixture of petrol or alcohol or kerosene, with a soaked wick that on ignition and contact with the targeted object creates a considerable explosion.

Sn: Molotov bomb, petrol bomb, gasoline bomb, fire bottle

**Molluscicide** Chemical substance used to destroy molluscs (snails).

Cf. pesticide

**Monitoring** Cf. surveillance, indicators

**Monsoon** Wind in the general direction of the atmospheric circulation, characterized by a seasonal direction, strongest in the southern and S.E. coasts of Asia and by a marked change of its direction from one season to the other.

Cf. atmosphere, wind

**Monsoon climate** Type of climate found in regions subject to monsoons, especially around the Indian Ocean, characterized mainly by a dry winter and a wet summer, due to the geographic influences of an unequal warming of the land and of the seas.

Cf. monsoon

**Monsoon season** In continental regions, the season when the summer monsoon blows. Example: in India.

Cf. summer monsoon

**Montreal Protocol** International rules and agreement promoted by UNEP beginning in 1980, to diminish chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and other ozone-destroying substances in the atmosphere.

Cf. atmospheric pollution

**Montreux Document on PMSCs** In the field of private military security companies, a Swiss document that sets out the agreed-upon pertinent international legal obligations and good practices for contracting States related to PMSC commercial operations. The five contractants are (a) the “contracting PMSC” business, (b) the personnel of that business, (c) the “contracting State”, (d) the “territorial State” on whose territory the personnel operate, (e) the “Home States”, where the PMSC business is registered – FDFA.

Cf. private military security company, mercenary

### **Morbidity**

1. The number of sick persons or of diseases in a given period among a given population.
2. The pathological or morbid conditions that characterize a disease, as opposed to mortality that characterizes the killing potentialities of a disease.

Cf. morbidity rate, mortality rate

### **Morbidity rate**

1. For a given disease, the ratio of individuals having that disease to the total number of the population.
2. For a given population, the ratio of all individuals sick from any disease to the total number of the population.

In both cases, the ratio can be expressed as incidence or prevalence.

Cf. death rate, incidence, mortality rate, prevalence

### **Mortality**

1. The number, magnitude or frequency of deaths over a period of time among the total sick and well population of an area.
2. The numerical expression of deaths, usually given as mortality rate.

Cf. morbidity, mortality rate

**Mortality rate** The ratio of the number of deaths in a given population to the total number of that population.

Sn: death rate

Cf. morbidity rate

**Mothballing** Cf. sarcophagus

**Motivation** The reasons, desires and aspirations that determine the behaviour of an individual or a group.

**Mountain climate** Climate governed by the geographic factor of altitude and characterized by low pressure and by intense solar radiation rich in ultraviolet rays.



Cf. atmospheric pressure

**MRSA** Short name for methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*. Difficult infection to treat.

**Mudslide** Sn: mud flow

Cf. earth flow, quicksand

**Multicultural Youth Council/COJEP** French name Conseil de la Jeunesse Pluriculturelle, NGO active in intercultural dialogue issues, human rights, democracy, sound citizenship, struggle against racism and discrimination.

**Multilateralism** In international and intergovernmental relations, the conduct of negotiations and discussions among multiple (more than two) governments and organizations and not limited to one-to-one (bilateral) discussions or single (unilateral) decisions.

Cf. unilateralism, bilateralism

**Multiple organ failure syndrome** Very serious condition of an injured patient who, besides severe trauma, e.g. multiple major fractures, or critical illness, e.g. pancreatitis, extensive infection, has involvement of at least two vital organs, e.g. lung and kidney, inducing severe shock and critical state. An early form can follow non-compensated shock, a late form follows multiple infectious insults.

Sn: MOFS

**Multisectoral** Action or discipline that implies and needs coordination at all levels between and among the various activities involved in managing a situation, e.g. a disaster, such as the health sector, transport, agriculture, housing, public works, water supply, communications, finance, etc.

Sn: intersectoral action, interdisciplinary, multisectorial

Cf. disaster medicine

**Mushroom cloud** In nuclear war, the characteristic mushroom-shaped cloud composed of hot gases, smoke and other earth particles sucked upwards immediately after the explosion of a nuclear bomb.

Cf. nuclear war, nuclear winter

**Mustard gas** Dichlorodiethyl sulphide. A lethal and incapacitating, vesicant chemical warfare agent. Notoriously used in World War I with devastating effects.

Cf. chemical weapons, biological weapons, Geneva Protocol

## N

**Nagasaki (Japan)** The second city to suffer an atomic bombardment.

Cf. Hiroshima/Nagasaki

**Nansen Passport/Nansen Award** Fridtjof Nansen was the first High Commissioner for Refugees. During World War I, with genuine humanitarian spirit and high authority, he helped the victims and the persecuted stateless persons, issuing them with Nansen Passports. A prestigious distinction is now awarded in his memory to men and women who demonstrate exceptional support in favour of the plight of refugees and displaced persons.

Cf. refugee, displaced person, apatriote

**Napalm** Acronymic name for aluminium naphthenate and aluminium palmitate, a chemical fire-producing weapon commonly used as an effective military incendiary bomb.

Cf. Chemical weapons, Geneva Protocol

**Narcotraffic** Illegal individual or highly organized secret procurement, transport and sale worldwide of narcotics and prohibited drugs, with

large sums of money at stake, gang competition, money laundering, mafia activities, powerful antisocial cartels, crime, corruption and government destabilization.

Cf. drug, addiction, mafia, UNODOC

**Natural disaster** A sudden major upheaval of nature, causing extensive destruction of society, death and suffering among the stricken community and which is not due to man’s action. However, (a) some natural disasters can be of slow origin, e.g. drought, and (b) a seemingly natural disaster can be caused or aggravated by man’s action, e.g. desertification through excessive land use and deforestation.

A natural hazard does not constitute a natural disaster unless and until it affects man and society. If it does not, it remains a mere natural hazard or a geo-meteorological phenomenon – Gunn.

Cf. disaster, natural hazard, hazard

**Natural fire** Any fire that is of natural origin that may be caused by lightning, spontaneous combustion or volcanic eruption.

**Natural hazard** The probability of occurrence, within a specific period of time in a given area, of a potentially damaging phenomenon of nature – UN.

It remains a hazard, and not a disaster, until it affects man and society.

Cf. natural disaster, hazard

**Natural phenomenon** Cf. natural disaster (Part II), natural hazard

**Natural resources** The aggregate of mineral and biotic elements of the earth, as well as the various forms of energy occurring in the natural state (solar energy) or environmental

forces independent of man (winds, tides), that is considered as being of potential value to man. Natural resources can be:

- Renewable, by reproduction (living organisms) or by biogeochemical cycles (water, nitrogen)
- Non-renewable (petrol)
- Permanent (solar energy)

**Natural resources management**

Administration of the natural resources in a manner that promotes judicious utilization, conservation and renewal, with minimum waste, pollution or depletion, for the improvement of disaster management.

Cf. natural resources

**Near-field** In a nuclear incident, the immediate zone, extending from some 5–20 km, around the damaged plant that is considered most dangerous and is cordoned off until further notice. The relatively less dangerous area beyond is called “far-field”.

Cf. far-field, nuclear accident, ground zero, zone zero

**Needs** The sum of the biological, social, psychological and physical elements necessary, at a given time, for the well-being, existence and even survival of the individual or society.

Cf. well-being, sustainable development

**Neglected tropical diseases** A group of communicable diseases that thrive in unsanitary, impoverished settings and further contribute to sickness, poverty and underdevelopment. WHO lists 17 such neglected diseases:

dengue, rabies, trachoma, buruli ulcer, endemic treponematoses, leprosy, Chagas disease, sleeping sickness, leishmaniasis, cysticercosis, dracunculiasis, echinococcosis,

food-borne trematodes, lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, soil transmitted helminthiasis.

Sn: orphan diseases

Cf. these diseases separately. Millennium Development Goals, poverty

**Nematocide** Medicament used to kill nematodes – intestinal and tissue worms, like the pinworm, whipworm, hookworm, ascarids, toxocara, filariae, onchocerca.

Cf. parasite, pesticide

**Neocolonialism** A deprecatory term referring to the dominant involvement of developed countries in the affairs of developing (mainly African and particularly ex-colonial) countries through direct or indirect paternalistic, economic, neo-imperialistic, political and cultural means.

Cf. colonialism

**Nephanalysis** System of meteorological information gathering based on the study of the clouds, usually seen from above.

Cf. meteorology

**Nepotism** Undeserved favours and patronage given to relatives and close friends in return for advantages, loyalty and security.

**Nerve gas/Nerve agent** Dangerous and potentially lethal organophosphorus compounds that inhibit tissue cholinesterase. Used in chemical warfare to incapacitate the enemy by interfering with the nerve impulses of the victim. The two main families are the G and V agents. Weapons of mass destruction.

Sn: Agent G, Agent V

Cf. chemical weapons, sarin, CBW, Geneva Protocol

**Nine/Eleven (9/11)** Sn: September 11, 2001 (the New York disaster)

**Niño** Cf. El Niño

**Nippon Foundation** Established in 1962 by Ryoichi Sasakawa, important Japanese foundation with extensive international humanitarian action in health, sciences, youth education and social studies. Has established a prize for disaster work and is WHO goodwill ambassador for leprosy.

**Nobel Prize** The most distinguished prize, established by the Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel (1833–1896), awarded annually to persons who have made the greatest contribution to mankind in specific fields of medicine, science, economics, literature and humanitarian work.

The first Nobel Prize for Peace (Pro Pace et Fraternitate Gentium) was given in 1901 to Henry Dunant, founder of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and in the same year, the first Nobel Prize for Medicine or Physiology was awarded to Wilhelm Röntgen for his work on X-rays. The Peace Prize has also been awarded to the United Nations and its Secretary-General Kofi Annan in recognition of humanitarian services in favour of world peace and to Pugwash and its President Joseph Rotblat for their efforts against nuclear war.

Cf. Red Cross, Pugwash

**Nomad** The traditional way of life in certain rural people who do not live continually in the same area but move cyclically or periodically, usually in search of grazing or hunting grounds and watering places, or financial opportunities, and who are well adapted to their changing environment.

There are also ethnically nomad groups, such as Romanies, Sintis, Gypsies, Tziganes.

Cf. migration, population mobility, Tziganes, Roma, gypsies

**Non-governmental organization (NGO)** A private, civil society, international, not governmental organization (as distinct from an intergovernmental or governmental organization), constituted as a single association or as a federation of various national organizations, without governmental or state ties. The most important NGOs are given consultative status with the United Nations or its specialized agencies and are active in disasters, civil society services and humanitarian aid. Examples: MSF, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, Medicus Mundi, AI.

Cf. civil society, voluntary agency, non-state health actors

**Non-international armed conflict** Cf. civil war

**Non-refoulement** Cf. principle of non-refoulement

**Non-state health actors** Long time the prerogative of Ministries of Health and major intergovernmental organizations, health is becoming increasingly the subject of interest and intervention at higher non-governmental, non-state levels. Quite distinct from the very useful traditional inputs of a multitude of NGOs, powerful, wealthy, knowledgeable and well-informed non-state institutions, such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Wellcome Trust, the Bill Clinton Foundation and others, are becoming indispensable health actors.

**Non-structural elements** In a building, those parts of the construction (e.g. partitions, ceilings) that are not components of the load-bearing system. Strict construction codes

regulate the necessary requirements for structural elements, e.g. for earthquake resistance.

**Non-tropical cyclone** Sn: depression

**Non-violence** A personal belief and posture that war is a bad and wrong thing and that progress and freedom can be achieved and maintained without resorting to violent action, whether at the personal or national level. Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela have proven this. Also written non violence.

Cf. war, violence

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization/ NATO** Commonly referred to as NATO, an alliance established in accordance with the United Nations Charter, to ensure security through defensive, political, military and scientific ties among its members.

Cf. European Union, United Nations, OSCE

**North-South** A theoretical, artificial division of the globe into North, representing the developed, more affluent, technologically advanced, financially rich, healthy, educated and stable countries, and South, with developing, poor, indebted, technologically retarded countries where mortality is high, health levels low and education deficient. The gap between north and south is disastrous.

Cf. development

**Nosocomial infection** An infection or disease acquired during a stay in hospital.

Cf. iatrogenic disease

**Note verbale** A diplomatic note, which is in fact not verbal but written, exchanged between diplomatic missions and intergovernmental organizations. Most commonly, it is used by the diplomatic representative

resident in a country with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the host country. It is customarily written in the third person.

Cf. protocol

**Notifiable disease** A disease that by law or decree must be reported to a government health authority.

**Nuclear accident** Unintentional, accidental release of radiation or radioactive material in or around a civil nuclear facility, exceeding the internationally set safety levels.

A less severe of such event is referred to as a nuclear incident.

Cf. radiation injury, radiation protection, radioactive decontamination, Chernobyl

**Nuclear activity** The number of spontaneous nuclear disintegrations within a radionuclide at any given time. The old unit of activity, the curie (Ci) has been replaced by the becquerel (Bq).

Cf. becquerel

**Nuclear cloud** Sn: radioactive cloud

Cf. fallout

**Nuclear energy** Energy liberated in nuclear reactions, especially in fission or fusion reactions.

**Nuclear fallout** Sn: radioactive fallout

Cf. fallout

**Nuclear famine** The climatic consequences of nuclear war would create abrupt global cooling, with alteration of precipitation patterns, radioactive contamination and major crop failures, leading to global famine, starvation, exposure to cold weather, major epidemics and social violence.

Cf. nuclear war, nuclear winter, GLAWARS

**Nuclear fuel** Material containing fissile nuclides which when placed in a

reactor enables a self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction to be achieved.

Cf. fissile uranium

**Nuclear hazard(s)** Radioactive material is potentially hazardous, both as a military nuclear weapon (atomic war, e.g. Hiroshima) and in civilian activities (e.g. Chernobyl). A peacetime nuclear plant has the following potentials for disaster: a meltdown and disintegration, releasing massive amounts of radioactivity (Chernobyl); effluent leaks from plant weaknesses; radioactive waste accumulation, as no safe disposal exists; plutonium production, which is a hazard and raw material for atomic bomb production; radioactive release into the atmosphere and environment, with absorption into food, inhalation and ingestion.

Cf. Chernobyl, Fukushima, Three Mile Island, fallout, plutonium, nuclear reprocessing

**Nuclear incident** Cf. nuclear accident

**Nuclear meltdown** Cf. meltdown, nuclear accident

**Nuclear nomads hazard** A nondescript mass of nuclear personnel who, quite distinct from the highly specialized established scientists, represent a non-organized body of less trained but needed, mobile seasonal employees such as electricians, plumbers, solderers, underwater workers, etc., who move uncontrolled from one nuclear facility to another as jobs open up, in the meantime constituting a potential nuclear hazard.

**Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty/NPT** Treaty formulated in 1970 to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons, to foster peaceful nuclear cooperation under safeguards, to

encourage ending the nuclear arms race, non-nuclear states not to produce arms and to aspire to complete nuclear disarmament.

Cf. SALT, START

**Nuclear power station** Cf. reactor

**Nuclear radiation effects**

1. Genetic: Change of hereditary character caused by ionizing radiation.
2. Somatic: Effects of radiation that appear in the lifetime of an exposed subject.

Cf. radioactive contamination

**Nuclear reaction** Disintegration and change in the nucleus of an atom induced by bombarding it with a radioactive particle, with liberation of energy.

Cf. nuclear activity

**Nuclear reactor** An industrial system for generating heat and electricity from nuclear power by controlled fission of uranium-235 (fission reaction) or by the fusion of light atoms (fusion reaction).

Generally intended for peaceful, civilian uses of nuclear energy, but accidents, e.g. Chernobyl, Fukushima, can be a disaster with immediate and long-lasting effects.

Sn: nuclear power plant, atomic reactor, atomic power plant

CF. Chernobyl, Fukushima, Three Mile Island, International Atomic Energy Agency, nuclear accident

**Nuclear reactor dismantling/decommissioning** Dismantling means planned total structural demolition and stoppage of a facility. Decommissioning is discontinuing the services of a facility. For nuclear reactors, either action is risky, dangerous and difficult. Following the Fukushima disaster of 2011, several countries have decided to discontinue

the use of nuclear power and are proceeding to staged decommissioning and dismantling (deconstruction) of their reactors. At every stage, there are risks, and even after total clearance, radioactivity persists. Karlsruhe Institute of Technology is specialized in dismantling. The French Superphenix was stopped in 1997 and full deconstruction will not be completed before 2028.

Cf. Fukushima, Fukushima effect, nuclear accident, reactor

**Nuclear reprocessing** Reprocessing is the chemical separation of plutonium and unburnt uranium – and to a lesser extent caesium and other radioactive isotopes – from the spent fuel rods of a nuclear reactor. The process creates large amounts of radioactive waste in three forms: (a) gaseous, with radioactivity in the environment, (b) solids in earth dumps and (c) marine discharges, all highly dangerous for generations to come.

Cf. nuclear hazards, uranium, Sellafield, Basel Convention, La Hague, International Atomic Energy Agency.

**Nuclear safety** All decisions and measures taken to protect workers, people and property from the harmful effects of radiation contamination, exposure to ionizing radiation and nuclear criticality.

Cf. radioactive decontamination, International Atomic Energy Agency, sustainable elimination

**Nuclear war** War in which nuclear weapons – as opposed to conventional explosive devices – are used. Like conventional bombs, nuclear weapons produce extensive blast and fire damage, but to an infinitely higher degree. Furthermore, the

immediate power of a nuclear explosion is increased by the following factors: intense radiation at the time of the explosion, lasting for about one minute; intense heat and light from the fireball, lasting a few seconds; local radioactive fallout and a strong electromagnetic radiation. Later effects add to the devastation. The nuclear bomb used on Nagasaki was 2,200 times more powerful than the largest conventional weapon used in World War II.

Sn: atomic war

Cf. atomic bomb, fission bomb, fusion bomb, hydrogen bomb, NPT, START, electromagnetic pulse, nuclear winter, nuclear weapon, zero option

**Nuclear waste** Cf. waste, nuclear reprocessing, Sellafield, La Hague

**Nuclear weapon** Generic term for any weapon based on nuclear explosion. The atom bomb is a nuclear weapon that derives its energy from fission of heavy elements, mainly uranium or plutonium; the hydrogen bomb derives its energy mainly from fusion.

Cf. atomic bomb, hydrogen bomb, weapons of mass destruction

**Nuclear winter** A term that describes the very damaging climatic and environmental situation likely to result from reduced sunlight and lowered temperatures following nuclear war.

Cf. firestorm, mushroom cloud, nuclear war, nuclear famine, GLAWARS

**Nuée ardente** Sn: glowing cloud

**Nuremberg Charter/Law** –

**International crimes** In 1945, the Charter identified three classes of international crimes: crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against

humanity. Established the legal basis of international crimes committed by individuals or groups.

Cf. Nuremberg Code/medical

**Nuremberg Code** Following the 1947 trials of the Nazi war criminals, along with other international ethical prescriptions, a code of ethical conduct in medicine was also established, dealing in particular with research involving humans. Ten standards are laid down to which physicians must conform. The Code stipulates that “the voluntary consent of the subject is absolutely essential”. This has now extended beyond research and is valid for all interventions in humans. Cf. Helsinki Declaration, informed consent, consent

**Nutrient** Any and all of the organic compounds and mineral salts contained in foods and water which are utilized in the normal metabolism of the body and play a specific role in nutrition and growth.

All nutrients consist of a combination of (a) macronutrients that produce energy: proteins, fats, carbohydrates and (b) micronutrients: vitamins and minerals essential to life.

In poorer developing countries, carbohydrates are the main source of energy (80%) and fats (8–10%). Micronutrient deficiency concerns some two billion people – WFP.

Cf. food, nutrition

**Nutrition**

1. The function of assimilation and metabolism whereby living organisms utilize food for maintenance of life.
2. In public health, the discipline that deals with the interactions of food, health, disease and the improvement of health standards through



prevention and treatment of nutritional diseases.

Cf. deficiency disease, food health

**Nutrition evaluation** Evaluation of the nutritional state of persons and of the community and estimation of food needs according to criteria based on nutritional indicators.

Cf. nutrition indicators

**Nutrition indicators** Calculations that permit to evaluate in quantified terms the nutritional changes that have occurred in a given population. Two kinds of indicators can be distinguished: food and nutrition indicators and indicators of the state of nutrition.

Cf. food and nutrition indicators, nutrition, nutritional state indicators, evaluation

**Nutritional cachexia** Sn: nutritional marasmus

**Nutritional deficiency** Absence or insufficiency, in the food or in the organism, of elements indispensable for nutrition.

Cf. nutrition, malnutrition, vitamin deficiency

**Nutritional marasmus** Severe form of protein-calorie malnutrition occurring mainly in infants, characterized by wasting, retardation of growth and cachexia. Other factors such as infection and infestation can play a role in its aetiology and aggravation.

Sn: athrepsy, nutritional cachexia.

Cf. kwashiorkor, marasmus, protein-calorie malnutrition

**Nutritional requirements** The amount of energy and nutrients normally calculated on averages and expressed on a daily basis, which cover the needs of healthy individuals or groups for growth and for the normal function of the body.

Cf. needs

**Nutritional state evaluation** Measurement and assessment, according to specific indices and criteria, of the nutritional condition of a given population, e.g. children, the elderly, new immigrants, expectant mothers, etc. in normal times, in emergencies or after a disaster, with the view to correcting any deficiencies.

Cf. nutritional state indicators, nutrition indicators

**Nutritional state indicators** Physical, functional and biochemical measurements used to describe with precision the nutritional state of persons or a population group and to quantify the changes that have occurred.

Cf. food and nutrition indicators, nutritional indicators

## O

**Obesity** Overweight. Abnormal or excessive accumulation of fat that presents a health risk. One measure is the body mass index (BMI). A person with a BMI equal to or more than 30 is obese, BMI equal to or more than 25 is overweight and above 40 is pathological. All are risk factors. Obesity is a danger not only in affluent circles but also in disaster situations and refugee camps due to the wrong nutrition.

Cf. malnutrition, body mass index

**Objective** The end result that a programme or an aim seeks to achieve. For example, the objective of community education for disaster preparedness can be defined as ensuring that people in risk areas will want to be less vulnerable, know how to act in case of disaster, do what they can individually and collectively at the time of emergency and do the necessary before the emergency so that they can be prepared for it.

Cf. goal, plan, target, MDGs

**Obninsk** The Hospital at Obninsk, near Moscow, that continues to receive and treat great numbers of direct, indirect and distant victims of radiation since 1986 from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Cf. Chernobyl, radiation injury, thyroid

**Ocean wave** A wave system generated by winds at some distance from the coast over a wide area, with little change in its characteristics.

Cf. seismic sea wave, storm wave, swell, tsunami

**Oceanic** Describes the marine area beyond the coast, generally situated away from the continental margin.

**Oceanic ridge** Submarine elevation along several thousand kilometres, with deep reliefs resulting from the rising of the crust.

Cf. ridge, submarine ridge

**Oceanology** The exploration and scientific study of the oceans and the seas (oceanography) and the techniques of protection and management of marine sources.

**Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)** Special focal point in the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) to mobilize, direct, and coordinate the emergency humanitarian activities of the various UN agencies and other organizations, particularly in response to disasters. Previously UNDRO.

Cf. United Nations, ISDR

**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** The United Nations central point for all human rights questions. Leads and stimulates human rights issues, responds to serious violations of human rights, investigates reports on their breaches, promotes human

rights, strengthens national action in their favour and ensures that UN decisions on human rights are implemented and the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights respected.

Cf. human rights, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, IAHM

**Office of the UN Disaster Relief Co-ordinator (UNDRO)** Superseded by United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Cf. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

**Office of Special Relief Operations/ OSRO** The emergency assistance department of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

Cf. humanitarian assistance, food aid

**Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)** Within the US Agency for International Development, OFDA is responsible for providing non-food, humanitarian assistance in international crises and disasters. It is part of the Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs (BHR), with four divisions: disaster response; prevention; mitigation, preparedness and planning; operational support; programme support.

Cf. humanitarian assistance, international assistance, USAID

**Offshore wind** Wind that engenders the surface movement of the water towards the open sea (as opposed to onshore wind).

Cf. onshore wind, wind

**Oil boom** Sn: floating barrier

Cf. oil slick, oil spill, black tide

**Oil pollution** Pollution of the oceans, lakes and rivers by discharge of hydrocarbon products, mostly

petroleum, crude oil, during offshore drilling, transportation or storage, from platforms, tanks, tankers or pipelines. The most devastating pollution due to oil spill from failure of a platform occurred in April 2010 off Louisiana, USA.

Cf. black tide, oil slick, floating barrier, technological disaster

**Oil slick** Oil, discharged naturally, by accident or intentionally, floating on the water and carried by wind, currents and tides. A more serious amount of oil slick, with tar balls and oil deposits on tidelands, is called black tide. Disastrous examples are the Exxon-Valdes tanker break-up in Alaska, the British Petroleum spill in the Louisiana Gulf region.

Sn: black tide

Cf. oil pollution, tar balls, floating barrier

**Oil spill** Cf. oil pollution, oil slick

**Onchocerciasis** A filarial infection caused by *Onchocerca volvulus* and spread by the *Simulid* blackfly. It is characterized by nodules in the skin and subcutaneous tissues, but its most serious complication is blindness, with subsequent socio-economic disaster. Common in sub-Saharan Africa and South America, along river basins. WHO has a long-term anti-onchocerciasis programme and the availability of ivermectin for this neglected tropical disease.

Sn: river blindness

Cf. filariasis, parasitic diseases, neglected tropical diseases

**Onshore wind** Wind that engenders the surface movement of the sea towards the coast (as opposed to offshore wind).

Cf. offshore wind

**Open sea** Sn: high seas

**Optional Protocol Against Torture/OPCAT** More correctly, Optional Protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture, adopted in 2002 by the UN General Assembly, with the aim of preventing torture and other forms of ill-treatment by a system of regular inspections.

Cf. torture, places of torture detention

**Oral rehydration** Providing a dehydrated person, e.g. suffering from diarrhoea, with the necessary fluids and electrolytes by mouth. In severe cases, rehydration may be necessary by the intravenous route.

Cf. diarrhoea, oral rehydration salts, dehydration

**Oral rehydration salts (ORS)** Convenient and effective means of providing fluids and electrolytes to a dehydrated person. The proven WHO/UNICEF formula of ORS comes in 27,5 g sachets, as follows:  
Sodium chloride (common salt) 3.5 g  
Glucose 20.0 g  
Sodium bicarbonate 2.5 g  
Potassium chloride 1.5 g  
To be diluted in 1 l of clean drinking water.

Sn: ORS

Cf. diarrhoea, oral rehydration, dehydration

**Orderly departure**

1. Organized displacement or departure of refugees or victims of a disaster.
2. The UNHCR programme for orderly departure is based on a memorandum of understanding concluded by the HCR and the government concerned, establishing the procedures for the departure of the refugee who possesses an exit visa from the country and a resettlement guarantee from the host country.

Cf. refugee

**Organization of activities** In refugee or displaced communities, the planning and organization of time for productive and educational purposes, besides recuperation and recreational (leisure) activities.

Cf. organization of leisure

**Organization of leisure** Planning and implementation of recreational activities within a social and environmental programme.

Cf. organization of activities

**Organized crime** Cf. Palermo Convention Against Organized Crime

**Oroya fever** Sn: bartonellosis

**Orphan diseases/Orphan drugs** Diseases that are rare and of low prevalence, attracting little attention and neglected by the scientific and medical communities, by the authorities and by the pharmaceutical industry. There are currently an estimated 6,000 such orphan or rare diseases. Because of their rarity and little financial profitability, the health industry also remains disinterested, thus resulting in orphan drugs. Somewhat akin to but not to be confused with forgotten diseases.

Cf. neglected tropical diseases

**Oslo Treaty** Treaty signed in 2008 prohibiting cluster bombs.

Cf. cluster bomb, Ottawa Treaty

**Ottawa Charter** Significant international declaration (1986) on health promotion.

**Ottawa Treaty** International Convention to Ban Landmines that entered into force on 1 March 1999, making it illegal to produce, sell, stockpile or use landmines/antipersonnel mines and requiring all states to clear mines, destroy stocks and support victims. Such mines cause extensive damage

indiscriminately, trauma and deaths, and their persisting numbers in millions constitute a chronic disaster. The Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to ICBL in recognition of the struggle against landmines.

Cf. mines, Oslo Treaty

**Outcome** The resultant of planned projects and interventions in relation to pre-established actions, expected goals and objectives.

**Outer Space Treaty** International Treaty signed in 1967, prohibiting the placing of any weapons of mass destruction in outer space.

Cf. star wars, arsenalization of space, strategic defence initiative

**Outrage, Time for** Cf. Indignez Vous!

**Overflow** Flooding or the spilling phase of a swell during which the abundant waters are liable to reshape the surface of the flooded area by furrowing, cutting out hollows or depositing alluvium.

Cf. alluvium, flood, swell

**Overnutrition** Sn: hypernutrition

Cf. malnutrition

**Overpressure** Transient increase, beyond the normal atmospheric pressure, in the blast wave that follows a nuclear explosion.

**Overspill** Permanent change in the course of a stream or river which, due to spilling over, changes its bed and follows another course.

Sn: spill

**Ovicide** Medicament or chemical substance intended to kill the ova or eggs of parasites.

Cf. pesticide

**Oxfam** The Oxford Committee for Famine Relief. Started in 1942, it has grown far beyond famine assistance and is at present one of the most important, efficient, ethical international

humanitarian NGOs and providers of assistance in any major disaster worldwide.

**Oxyology** A new term (not much used) for emergency medicine involving rapid response, first aid, triage, transport, resuscitation and urgent care.

Sn: Emergency Medical Services, disastrology

Cf. CPR, disaster medicine, first aid, triage

**Ozone** An unstable molecular form of oxygen that consists of three atoms (O3). Present in the lower layers of the stratosphere, about 20–50 km above the earth’s surface, it protects the earth from excessive solar radiation. Certain chemical pollutants can cause depletion of the layer, with resulting global environmental damage.

Sn: ozonosphere Cf. ozone depletion, chlorofluorocarbons

**Ozone depletion** The stratospheric ozone layer that protects the earth from excessive ultraviolet radiations can be depleted by certain pollutants. Gases used in spray cans (chlorofluorocarbons, chlorofluoromethanes) or oxides of nitrogen released by cars and flying aircraft can damage or create “holes” in the ozone layer, allowing excess amounts of ultraviolet radiation to reach the earth, with global climatic and environmental consequences and damage to health. A combined technological and natural disaster.

Sn: ozone hole

Cf. chlorofluorocarbons, glasshouse effect, ozone, global warming, Kyoto protocol, World Meteorological Organization, United Nations Environment Programme, climate change

**P**

**Pacifism** A doctrine and personal view that war is wrong, that international disputes can be solved peacefully and that military and war instruments are unnecessary and should be abolished. Not to be confused with non-violence.

Cf. war, non-violence, conscientious objector

**Pack ice** Sn: ice pack

**Palermo Convention against Organized Crime** International agreement signed in Palermo, Italy, 2000, under the aegis of the United Nations, banning the mafia, transnational racketeering, money laundering, trafficking in humans, drug cartels and other illicit activities constituting organized crime.

Cf. mafia, disappearances, man-conceived disaster, narcotraffic

**Palliative treatment** Treatment and comforting help given to reduce pain, alleviate immobility or relieve other symptoms of a disease, but not to cure the disease.

Cf. hospice

**Palmer drought index** A mathematical formula indicating drought conditions.

Cf. aridity, famine, Sahel

**Pandemic** The presence of a disease in important proportions at the same time throughout the world. Example: AIDS.

Cf. endemicity, epidemic

**Panic** Acute and overwhelming sense of fear and dread, usually of sudden onset and most often self-limiting and of short duration, from a few seconds to hours, accompanying restlessness resulting in an urge to escape. A frequent but not lasting

phenomenon, following disasters and major emergencies.

**Paragrapher** Vessel of less than 500 tons usually used for coastal or inshore navigation that can be utilized in emergencies with a small crew, life-saving equipment and light radio facilities.

**Parasitic diseases** Infections, infestation and other disease states caused by parasites of animal origin. Some examples common in disaster situations are amoebiasis, intestinal worms, schistosomiasis, malaria, trypanosomiasis, scabies, pediculosis.

**Paris Declaration** The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, signed in 2005, seeks to enable aid-recipient countries rather than donors “to execute their own national plans according to their own national priorities ... on long term” and be mutually accountable.

Cf. Accra Agenda

**Participation** The philosophy and action of taking part in a decision-making process, being responsible for one’s contribution and sharing the burden.

**Pathogen(ic)** Bacterium, virus, prion, parasite, fungus or other microorganisms that can cause disease.

#### **Pathogenicity**

1. Capacity to cause disease.
2. Which carries a pathogen.

Cf. pathogen

#### **Pathology**

1. The medical science that studies disease.
2. By extension, it is also commonly but erroneously used to mean disease or the characteristics of a disease.

**Patient** A sick person who needs, is receiving or will receive medical care, treatment or surgical attention.

**Peace Boat** A Japan-based but international NGO that works to promote peace, human rights and environmental development by making calls at various ports where advocacy and teaching are promoted.

Cf. Mercy Ship

**Peace Corps** A US governmental humanitarian agency that conducts international assignments and carries out voluntary services in developing countries.

**Pediculosis** Infestation by lice. The condition is facilitated by overcrowding and poor sanitary conditions. Lice may cause or transmit infection.

Cf. infestation, louse infestation

**Pellagra** Disease due to deficiency of vitamin PP or niacin, usually endemic in areas where maize or millet forms the major part of the diet. It is characterized by skin rash, diarrhoea and mental retardation.

Sn: hypovitaminosis PP

Cf. hypovitaminosis, vitamin deficiency

**People’s Health Movement** A civil society organization that promotes health through searching for alternative world solutions, a vision of equity, human rights and peoples’ empowerment. Publishes the “Global Health Watch”.

**Perinatal mortality** The death of the foetus after a gestation of 22 weeks.

**Permafrost** A surface layer of frosted soil and rock with a continuous temperature below 0°C for several years.

**Persona non grata** Diplomatic expression indicating that a person representing his State or organization in a host country is no more desirable or welcome and must leave.

**Pertussis** Sn: whooping cough  
Cf. Expanded Programme on Immunization

**Pest control** Technique aimed at inhibiting the growth and stopping the spread of parasites and other pests.

**Pesticide** Chemical compound used for killing organisms that are dangerous, undesirable or a nuisance to man, animals or plants. They are named according to their action, such as fungicide, herbicide, insecticide, molluscicide, nematocide, ovicide, rodenticide, virucide. (The suffix -cide means which kills.)

**Pharaonic circumcision** Sn: infibulation, female genital mutilation

**Phases of disaster** A disaster can be phased in chronological order, e.g. pre-event status, preparedness, warning, threat, impact, rescue, reconstruction, rehabilitation.

Recently, a psychological behavioural phasing has been suggested in the US: heroic phase, honeymoon phase, disillusionment phase, reconstruction phase – DHHS.

**Philanthrocapitalism** A new journalistic term for a business-like approach to charity, as extremely rich philanthropic capitalists, e.g. Bill Gates, promote worthy causes, such as health, with huge donations – after *Time*.

Cf. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, philanthropy

**Philanthropic foundations** Organizations that derive their capital from large bequests and/or donations and disburse funds to causes that fit their aims – Last.

Examples of health benefactors: Rockefeller Foundation, Ford Foundation, Gulbenkian Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, the Wellcome

Trust, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

**Philanthropy** Love and practical benevolence towards humanity, desire to help mankind and share one’s advantages with fellow beings.

**Phosgene** A lethal, lung irritant agent used as chemical weapon.

Cf. chemical warfare, Geneva Protocol, CBW

**Pinta** A serious treponema infection endemic to hot and humid forest regions.

Cf. yaws

**Piracy** Violent action, for private ends, committed on the high seas outside the jurisdiction of a state. It is an offence under international law.

Cf. high seas, hacking

Piracy of electronic information is hacking.

**Places of torture detention** Places of detention where torture may be practised and that can be visited for inspection according to the UN Convention Against Torture should include police stations, security force stations, all pretrial centres, remand prisons, prisons for sentenced persons, centres for juveniles, immigration centres, transit zones at ports, centres for detained asylum seekers, psychiatric institutions and places of administrative detention – OPCAT.

Cf. torture, Optional Protocol on Torture

**Plague** A highly dangerous contagious disease, often fatal if untreated, caused by the *bacillus pestis*, transmitted by infected rats and rodents, through flea bites or at times by air-borne spread (pneumonic plague). Overcrowding, unsanitary conditions and large food stores encourage rat proliferation, the vector.



Sn: black death, bubonic plague, pestis

**Plan** A pre-established course of action which, when implemented, is expected to lead to the attainment of the expected ends and objectives. An orderly set of decisions on the ways and means to achieving the impact and objectives sought.

Cf. goal, objective, target, outcome

**Plate tectonics** Tectonics is the branch of geological science that deals with regional structural and deformational aspects of the earth's crust. Plate tectonics refers to the concept that the crust consists of several large geological rigid plates whose borders represent fault zones along which slipping movements, deformity and earthquake activity occur.

Cf. earthquake, fault, transform fault, tsunami

**Pledging conference** Any conference called specifically to present a programme and obtain pledges of financial support for its realization. The phrase is, however, most commonly used for the Ad Hoc Committee of the General Assembly for the announcement of voluntary contributions to the programme of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Sn: donors' meeting

Cf. donor, request for disaster assistance

**Plutocracy** The ruling class of the wealthy, unsocial government dictated by riches and the influence of money.

Cf. autocracy, democracy, kleptocracy

**Plutonium** Plutonium 239 is an artificially created (1941) fissile

material, the product of bombarding uranium with neutrons. It is used in nuclear bombs and nuclear power; the Nagasaki atomic bomb was of the plutonium type. Being relatively inexpensive to produce, it has contributed to the proliferation of nuclear weapons since 1945.

Cf. uranium, caesium, atom bomb, Sellafield, SALT

**Pluviometry** Sn: rainfall amount

**Pogrom** Russian word for organized persecution and massacre, especially of the opponents of the regime.

Cf. concentration camp, Auschwitz, ethnic cleansing

**Polder** A low-lying humid region, protected artificially against the surrounding waters by structures that can also be used for regulating the water levels. Example: Holland.

**Policy** A set of objectives, course of action or a road map, reflecting certain principles considered to be useful, helpful and advantageous in guiding the authorities and associated persons or organization to achieve the agreed desired goals.

**Poliomyelitis** An acute viral contagious infection which begins with fever, headache, stiff neck and back, but predominantly settles in the central nervous system, especially the spinal cord, causing paralysis. Epidemic outbreaks are to be feared in unsanitary and disaster conditions. Vaccination prevents the disease and is included in the WHO thrust and Expanded Programme on Immunization.

Sn: infantile paralysis, polio

**Pollution** Degradation of one or more elements or aspects in the environment by noxious industrial, chemical or biological wastes, from debris of

man-made products and from mismanagement of natural and environmental resources.

Cf. air pollution, atmospheric pollution, man-made disaster, oil pollution.

**Pontifical Council of the Pastoral Staff for Health Professionals** Pontificio Consiglio della Pastorale per gli Operatori Sanitari.

The Vatican's equivalent of Ministry of Health. Includes Cor Unum, for Coordination of Roman Catholic Relief Agencies.

**Population** The aggregate of individuals belonging to several biological species of the same systematic group that occupies a given territory. Examples: avian population, rodent population.

**Population at risk** A defined group of people or community threatened by a potential hazard, e.g. a nearby volcano, a polder or a nuclear station, whose lives, livelihood and property may be at risk at any time.

**Population concentration** Sn: demographic concentration

**Population density** The number of persons per a given area of land, such as square kilometre. It expresses the extent and distribution of the population of a region.

Cf. demography

**Population dynamics** Study, in a given space and time, of the mechanisms and changes of population structures and the factors that determine those changes.

Cd. demography

**Population mobility** The characteristic of a defined group of people likely to change its place of residence, expressed by the frequency of such displacements.

Cf. migration, nomad, Roma

**Population service International/PSI** A non-profit NGO which, together with Malaria No More, is the world's major distributor of anti-malarial mosquito nets and aims at ending malaria in Africa by 2015.

**Portable nuclear arm** Stolen or clandestine nuclear device secretly carried (nuclear bag) for illegal arms sales, sabotage or terrorist attacks.

Sn: bag bomb

Cf. atom bomb, terrorism

**Post-traumatic stress disorder/syndrome** Delayed or protracted reaction to an exceptionally strong stressful event of catastrophic dimension which can cause pervasive distress in almost any person, but more marked in some, following a natural or man-made disaster, combat, violent death, torture, rape, terrorism, etc. The onset may follow the trauma within a few weeks or at most six months. Typical symptoms include "reliving" or "flashbacks" of the event, "numbness" and detachment and fearful reminiscences.

Sn: also called post-traumatic stress syndrome, PTSS, PTSD

Cf. panic, stupor, stress, shock

**Potable water** Sn: drinking water

**Potential epidemic** Sn: threatened epidemic

**Poverty** A human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights – UN.

Income calculated at less than \$2 a day per person. The UN Millennium Development Goals have made it a priority to diminish poverty and its

multidimensional consequences worldwide.

Cf. Millennium Development Goals, low-income country, LDC, pro-poor health approach

**Poverty reduction strategy**

Investigations and resulting strategy papers prepared by countries through a participatory process that brings together national stakeholders, external development partners, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other experts with the view to advising and guiding on poverty and poverty reduction issues. These useful strategy papers (PRSPs) are updated every 3 years.

Cf. poverty, low-income country, pro-poor health, MDGs

**Precipitation** All or any form of water, in liquid or solid state, whether rain, snow, drizzle, sleet, hail, that falls from the atmosphere onto the earth's surface.

Cf. fall

**Precursor, seismic** Sn: foreshock

Cf. aftershock, earthquake

**Precursors, volcanic** Rumbling and phenomena indicating a probable volcanic eruption.

**Prediction** A statement giving the expected time, place and magnitude of a future disruptive event, such as a volcanic eruption or earthquake. (Forecasting is used for the weather.) Cf. precursor

**Prehospital medicine** The system and provision of basic emergency treatment to persons who have suffered a sudden illness or injury outside the availability of a hospital or organized medical services and rendered by competent persons with the intention of preventing disability or death and ensuring safe transfer to a hospital or other appropriate facility.

Sn: emergency medical services, EMS

**Preparedness** Cf. disaster preparedness

**Press freedom** Cf. freedom of the press, Windhoek Declaration

**Prevalence** The number of illnesses, accidents or sick persons in a given population and time, without distinction between new and old cases. Cf. incidence

**Prevention** Medicine: Approaches and activities aimed at reducing the likelihood that a disease will affect the individual, interrupting or slowing the progress of the disease and strengthening health.

Law and society: Laws, governance and activities aimed at reducing the likelihood of lawlessness and disorder in a community and promoting a state of safe, equitable and harmonious living.

**Prevention (of disaster)** Cf. disaster prevention

**Primary health care/PHC** Essential health care made universally accessible to individuals and families in the community by means acceptable to them, through their full participation and at a cost that the community and country can afford and sustain. It forms an integral part both of the country's health system, of which it is the nucleus, and of the overall social and economic development of the community. It is the backbone of the Health for All concept of WHO.

Sn: PHC

Cf. Alma-Ata, secondary health care, tertiary health care

**Primary prevention** Health: Actions directed towards preventing the initial occurrence of a disease or disorder – WHO.

Society: Laws and actions directed towards preventing the initial breach of laws, order and peace.

**Principle of non-refoulement** The international principle according to which a person seeking asylum must not be subjected to such administrative measures as refusal of admission at a frontier post or, if he is already in the country, should not be expelled or obligatorily returned to a country where he might be in danger. This principle is fundamental to the work of UNHCR.

**Prion** Acronymic word for protein virion. A relatively recently described and not yet fully understood infectious particle composed entirely of protein. It is resistant to known inactivating agents and is implicated in such neuropathological conditions as Alzheimer's and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans, bovine spongiform encephalitis in cows, scrapie in sheep and similar encephalopathies. Cf. Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, mad cow disease, b.s.e., zoonosis

**PRISM** Acronym for Prognostic Risk of Mortality, a diagnostic scoring system in paediatric critical care medicine based on an index that assesses 34 physiological variables on a severity scale of 1–5.

**Prisoner** Person deprived of liberty and restricted in activity by the use of force. National and international laws define the extent of a prisoner's restrictions.

Cf. torture

**Prisoner of conscience** Person imprisoned solely because of his/her political or religious beliefs, gender or racial or ethnic origin, and who has neither used nor advocated violence – AI.

Cf. Amnesty International, torture, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Prisoner of war** A member of the armed forces of a party to conflict, all members of armed groups and units which are under a command responsible to that party and who have been caught and made prisoner by the opposing party in the conflict. Prisoners of war have rights and responsibilities defined by the Geneva Conventions. Guerrillas also benefit from POW provisions.

Sn: POW

Cf. armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, ICRC

**Privacy Act** A governmental law protecting the privacy of every citizen. In particular, in the United States, the Privacy Act of 1974 upholds the citizens' fundamental right against the misuse of governmental information. In essence, this personal right overrides the public's right, a good factor but which is not free from creating ancillary legal and democratic complications.

**Private military and security company/PMSC** A commercial non-military company selling security and support services, such as armed or unarmed guards, protection of persons and assets, demining, security training, anti-piracy and anti-hijacking protection, etc., to a variety of state, industrial or private clients, as a business.

Cf. mercenary, UN civilian police, Montreux Document

**Privilege** Right, exceptional advantage or other benefit belonging to or acquired by a person, a class or office in virtue of their contribution or position, e.g. physician, schoolteacher,

school, church, diplomat, member of parliament, the parliament building.

**Pro bono** More exactly *pro bono publico*, Latin term meaning “for the public good”. Voluntary and unpaid service or work undertaken by a person or organization as a humanitarian, altruistic public contribution. Also *pro Deo*.

**Pro-poor health approach** An organizational process that stresses the importance of protecting, promoting and improving the health and health conditions of poor people and thereby strengthening development. It constitutes one of the goals within the MDGs.

Cf. poverty, least developed countries, Millennium Development Goals

**Probability** A measure lying between 0 and 1 which concerns the likelihood that an event is true or will occur, 0 being that the event will not occur.

**Probability of damage/of disaster** Cf. damage probability formula

**Probe** Physical: Measuring instrument used in situ and in continuity. Example: probe to measure depth, salinity, temperature.

Medicine: Similar instrument to examine a fistula, deep ulcer.

**Processing centre (refugee)** A centre where refugees who have been accepted for settlement in a third country live while awaiting their final departure. The term “camp” is not used at UNHCR.

Cf. refugee

**Productivity** The ratio between the quantity of goods and services produced and the factors that determine it. It is taken as a measure of efficiency.

**Prognostic risk of mortality** Cf. PRISM

**Protection of refugees** Cf. refugee protection

**Protective food** Food of special value which promotes physical development and protects health by virtue of its richness in essential nutrients.

Cf. food fortification, fortified food

**Protein** The natural nitrogenous substances which, by hydrolysis, give amino acids and constitute an essential factor in cells for the vital functions, growth and repair of all living organisms. Deficiency in protein causes disease.

Cf. protective food

**Protein-calorie malnutrition** A diversity of pathological conditions arising from coincident shortage or lack of proteins and calories, most frequently occurring in infants and young children and commonly associated with infections.

Sn: protein energy malnutrition.

Cf. malnutrition

**Protocol refugee** Person who fulfils the definition of refugee according to article I (2) of the Protocol on the status of refugees.

Cf. refugee

**Proton** Elementary particle carrying positive electrical charge, present in all atoms.

Cf. electron, ionizing radiation

**Protrusive dome** Type of volcanic dome where the lava has extruded to the surface.

Cf. volcano

**Provocation** A hostile position, act, threat or aggressiveness, usually uncalled for, expressed by an individual, group, nation or the military, to excite anger, to test opposition or to express dominance.

**Pseudomonas** Gram-negative bacteria that can produce serious and resistant

infection, especially in immune deficient persons, such as in AIDS or radiation injury.

Cf. immunosuppression

**Public health** The social and political concept and the health sciences discipline that, at the level of the community or the public, aims at promoting prevention of disease, improving health, prolonging life and enhancing its quality through sanitary living, laws, practices and a healthier environment.

In general, all measures to protect the public's health.

Cf. health, hygiene, primary health care, World Health Organization

**Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs** Commonly referred to as "Pugwash", a highly regarded international forum named after the town in Canada where eminent scientists and thinkers first met to discuss and propose ways to avoid nuclear war. Since then, conference choices and reflection themes have broadened to include widely different views on social, military, political and international issues, based on impartiality and scientific objectivity. Its deliberations are often heeded by governments, and in 1995, Pugwash and its president jointly received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Cf. WHOPAX Report, Nobel Prize

**Purchasing power** Ability of individuals or a community to acquire services and goods in function of their income and the prices asked.

**Pyroclastic flow** In a volcanic eruption, high-density flow or solid magma fragments and gas advancing down-slope at speeds reaching 200 km/h, subdivided into ash flow, nuée ardente, glowing avalanche and pumice.

Cf. ash, ash flow, explosivity index, glowing avalanche, nuée ardente, volcanic eruption

## Q

**Q fever** An acute rickettsial disease with fever, headache and pulmonary complications, acquired by inhalation mainly from domestic animals or through ticks.

Cf. zoonosis

**Quake** Popular term for earthquake.

**Quality-adjusted life expectancy (QALE)** A model of judgement in which a disability or disease is considered as a factor of reduced quality of life in calculating life expectancy.

Cf. QALY

**Quality-adjusted life years (QALY)** A measure of adjusting life expectancy by taking into account disabilities, illnesses, handicaps, etc.

**Quality health care** Cf. medical care quality

## Quarantine

1. Obligatory isolation during a given period, prescribed by international law, of a person carrying or coming from an epidemic area with certain specific "quarantinable" communicable diseases.

2. Isolation imposed on ships or aeroplanes coming from infected areas. Cholera, plague and yellow fever are the internationally quarantinable diseases.

Cf. communicable diseases, epidemic

**Quicksand** Sandy earth which, when saturated and under the influence of hydrostatic pressures, becomes weak, buoyant, unable to bear weight, and tends to flow.

Cf. earth flow

**Quinine** The classical antimalarial medication and febrifuge. From the

alkaloid in cinchona bark, usually taken in sulphate form.

Cf. malaria, mefloquine

## R

**Rabies** A very serious disease due to a virus, common in dogs, foxes, bats but uncommon in man, transmitted by accidental animal bite or contact with its saliva. Death usually ensues due to meningoencephalitis.

Cf. zoonosis, neglected tropical disease

**Race** A group of people or animals that differs from others in certain visible or invisible characteristics and in the relative frequency of a gene or genes. In reference to populations, it is also used for a community or group of people sharing the same ancestry. Racial discrimination is not tolerable. Cf. racism

**Racism** Overt or covert animosity and discrimination against a person, group or population because of race. It is unacceptable according to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Cf. race, human rights

**Racketeering** Obtaining money, influence or other favours by blackmail, intimidation, force or other illegal means. Destitute persons, disaster stricken people and helpless refugees are often common prey.

Cf. mafia

**Rad** The old unit of radioactive absorbed dose, equal to one-hundredth of 1 Gy, the SI unit that has replaced it.

Cf. gray, Gy

**Radar** Acronymic term for Radio Detection and Ranging. A radioelectric method of determining from a single station the direction, distance and speed of an object.

**Radiation absorption** The ionizing energy absorbed by an exposed population – patient, laboratory worker, explosion victim – from the decay of a radionuclide. The measuring unit is the gray (Gy)

Cf. radiation protection, radiation exposure, gray, sievert

**Radiation detriment** The detriment of radiation to an exposed population is defined as the mathematical expectation of the harm incurred from an exposure to radiation, taking into account not only the probability of each type of deleterious effect but also the severity of the effects – ICRP.

Cf. radiation exposure, radiation injury, radiation toxicity, radioactive contamination, fallout

**Radiation Emergency Medical Preparedness and Assistance Network/REMPAN** Better known by its acronym REMPAN, the WHO-led network of over 40 specialized institutions in radiation emergency and public health interventions and long-term follow-up of victims. Cf. radiation protection, radioactive contamination

**Radiation exposure risks/mSv** A dose of 100 mSv (millisieverts) results in risk of cancer; 20 mSv is the maximum annual dose allowable for nuclear workers; 10 mSv is the dose received at a whole body scan; 1 mSv is the annual tolerated dose for a person; 0.1 mSv is the dose received at thoracic X-ray examination. Cf. sievert, radiation detriment, radiation toxicity

**Radiation injury** Somatic and genetic damage to living organisms caused by ionizing radiation.

Cf. immunodeficiency, ionizing radiation



**Radiation protection** The measures taken in order to ensure the protection of man and his environment against the consequences of ionizing radiation.

Cf. ionizing radiation, Lugol's iodine, maximum acceptable dose, radioactive decontamination

**Radiation sickness** Severe nausea, vomiting, lethargy are some of the earliest symptoms of acute radiation exposure, as seen after the Hiroshima nuclear bombing.

Sn: acute radiation syndrome

Cf. Hiroshima/Nagasaki, Chernobyl, Fukushima

**Radiation toxicity** Toxicity and harmful effects due to radioactivity from a radionuclide present in the body.

Cf. radioactive contamination, sievert, technological disaster

**Radioactive cloud** Sn: nuclear cloud

Cf. fallout

**Radioactive contamination** The undesirable presence of radioactive material in the air, in men, in the soil, water, food or on any substance.

Cf. radioactivity, contamination, Chernobyl, radiation detriment

**Radioactive decontamination** Measures taken to eliminate or reduce the radioactive contamination or pollution of a body, surface, soil or environment.

Cf. radioactive contamination

**Radioactive fallout** Sn: nuclear fallout

Cf. fallout

**Radioactive half-life** In the process of diminishing activity of a radioactive substance, the time necessary for half the number of radionuclides to disintegrate.

Sn: half-life

Cf. radioactivity

**Radioactive iodine** Cf. Iodine-131

**Radioactive waste** Used material which is contaminated or contains radionuclides at concentrations higher than clearance levels and which will not be reused.

Cf. nuclear waste, Sellafield, La Hague, Windscale

**Radioactivity** The phenomenon of spontaneous disintegration in a nuclide accompanied by the emission of ionizing radiation.

Cf. nuclear activity, ionizing radiation

**Radio astronomy** Study of the natural radioelectric rays of cosmic origin.

**Radionuclide** Species of atom characterized by the number of protons and of neutrons in its nucleus, with properties of spontaneous disintegration. Usually specified by the symbol of the element and the mass number, as in  $^{235}\text{U}$  or uranium-235 and cesium-137.

Cf. radionuclide maximum acceptable concentration

**Radionuclide maximum acceptable concentration** The radioactivity of a nuclide in the air or in drinking water which, when inhaled or ingested, produces the maximum admissible dose in the receiver.

Cf. radionuclide

**Radium** A radioactive metallic alkaline element of the earth, used in medical therapy. Half-life 1,620 years. Symbol Ra.

Cf. radioactivity, radioactive half-life

**Radon** A zero-valent radioactive element of short half-life (3.82 days) formed by the disintegration of radium. Directly inserted radon "seeds" are used in cancer therapy.

**Rainfall amount** The measure of the total amount of liquid precipitation in a given place and time.

Sn: pluviometry

Cf. precipitation, cyclonic rain

**Rainout** The washing out, by concurrent rain, of the radioactivity from the mushroom cloud produced by nuclear explosion. The oncoming rain may in fact be induced by the heat of the explosion itself.

Sn: washout

Cf. scavenging, mushroom cloud

**Rainy season** Term used mainly in tropical regions for the annually recurring period of high rainfall which is preceded and followed by dry periods. In the latitudes concerned, this season is often the cause of flood disasters.

Cf. tropical climate, macroclimate

**Raison d'état** French diplomatic term meaning "Reason of State". According to this political doctrine, a State's interests or well-being override moral, military or other considerations.

**Rapid assessment protocol/RAP**

A brief but valid evaluation, usually with established checklist, to assess the emergency needs of a disaster-affected community in health, survival necessities and services.

Cf. assessment/disaster

**Rapprochement** A French term, much used in social and diplomatic relations, that refers to gradual normalization and reestablishment of relations after a period of cooling, conflict or disharmony.

**Ratification** A State's formal approval of a Treaty, by which it officially becomes a state party and has to abide by the stipulations and requirements of that treaty.

**Ration (food)** Fixed quantity of a specific food or combination of foods provided or distributed to certain individuals or categories of persons, e.g. the army, or to entire populations in special circumstances, as in times of food shortage, war, refugees or disaster.

Cf. emergency feeding, food relief, food shortage

**Reactor** Sn: nuclear reactor, atomic reactor

**Realizing Rights: The Ethical Globalization Initiative** Founded by former President of Ireland and High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, this NGO proposes and strives for an ethical foundation to globalization, the need for a new global order built on respect of human rights and understanding between peoples.

Cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Reanimatology** Syn: resuscitology

Cf. resuscitation

**Recession** Marine: ebb.

Finance: slump in trade.

Biology: Mendelian genetic recessive trait.

**Recipient** Person, group, nation or country that is the beneficiary of aid or technical assistance to meet particular needs, emergency or otherwise.

Sn: donee, beneficiary

Cf. international aid, technical assistance

**Recognized refugee** Person who is formally recognized as a refugee by the authorities of a State that has signed the international instruments relative to the status of refugees.

Cf. refugee

**Reconstruction** The phase that follows a disaster, consisting of reorganization

of the stricken territory, the restructuring of the built environment and the development of the economy, with the view to re-establishing the pre-disaster conditions.

Cf. rehabilitation

**Recovery** The restoration, and improvement where appropriate, of facilities, livelihoods and living conditions of the disaster-affected communities, including efforts to reduce further disaster risk factors – UNISDR.

Cf. reconstruction, rehabilitation

**Red Crescent** The counterpart of the Red Cross in Islamic countries.

Cf. Red Cross

**Red Cross** Red Cross, or International Red Cross, general terms used for one or all the components of the worldwide organization active in humanitarian work. The official overall name is the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, which has three components.

1. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): acts mainly in conflict disasters as neutral intermediary in hostilities and for the protection of war victims. Guardian of the Geneva Conventions and of International Humanitarian Law.
2. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC): federation of all the National Societies, active in non-conflict disasters and natural calamities humanitarian aid.
3. The individual National Red Cross or Red Crescent Society of every country.

**Red Cross Principles** The seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are humanity, impartiality, neutrality,

independence, voluntary service, unity, universality.

**Red Cross symbols** The three official symbols of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are the Red Cross, the Red Crescent and the Red Diamond.

**Red Diamond** The recently introduced symbol, counterpart of the Red Cross in Israel.

Cf. Red Cross symbols

**Redevelopment** Extensive reorganization of a given area with the view to meeting the needs of the population concerned, by providing the necessary facilities and making better use of the available resources.

Cf. need, resources

**Refoulement** Expulsion of a refugee towards his country. Such action is reprehensible to the international community. The principle of non-refoulement.

Sn: expulsion

Cf. international community, principle of non-refoulement

**Refugee** A person who is outside his country of origin and who, due to well-founded fear of persecution, is unable or unwilling to avail himself of that country’s protection – UNHCR.

There are different categories of refugees, as given below:

Cf. Convention refugee

- de facto refugee
- de jure refugee
- economic refugee
- environmental refugee
- internal refugee
- mandate refugee
- Protocol refugee
- recognized refugee
- refugee sur place
- statutory refugee.

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

**Refugees International** Important independent NGO active in advocacy, assistance and protection issues of refugees, stateless persons and displaced populations

Cf. refugee, stateless, migration, UNHCR

**Refugee processing centre** Cf. processing centre

**Refugee protection** International protection of refugees and displaced persons outside their country and who do not enjoy the protection of their country of origin. Such protection accorded by the High Commissioner for Refugees is based on the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol of the UN, the Convention and Protocols of the International Red Cross and on such regional instruments as the 1969 Convention of the Organization of African Unity.

Cf. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, principle of non-refoulement, refugee, Geneva Conventions, international protection

**Refugee sur place** Person who, while not being a refugee when he left his country, becomes one as a result of intervening circumstances.

Cf. refugee

**Rehabilitation** The operations and decisions after a disaster, with the view to restoring to the stricken country, communities, families and individuals the former living conditions while at the same time encouraging and facilitating the necessary adjustments to the changes caused by the disaster to ensure development.

Cf. adaptation, reconstruction

**Rejection** Not accepting, not believing, refusing, denying.

**Psychology: Denial**, in certain circumstances not accepting the evident, e.g. that a parent has died or that a disaster has hit. May be used as a protective mechanism to avoid reality.

**Law:** The denial, against all evidence, by a powerful person or autocratic ruler, of all wrongdoing. Impunity.

Cf. denial, impunity

**Relative risk (disease)** The ratio of the incidence of a given disease in exposed or at-risk persons, to the incidence of that disease in unexposed persons.

**Reliability** The probability that a structure, device, method or system will operate without failure under given conditions for a specific period of time. Cf. failure

**Relief** Assistance in material facilities, personal needs and services given to needy persons or communities, without which they would suffer.

Cf. aid, emergency relief, international assistance

**Religious sects** All major religions have movements of belief and practice that have evolved out of the mainstream teachings of orthodoxy and which have implications on health, medical care, society, the law and human rights. Examples: Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientology, Amish Order, etc.

**Rem** Acronym for Roentgen Equivalent Man. Previously a unit of ionizing radiation that causes the same damage to humans as 1 roentgen of X-rays, now replaced by Sv, sievert (1 Sv = 100 rem)

**Remote sensing** The study, exploration and observation of a faraway area, phenomenon or object in space by distant study through satellite-provided data.

Cf. remote sounding

**Remote sounding** The methodical local exploration of a given environment or unattainable point (e.g. beneath a

collapsed building) carried out from a distance by the use of signals.

Cf. remote sensing

**Repatriation** The actions and measures taken to ensure the return of a person to his country of origin or of usual residence.

Cf. voluntary repatriation

**Representative** The delegate of an international organization to a country or to another organization. Organizations have different names for their representatives, e.g. delegate (ICRC), resident representative (UNDP), programme coordinator (WHO), cooperant (France), expert.

**Request for disaster assistance** Official approach made by the authorities of a disaster-stricken country to other governments, international organizations or voluntary agencies requesting aid in face of the calamity.

Cf. declaration of disaster

**Rescue** Immediate assistance to a person who is injured, e.g. fracture, or in distress, e.g. trapped in a collapsed building, with the view to applying first aid and delivering him from harm.

Cf. first aid

**Reservoir of infection** Any physical, animal, plant or human source harbouring and favouring the development of pathogens susceptible to be transmitted to man or animals.

Cf. carrier, infection, transmission

**Resettlement** Relocation and more or less orderly settlement, for temporary or permanent habitation, of refugees and other persons displaced from their usual place of residence.

Cf. displaced person, crisis relocation, refugee, settlement

**Residence time** The average length of time during which pollutants, such as smoke, toxic chemicals, radioactivity,

remain in the atmosphere from the time the pollution begins.

Cf. atmospheric pollution, Chernobyl, Seveso, superfire

**Resilience** A given person's, community's, or society's capacity to learn from, adapt to, and resist a real or potential hazard (such as a volcano or adverse indoctrination), contain its effects, proceed to recovery and maintain acceptable levels of ordinary living and functioning.

Cf. adaptability, coping capacity

**Resource planning and development** Study and application of legislative, economic, financial and planning measures to promote a harmonious equilibrium among the activities, the amenities, the population needs and the country's resources over the national territory.

Cf. resources, natural resources management, sustainable development

**Respiratory distress syndrome (Acute)** A condition of acute pulmonary inflammation with respiratory insufficiency and lack of arterial oxygen, due, among other causes, to multiple trauma and crush injuries.

Cf. asphyxia, dyspnoea

Sn: ARDS

Cf. SARS

**Resuscitation/Resuscitology** The scientific techniques and manoeuvres applied to reverse acute terminal states and reanimate victims in clinical death, by using intensive care and intensive therapy methods.

The discipline is called resuscitology or reanimatology – after Safar.

**Retained dose** Following exposure to a given pollutant, the portion of the absorbed dose that persists in the individual after a given time.

Cf. absorbed dose

**Retrofitting** Strengthening and structurally upgrading existing buildings (houses, dams, bridges, etc.) to withstand destructive forces such as earthquakes and floods and to bring them closer to acceptable construction standards. Rehabilitating a weak structure.

**Retrograde amnesia** A type of memory loss, of varying length of time, that often follows head injury, with loss of memory for events leading up to the accident.

Cf. amnesia

**Retrovirus** A pathogenic virus of higher organisms with RNA genome that has the ability to insert a DNA copy of its genome into the chromosome of the host.

**Returnee** Person who, after having crossed an international boundary as a refugee, returns voluntarily to his country of origin or of usual residence. (Term used by the HCR).

Cf. refugee, voluntary repatriation

**Richter scale** Logarithmic scale, -1 to 8, indicating the magnitude or "size" of an earthquake, calculated on the amplitude of the seismic waves. All tremors 4, 5 or over are internationally recorded.

- An earthquake of amplitude 3 corresponds to a tremor felt over a limited area.
- 4.5 can cause light destruction.
- 6.6 causes considerable destruction.
- 7-8 causes very great destruction.
- Over 8, total destruction.

Cf. Mercalli scale, earthquake, seismograph, UNESCO

**Rickets** Disease due to nutritional deficiency in vitamin D. (Not to be confused with rickettsial fevers.)

Sn: hypovitaminosis D

Cf. vitamin deficiency

**Rickettsial fever(s)** A group of acute diseases characterized by fever and skin eruption due to rickettsiae. Four groups are known: typhus, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, Q fever and trench fever. The agent has been used as a biological weapon.

(Not to be confused with rickets.)

Sn: rickettsial diseases, rickettsiosis

Cf. Q fever, typhus, tick-borne typhus

**Ridge** Sn: oceanic ridge

**Right against discrimination** Everyone is entitled to the rights and freedoms set forth in the UDHR without any discrimination. Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Cf. discrimination, xenophobia, UDHR

**Right to a nationality** Everyone has the right to belong to a nation. Article 15 of UDHR.

Cf. apatriote

**Right to assurance of human rights** The right to a social order that assures all persons' human rights. Article 28 of UDHR.

Cf. human rights

**Right to asylum** A persecuted person has the right to asylum in other countries. Article 14 of UDHR.

Cf. asylum, refugee, displaced person

**Right to community participation** The right to community social life for full development. Article 29, UDHR.

Cf. community, society

**Right to cultural participation** The right to cultural life in a community. Article 27 of UDHR.

Cf. community, social group

**Right to education** The right to education. Proclaimed by Article 26 of UDHR.

Cf. Millennium Development Goals

**Right to equality** All people are equal. Proclaimed by Article 1 of UDHR.

Cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, rights fundamental

**Right to family privacy** The right to freedom from interference with privacy and family. Article 12 of UDHR.

Cf. family unit

**Right to free movement** Freedom to move in and out of a country. Article 13 of UDHR.

**Right to freedom from arbitrary arrest or exile** Everyone has the right to be free from arbitrary arrest or exile. Proclaimed by Article 9 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Cf. human rights, UDHR, displaced person, deportation

**Right to freedom from slavery** Everyone has the right to be free from slavery. Article 4, UDHR.

Cf. man-induced disaster

**Right to freedom from torture** Everyone has the right to be free from torture or degrading treatment. Article 5, UDHR.

Cf. torture

**Right to freedom of opinion** Freedom of opinion and information. Article 19, UDHR.

Cf. democracy

**Right to health** Right to health, well-being and adequate standard of living. Proclaimed by Article 25 of UDHR and the Constitution of WHO.

Cf. health, World Health Organization, Health for All

**Right to intervene** By international law, every State has absolute sovereignty over its national territory and its internal affairs, and no outside interference is tolerated. In view, however, of certain unacceptable

injustices and totalitarian acts carried out by dictatorial regimes, in 1991, UN Resolution 688 introduced the concept of the right to intervene on humanitarian grounds, e.g. in Iraq. (But so-called “humanitarian war” should never be used as a synonym.) Resolution 43–131 also recognizes the role of NGOs in providing humanitarian aid in “...food, medicine and health care”, e.g. in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Subsequent decisions have further codified the concept of the right to intervene, while some even extend this to a duty to intervene.

Sn: droit d’ingérence, R2P, right to protection

Cf. human rights, International Humanitarian Law, international aid, right to protection, sovereignty

**Right to life, liberty and security** Everyone has the right to life, liberty and personal security. Article 2 of UDHR.

**Right to own property** Everyone has the right to own property alone, or in association with others. Article 17 of UDHR.

**Right to social security** Every person has the right to social security. Article 22 of UDHR.

**Rights-based development** An essential approach to development that describes situations not simply in terms of human needs or of developmental requirements, but in terms of society’s obligations to respond to the inalienable rights of individuals, empowers people to demand justice as a right, not as charity, and gives communities a moral basis from which to claim international assistance when needed – K. Annan.

Cf. development, Millennium Development Goals



- Rights, inalienable, fundamental** The Preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares: All human beings are born with equal and inalienable rights and fundamental freedoms.  
Cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Rigours** Sensation of extreme chill, with severe chattering of teeth, shivers and gooseflesh indicative of lack of adequate body heat. Situation quite frequent in disasters and exposed refugee camps.
- Riot-control gases** Chemical harassing agents – CN, CS, DM – that are tear gases used for crowd dispersal and riot-armed control. Among the chemical weapons, their use is not prohibited.  
Cf. chemical weapons
- Rising tide** Time interval during which the tide current is directed approximately in the same way as the direction of the sea current.  
Sn: flood tide  
Cf. tide
- Risk** Expected loss of lives, persons injured, property damaged and economic activity disrupted, due to a particular hazard for a given area and a reference period. Risk is the product of hazard and vulnerability – UN.  
Cf. elements at risk, hazard, vulnerability, acceptable risk, risk management
- Risk analysis/assessment** The use of available data and information to identify hazards and to estimate the risk – ISO.  
Sn: risk assessment  
Cf. hazard, risk, risk evaluation
- Risk evaluation** On the basis of risk analysis, judgement as to whether a risk which is acceptable has been achieved in a given context based on the current values of society – ISO.  
Cf. hazard, risk, risk indicator, risk management
- Risk indicator** Descriptor that briefly denotes a risk that may cause a certain damage or disaster.  
Cf. risk map, disaster prevention
- Risk management** The application of management policies, techniques, methods and practices with the view to analyzing, evaluating, controlling and diminishing risk.  
Cf. hazard, risk
- Risk map** Cartographic representation of the types and degrees of hazard and of natural phenomena that may cause or contribute to a disaster.  
Cf. risk indicator, vulnerability study, zoning
- Risk reduction–non-structural** Besides structural measures to reduce risk, there are non-structural measures that include measures not involving physical construction that uses knowledge, practice or agreement to reduce risks and impacts, in particular through policies and laws, public awareness raising, training and education – UNISDR.  
Cf. disaster management, disaster mitigation, risk
- Risk transition (health)** In the health field, transition that is characterized by such patterns as reduction in infectious disease factors, e.g. undernutrition, unsafe water, poor sanitation, and an increase in risk factors for chronic diseases, e.g. overweight, alcohol abuse, tobacco.  
Cf. relative risk
- River basin** Region drained by a part or all of one or several rivers and their tributaries.  
Sn: catchment basin, watershed, hydrological basin, catchment area

**River blindness** Sn: onchocerciasis

**River forecast** The expected discharge of a river or stream, especially of the volume of flow, into a reservoir.

**Road traffic crash/injury** A collision or incident occurring on a public road, involving at least one moving vehicle; a road crash injury that results from a road traffic crash – WHO.

**Robben Island Guidelines** Reflecting the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, this set of humanitarian and practical guidelines constitutes a further tool for the prevention of torture and the treatment of prisoners.

Cf. torture, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, APT

**Rock slide** The sudden fall of rock masses and fragments and earth along a slope.

Sn: landslide, mudslide

**Rockefeller Foundation** Classical benevolent foundation since the beginning of the twentieth century. Active in a wide gamut of health, humanitarian and scientific endeavours. Was instrumental in the founding of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the Peking Union Medical College. It donated the land in New York on which the UN building now stands.

**Rocky Mountain spotted fever** Cf. rickettsial fever

**Rodenticide** A toxic chemical compound used for the elimination of rodents.

Cf. pesticide

**Roentgen** The unit of exposure to radiation.

**Roller** A form of violent coastal surge with a spiral curling movement of the wave crest.

**Roma people** A term of Sanskrit origin, meaning man, without any reference to Rome, Romania or Greece. A nomadic people without fixed national status or cultural and historic origin, which tends to stigmatize and marginalize them.

Cf. Tziganes, nomad, gypsies

**Rome Declaration** A proposal for a model of aid effectiveness in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and other development results, based on the guidelines for sector-wide approaches (SWAps) to health development.

**Rotary International** A worldwide organization composed of local and national "Rotarian" members representing professional and business community leaders who provide philanthropic services and funds in all walks of life, promoting goodwill and ethical standards. A worthwhile programme has been the fight for polio eradication.

**Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada** The official qualifying body of physicians and surgeons in Canada devoted to maintain high-quality care, research, studies, ethics and surgical specialization. Also promotes proficiency in essential surgery in developing countries and awards its Humanitarian Medal to deserving doctors working in poorer regions.

Cf. essential surgery, CIDA

**Rupture zone** In seismology, the line of fault breakage corresponding to a particular earthquake sequence.

Cf. fault, fracture

**Rural** Any area which is predominantly agricultural and farmland, intermingled with forest and vegetation and scattered with residences and other development, situated some distance

from cities and not dependent on industry.

Cf. urbanization, rural health

**Rural development** Study and applications of measures aiming, within a rural setting, at better utilization of natural resources in function of the needs of the population and within the framework of an environmental policy.

**Rural economy** Branch of economics and administration with emphasis on agricultural activity that studies the mechanisms of agricultural enterprise and the definition of the rural/agricultural sector within the wider economic context.

Cf. urbanization, industrial complex

**Rural health** The pattern of diseases and the available health care in rural areas under difficult circumstances. Most of the developing countries are serviced by this level of care, less expensive and more relevant to the population, based on the primary health-care concept and health-care centres to provide essential medicine and surgery, obstetrics, mother and child care, vaccinations, basic medicaments and health advice.

Cf. rural, primary health care

## S

**Safety at sea** The international laws and regulations enacted for the security of maritime navigation and the safety of life at sea.

Cf. Law of the Sea, International Maritime Organization

**Saffir-Simpson Scale of Cyclones** A scale that takes into account wind speed, the minimum pressure in the eye of the cyclone and the resulting damage. Expressed in 5 categories:

*Wind speed km/h*                      *Damage*

- |            |              |
|------------|--------------|
| 1. 118–153 | Minimal      |
| 2. 154–177 | Moderate     |
| 3. 178–209 | Extensive    |
| 4. 210–249 | Extreme      |
| 5. 250>    | Catastrophic |

Cf. hurricane, Beaufort scale, cyclone

**Sago** A starch extracted from the pith of the sago palm and used as a food-stuff in certain regions.

**Sahel** Vast area of semi-arid land bordering the Southern Sahara and covering all or part of Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Senegal, Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria and the Central African Republic. It is particularly subject to drought and desertification, which is also called Sahelization.

Cf. desertification, CILSS, semi-arid land

**Sahelian zone** Sn: Sahel

**Salmonellosis** Infection of the gastrointestinal tract caused by germs of the *Salmonella* group. It presents as a variety of diseases, the infection appearing as an acute gastroenteritis, enteric fever or a focal disease with or without septicaemia. It includes typhoid fever.

Cf. diarrhoeal diseases, carrier, food poisoning, typhoid fever

**SAMU Social International** Cf. International Social EMS

**Sand whirl** Sn: dust whirl

**Sanitary engineering** The theory, practice and techniques of medical, construction, hydraulic, town planning, waterworks and other principles applied to public health.

Cf. public health

**Sanitary improvement** Collection, evacuation and disposal, according to hygienic precepts, of rain water, waste water and solid wastes, with or without prior treatment.

Cf. waste water

**Sanitation** The application of measures and techniques aimed at ensuring and improving environmental health in a community, including the collection, evacuation and disposal of rain and used liquid and solid wastes, with or without prior treatment.

Sn: sanitary improvement

Cf. waste water, water treatment

**Sarcophagus** In ancient Greece, a stone coffin. In the thermonuclear industry, when a reactor explodes, melts down or fails beyond repair, it is totally cocooned or "mothballed" to prevent further escape of radiation, definitively covered in its entirety with very thick, heavily reinforced concrete, known as sarcophagus. This was done to the exploded reactor in Chernobyl.

**Sarin** A highly lethal nerve gas, used as a chemical weapon for terrorism or war. Notorious incident at Tokyo railway station in March 1995.

Cf. nerve gas, chemical warfare, terrorism, Geneva Protocol

**Sasakawa Foundation** Cf. Nippon Foundation

**Satellite** An object that orbits around a larger one. Artificial satellites orbiting the earth are now used for communications, monitoring weather, gathering hydrological, agricultural, seismological and other similar data and observing environmental phenomena. Also used for military purposes.

Sn: artificial satellite.

Cf. meteosat, probe, space station, World Weather Watch

**Savannah** Semi-arid region (dryness ratio 1 to 7) of grasslands across which shrubs and trees are scattered. The grasses are typically tall and

fast-growing that become dormant during and immediately after the short wet season. For the remainder of the year, they are brown and dry, particularly prone to extensive fire disasters.

Cf. desert, desertification, Sahel, semi-arid zone, vegetation fire

**Scabies** A highly transmissible parasitic skin infection characterized by intense itching, superficial burrows, especially between the fingers and in the skin folds, and secondary infection due to scratching. Can spread to entire families and communities in crowded conditions. Treatment is effective.

Sn: the itch

Cf. parasitic diseases

**Scavenging** The removal by precipitation or clouds of radiation particles or gases deposited in the atmosphere following a nuclear explosion.

Cf. rainout

**Schistosomiasis** A group of parasitic diseases prevalent in endemic form in many areas, caused by flukes (*Schistosoma*) and transmitted through freshwater snails as intermediate hosts.

Sn: bilharzia

Cf. endemic disease, parasitic disease

**Scrapie** The zoonotic disease of spongiform encephalopathy of sheep, caused by a prion.

Cf. bovine spongiform encephalopathy, prion, zoonosis

**Screening** The presumptive search for and identification of unrecognized disease, defect or disorder through the application of tests, examinations, questions and other rapid procedures.

**Scurvy** A severe nutritional disease due to deficiency of vitamin C (ascorbic

acid), characterized by bleeding gums, gingivitis, bone pain, swelling over the ends of the long bones and generally poor condition. It is easily preventable by eating citrus fruits and fresh fruits and vegetables.

Sn: hypovitaminosis C, ascorbic acid deficiency

**Sea bed** In the marine environment, the interface between the solid floor and the liquid overlay.

Sn: sea floor

Cf. estuary, hydrography, littoral

**Sea conditions** An assessment of the agitation of the surface of the sea. The state of the sea is expressed numerically by the Douglas scale or by the height of the waves.

**Sea floor** Sn: sea bed

**Sea level** The actual level of the sea constantly changes; the mean level at a stable place is determined by averaging all the levels over a given period.

Cf. swell, tide, wave

**Sea surge** A rise in sea level that results in the inundation of coastline areas. These phenomena are caused by the movements of the ocean, sea currents, winds and major storms – OFDA.

**Search and rescue/SAR** The extensive system using air, sea, land and other means employed to look for, locate, rescue and recover disaster victims and apply the necessary emergency aid and treatment. INSARAG, the International Rescue Advisory Group, coordinates these efforts worldwide.

Cf. first aid, rescue, survival chain, SAR

**Season** In meteorology, the climatic division of the year into periodic sections, varying according to the latitude. In middle latitudes, the division

corresponds to the farming year; in the northern and southern hemisphere, the divisions are autumn, winter, spring, summer. In the tropics, the division into seasons is usually made in terms of rainfall or, in places, of wind direction, thus, in India, dry season or rainy season, or “north-east monsoon” and “south-west monsoon”. In the continental subtropical regions, the seasons are usually defined in terms of temperature (cold or hot season) or rainfall (dry or rainy season) or both.

**Secondary hazard** An emergency or hazard that follows or is caused by another hazard or disaster, e.g. epidemic following famine, fires following an earthquake, landslides after floods, malnutrition after drought, avalanche after volcanic eruption (Nevado del Ruiz), mass blindness after chemical explosion (Bhopal), extensive goitre and cancer after nuclear accident (Chernobyl)

Cf. fallout, hazard

**Secondary healthcare facility** Diseases that cannot be managed at the peripheral primary health-care level are referred to a secondary health-care facility which is more specialized and can meet more advanced diagnostic and therapeutic needs, such as radiography, general surgery, complicated pregnancy, etc., by trained staff. More complicated and specialized conditions are referred to a tertiary health-care centre.

Cf. tertiary health care, primary health care

**Sector-wide approach to health development (SWAp)** An important element of the international efforts to harmonize and align development assistance around national policies

and strategies. Built on the premise that all significant funding for the sector supports a single sector policy and expenditure programme, under government leadership, adopting common approaches across the sector and progressing towards relying on government procedures to disburse and account for all funds – WHO.

Cf. Rome Declaration, Millennium Development Goals

**Seiche** A free or standing wave oscillation of the surface of water in an enclosed basin that is initiated by local atmospheric changes, tidal currents or earthquakes – OFDA.

**Seism** From the Greek earthquake. Relating to, pertaining to, connected with or produced by an earthquake. Seismicity denotes the frequency of earthquakes in a given area.

Sn: earthquake

Cf. seismograph, seismoscope, Richter scale, Mercalli scale

**Seismic epicentre** Cf. epicentre

**Seismic precursor** Sn: foreshock

**Seismic sea wave** Ocean wave caused by undersea earthquakes, volcanoes or land movements. Tsunami.

Cf. earthquake, tsunami, volcano

**Seismic sounding** Definition of the position of submarine plates by measuring the time interval that separates the emission of seismic signals and their rebound after reflection and/or refraction in the variable terrain and onto the sounding reflectors.

Cf. seismograph, sliding fault

**Seismograph** A highly sensitive instrument for recording the time, amplitude and duration of vibratory movements of the ground, especially earthquakes.

Cf. earthquake, Mercalli scale, Richter scale, seismoscope

**Seismoscope** An instrument which indicates only the occurrence of an earthquake, without permanently recording it as opposed to the seismograph.

Cf. seismograph

**Self-immolation** Immolation is sacrifice. Committing suicide by self-destruction, usually by fire, in a public place, is a not uncommon way of attracting attention to a cause, ideal or struggle. Examples: Prague, Tunis.

Cf. suicide bomb, kamikaze

**Sellafield** Nuclear waste reprocessing plant in England built to recycle the unused uranium 235 and plutonium 239 from nuclear industry into fuel for nuclear reactors. Highly controversial due to the risks of very serious radioactive contamination. Suffered five radioactive incidents of INES level 4 in 1955 and 1979.

Cf. nuclear reactor, nuclear waste, radioactive contamination, atom bomb, Windscale, La Hague, Three Mile Island, International Nuclear Event Scale

**Semaphore** Post or apparatus for sending signals by day or night through a system of oscillating arms, lanterns or flags. Verb to signal. In Italy, it means traffic lights.

**Semi-arid zone** Zone, bordering an arid region, in which the precipitation is insufficient (dryness ratio 1 to 7) to maintain agriculture and where artificial irrigation is needed if cultivation is to be carried out. Particularly prone to extensive fire disasters.

Cf. desert, desertification, Sahel, savannah

**Semi-permanent anticyclone** Region where high pressures predominate during about half of the year and

where an anticyclone appears on the corresponding seasonal mean pressure chart.

Cf. anticyclone

**September 11, 2001 / 9/11** On 11 September 2001, a coordinated series of catastrophic terrorist suicidal attacks using hijacked civilian aircraft smashed against and totally destroyed the Twin Towers of the New York Trade Centre, and partly damaged the Pentagon, causing immense destruction, some 3,000 dead and over 6,000 injured. The worst foreign attack on US soil to date. The American and worldwide responses have caused significant revisions in national and international defence strategies, psychological and political perceptions of peace, alliances, travel regulations, terrorist suppression and subsequent conflicts.

Sn: popularly known as 9/11

Cf. terrorism, man-made disaster

**Septic tank** A method of static sewage disposal based on water filtrage through an earthen pit, where there is no sewer canalization.

**Serum** The liquid part of blood plasma that contains all the components of blood except the clotting factor fibrinogen.

**Serum hepatitis** Cf. viral hepatitis B

**Services** An activity or its result that is of value to individuals and to society, but which does not consist of economic goods or of tangible products. Examples: public transport, medical service, education, city lighting.

### Settlement

1. Introduction, in a given place, of new facilities, such as buildings, factories, schools, according to a plan, called a settlement or development plan.
2. Introduction, in a given site, of a population, where it establishes and develops, according to a resettlement plan.

**Severe weather threat** An indicator, the severe weather threat index – SWEAT – is used to predict tornadoes and thunderstorms – WMO.

**Seveso** A village near Milan, Italy, site of a chemical plant which, in July 1976, accidentally discharged the toxic compound dioxin, causing severe illness and toxic manifestations among the surrounding population, with extensive environmental damage. Subject of EU Directive 501/82 which sets regulations and emergency plans for any industrial activity that may be “a major accident hazard”.

Cf. dioxin, technological disaster, toxicological disaster

**Sewage/Sewerage** A community's used water system, carrying washed-up material, domestic, communal and industrial, together with any rain and surface water. The technical aggregate of collecting pipes, conduits and pumping stations is called sewerage. A critical problem in disasters and refugee camps.

**Sexual abuse** An act forcibly performed by a person of trust and responsibility against a vulnerable person, e.g. a child. It is a criminal act punishable by law.

**Sexual harassment** Social, psychological or physical pressure exerted by a person of trust, authority or confidence on a weaker person of dependence or lower rank, with the aim of winning sexual favours.

**Sexual violence** Any unconsented sexual act, or act with sexual connotation, attempt to coerce, provoke or obtain a sexual act or an act to use a person for sexual traffic or exploitation, regardless of the relationship of the persons concerned and in any setting. Any sexual act on a minor.

Cf. violence against women



**Sexually transmitted diseases** Diseases transmitted by sexual contact constitute the most common communicable diseases in the world. Some are specific, others are non-specific, and include gonorrhoea, syphilis, genital warts, AIDS, urethritis, trichomoniasis, candidiasis, etc.

Sn: venereal disease, STD, VD

**Shaman/Shamanism** Originally a primitive religion of the Ural-Altai people of Siberia, in which all good and evil in life is believed to be caused by spirits. Shaman priests or spiritual medicine-men can intervene (e.g. as healers), being the initiated intermediaries between the common people and the unseen world of spirits. – Skil Da Gatkun

Cf. totemism, traditional medicine, aborigine

**Shanty town** Disorderly conglomeration of improvised dwellings with minimal or absent public services, consisting of unsanitary shacks, constructed with reclaimed materials, often built in and contributing to an unsanitary environment. Called favela in South America.

Cf. slum dwelling, favela

**Sharia** Arabic term for the body of Islamic law based on the Quran and on the practices undertaken or approved by the Prophet and established as legally binding precedents.

Cf. fatwa

**Shear** The difference in the velocity of the wind at various altitudes.

**Shear wall** A structural element that resists lateral forces – UNDR0.

**Shelter** The necessary, essential physical cover and protection in the form of tents, sheeting, shacks, for disaster victims or displaced persons who have lost access to their normal homes or habitations and who must have some

defence against the rain, snow, wind, cold, heat, etc., and maintain some privacy. Food, water, shelter are the main immediate needs of people in disaster. In disaster and refugee situations, the basic requirement is 3.5 sq. metres per person. For a collectivity, 30 sq. m. are needed.

Cf. sheltering, shelter needs, essential bodily needs

**Shelter needs** Essential covered shelter space needed in disaster situations is 3.5–5.5 m<sup>2</sup> per person depending on climatic conditions.

Cf. shelter, essential bodily needs

**Sheltering** Action that consists of providing asylum or provisional lodgings to an individual or group.

**Shigellosis** Cf. bacillary dysentery

**Shock** Medicine: An acute condition in which the flow of blood to the tissues and the output of the heart are not adequate to sustain the body's normal functions and may lead to death unless emergency measures are taken.

Cf. basic life support, survival chain

Psychology: The extreme degree of stress, panic or anxiety attack that certain individuals may present in an emergency or disaster. See also post-traumatic stress disorder.

**Shock wave** A critical point in the interface between two waves when the velocity, and consequently the pressure and density, jumps to new values, with the decompression of air at high speeds, and occurring naturally in space – or when man-made supersonic objects transverse it – at a speed higher than the speed of sound.

**Shore profile** The line of the coast formed by the constant accumulating and abrasive action of the waves.

Cf. wave, littoral

**Sievert (Sv)** Unit of radiation dose. Has replaced the rem (1 Sv=100 rem).

Symbol Sv. For harmful radiation exposure doses in millisieverts (mSv), see radiation exposure risks.

**Siting** Cf. settlement

**Size of earthquake** Vernacular term, the correct designation is magnitude of the earthquake.

Cf. Richter scale

**Skimmed milk powder** Sn: dried skimmed milk, DSM

**Slant distance** In nuclear explosion, the distance from a given point on the surface of the earth to a point where the explosion occurs.

**Sleeping sickness** A chronic, often fatal sickness in tropical Africa transmitted by the tsetse fly. Another variant is common in South America, where it is known as Chagas' disease.

Sn: Chagas' disease, African trypanosomiasis

**Sliding fault** Subvertical shearing plane along which two plates of lithosphere or two active segments of oceanic ridge slide upon each other.

Sn: transform fault

Cf. earthquake, oceanic ridge, seismic sounding

**Slow disaster** Disaster, usually natural, the beginnings of which are slow, sometimes imperceptible until the full effect is felt, as in poor crops leading to drought and famine.

Sn: creeping disaster

Cf. disaster, natural disaster, sudden impact disaster

**Slum** Cf. shanty town, slum dwelling

**Slum dwelling** Lodgings that, by their poor construction, conditions of occupation, lack of upkeep and siting, do not meet the needs of comfort and sanitation and contribute to social and health deprivation.

Sn: shanty town, slum, favela

**Smallpox** A highly contagious lethal disease caused by the *vaccinia* group of viruses, transmitted from person to person. It was the first disease for which vaccination was professionally applied (1721) and the first to have been totally eradicated (since 1977) through the programme of WHO.

Sn: variola major and minor

Cf. immunization, vaccination, World Health Organization.

**Smoke yield** The mass of smoke produced per gram of material burnt.

**SMS/GOES Satellites** Synchronous Meteorological Satellites/Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites. Satellites orbiting over the equator at the same rate as the earth's rotation and providing to ground receiving stations images of visible and infrared portions of the spectrum for the same area every 30 min – UNDRO.

**Social accountability** Society: The responsibility of serving society for the benefit of the population it is derived from.

Health: In the field of health, the social accountability of medical schools can be defined as the obligation to direct education, research and service activities towards addressing the priority health concerns of the country, region and/or nation they have a mandate to serve – WHO.

**Social behaviour** The aggregate actions and reactions of a person or group when relating to a given social environment and which can be objectively observed.

**Social cost** The total monetary and communal cost or health burden to society due to any kind of economic activity, e.g. asbestos mining causing long-term pulmonary impairment.

**Social group** Groups of individuals, within a population, who share one or several characteristics that distinguish them sociologically. Examples: students, retirees, handicapped.

**Social indicators** Different indices used for the assessment of the socio-economic situation of a society. Examples: infantile mortality rates, green spaces per inhabitant, density of motor traffic, literacy rates.

Cf. society

**Social media/Social network** A recent worldwide development in electronic social networking whereby an online service, web or site focuses on establishing social data and links among people who share common interests or activities and who interact via the Internet, Twitter, Facebook or similar media. Such quick independent and personal communications can be of great importance in emergencies, as was the case in the 2011 Arab uprisings. It can also be used for harmful purposes.

**Societal functions in disasters** Disasters are liable to disrupt most basic social facilities and societal functions. For details Cf. basic societal functions.

**Society** The complex organization of a population group sharing a common culture, institutional resources and obeying common laws. A natural disaster that does not hit man and his society remains a mere geological or meteorological phenomenon.

**Society for International Development/SID** Explores and promotes dialogue and searches for alternative paths of social transformation for sustainable and just development.

Partner in health with WHO.

**Society for Medical Care of Chemical War Victims** A medical and social

organization in Tehran for the immediate and subsequent care of victims of chemical weapons used in the 1987 Iran-Iraq war.

Cf. chemical weapons

**Socio-economic survey** Enquiry based on social and economic factors, comprising the structure of the family, social attitudes, cultural activities, profession, regular or seasonal employment, revenue, spending power, level of education, size of enterprise, agriculture, etc.

Cf. social indicators

**Soil** The superficial loose covering of the earth's crust, composed of the breakdown, from weathering, of the bedrock and of the decomposition of organic matter under the physical, chemical and biological action of the environment.

**Soil erosion** Degradation of the soil through carrying away by wind or water of soil necessary for the forests, food and agriculture. Often caused by mismanagement of the land – a natural and man-made disaster.

Cf. desertification, anthropic erosion

**Soil-transmitted helminthiasis** Intestinal worm infections found worldwide under poor conditions that in children cause anaemia, stunted growth, avitaminosis A, malnutrition.

A neglected disease.

Cf. helminthiasis

**Solfatara** A vent in a volcano from which only gases are emitted.

Cf. volcano

**Somatic cells** All cells of the body other than germ cells.

**Sorghum** Common tropical cereal plant grown for grain and fodder.

**Source** Emergence of underground water at a point on the surface of the ground.

Sn: spring

**Source of infection** Any organism, substance, material or object which transmits an infectious agent to a host.

Cf. communicable disease, infection

**Sovereignty** The primary characteristic of a State which is subordinate to no other State is equal to all others within the United Nations and enjoys authority within its borders and total independence recognized by all States.

Cf. United Nations, right to intervene

**Soya-fortified bulghur** Food mixture consisting of:

85% bulghur wheat, cracked

15% soya grits, defatted, toasted

Sn: SFB

Cf. food mixtures, bulghur

**Soya-fortified cornmeal** Food mixture consisting of:

85% cornmeal, degermed

15% soya grits, defatted, toasted.

Sn: SFCM

Cf. food mixtures

**Soya-fortified sorghum grits** Sorghum preparation enriched with soya, used for supplementary feeding.

Sn: SFSG

Cf. food mixtures, sorghum, supplementary feeding

**Space débris** The remains of missiles, spacecraft, space exploration stations, probes and military devices left in space after their use or still in operation, presenting an increasing space hazard.

Cf. arsenalization of space

**Space probe** Uninhabited device for the exploration of space beyond the earth's gravity.

Cf. probe, satellite, World Meteorological Organization

**Space station** Satellite that does not have its autonomous means of propulsion (or has limited such capacity), placed in space to ensure a mission of a certain length of time.

Cf. satellite

**Sphere Project, The** The programme of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, launched in 1997, which has developed the Humanitarian Charter, a set of universal minimum standards and indicators for effective assistance in humanitarian disaster response, published as a useful guide.

Cf. International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, Humanitarian Charter, emergency health kit of WHO, standards, indicators

**Spill** Sn: overspill

**Spitak earthquake 1988** The strongest earthquake in the region since historical times, in spite of this Caucasian zone being known as seismic. On 7 December 1988, the Spitak region of Armenia (then in the Soviet Union) was hit disastrously, over 25,000 dead, the city completely destroyed, particularly due to poor construction and bad infrastructure. Outpouring of international solidarity: 111 nations provided aid, and despite Cold War animosity, the Soviet Union exceptionally asked for US assistance, the first since the end of World War II. The new Republic of Armenia still not fully recovered.

Cf. earthquake, FAR

**Spontaneous combustion** Catching fire from self-heating, as in natural wildfires, without any outside source of heat being applied.

**Spring** Sn: source

**Squall** A sudden strong wind of short duration that stands out of the mean velocity of its mainstream.

Sn: gust

**Stampede** An irrational rush of flight of a group in panic, with risk of trampling, crush and asphyxiation.

Cf. panic

**Standard of living** The aggregate of goods and services available or accessible to an individual, group or nation, depending on its purchasing power.

Cf. purchasing power

**Standards/Indicators** In humanitarian assistance, standards are the minimum level to be attained to meet the needs of life with dignity, while indicators are signals that show whether such standards have been attained – Sphere Project.

Cf. Sphere Project

**Staple food** The most commonly or regularly eaten food in a country or community and which forms the mainstay of the total calorie supply, especially in the poorer populations and at times of food shortage. When referring to staple food, the actual food product must be mentioned.

Cf. conventional food, food

**Star wars** Sn: Strategic defence initiative

Cf. cyberwar

**Starvation** The state resulting from extreme privation of food or of drastic reduction in food intake over a long period of time, leading to severe physiological, functional, behavioural, clinical and morphological disturbances.

Cf. famine, slow disaster, undernutrition

**Stateless** A person who is not officially recognized to have formal, statutory identity with a State, a country or nationality. May be due to expulsion from the country, non-issuance of nationality documents or passport by a conquering power, to discrimination, depriving one of his citizenship, or more rarely, upon voluntary exile, relinquishing or refusal. This is a grave situation in an interdependent world. According to Article 15 of the

UDHR, everyone has the right to a nationality and the right to not being arbitrarily deprived of it.

Cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Nansen passport, refugee, displaced person, apatriote

**Statutory refugee** Person recognized as a refugee according to the international accords prior to the 1951 Convention on the status of refugees, as defined by Article I.A of that Convention.

Sn: de jure refugee

Cf. refuge

**Sterilization**

1. Technique(s) aiming at destroying all living microorganisms.
2. Operation or technique aiming at preventing the reproduction of living organisms.
3. Disinfection.

Cf. decontamination

**Sternal punch** A manoeuvre in emergency cardiac resuscitation, when the person is pulseless. It consists of delivering a controlled blow with the clenched fist to the base of the sternum. If not successful, it must be followed by external cardiac massage.

**Stigma** An unjustified negative imputation to a person's or community's reputation or racial characteristics, a shame or a stain of disgrace, closely leading to discrimination and racism.

Cf. discrimination, race, facies

**Stochastic modelling** A method of modelling which includes elements of probability or chance. In mathematics, stochastic means pertaining to random variables.

Cf. damage probability

**Stockholm International Peace Research Institute/SIPRI** Very important Swedish institution for studying peace mechanisms, promoting peace, facilitating arbitration, providing peace personnel for

the UN and promoting international understanding.

**Stockholm syndrome** A personal psychological reconditioning through which, after initial aversion and animosity, a victim or detainee develops compassion, loyalty or even love towards his/her captor or prison guard.

**Stockpile**

1. To store.
2. A place or storehouse where material, medicines and other supplies needed in disaster are kept under good conditions for emergency relief. Example: UN warehouse in Italy, UNIPAC in Copenhagen.
3. In an arms race, the accumulation and storing of nuclear weapons.
4. The stored supplies.

Cf. emergency supplies, supplies

**Storm** Strong wind with a speed of 44–50 knots. (Force 10 on the Beaufort scale).

The atmospheric disturbance can range from a tornado (1 km across) to tropical cyclones (2,000–3,000 km across).

Cf. Beaufort scale, wind

**Storm surge** A sudden and often catastrophic rise in the level of the sea as a result of a combination of high winds and low atmospheric pressure.

Cf. tidal wave, storm wave

**Storm warning** Meteorological message intended to warn those concerned of the actual or expected occurrence of high winds, of Beaufort force 10 or 11, over a specified area.

Cf. cyclone warning, gale warning, hurricane warning, typhoon warning

**Strategic Arms Limitation and Reduction Treaty (START)** Originally a treaty (START I) negotiated during the Cold War with the aim of reducing the strategic nuclear arms stockpiles of the superpowers, signed in

1991. Subsequently renegotiated between the United States and Russia, START-II came into force on 5 February 2011, each pledging to lower their ceiling of 2,200 nuclear strategic warheads to 1,550 and the nuclear ballistic missiles to 700. The inspection mechanisms remain as those of 1991.

Cf. Strategic defence initiative, Non-Proliferation Treaty, Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty – SALT.

**Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT)** Negotiations on the limitation of strategic nuclear arms, signed in 1972, but not ratified.

Cf. Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty – START.

**Strategic Defence Initiative** The space-based system of nuclear weaponry proposed by the United States as a national defensive initiative. Popularly known as Star Wars.

Cf. arms race, cyberwar, START, anti-missile shield, arsenalization of space

**Stratosphere** The zone of atmospheric air, above the troposphere, between 10 and 50 km altitude, in which the temperature changes very little with height.

Cf. atmosphere

**Stratovolcano** Volcanic complex composed of the piling up of lava flows and of pyroclastic beds.

Cf. lava flow, volcano

**Stratus cloud**

1. A low cloud varying in altitude, between 0 and 2,000 m.
2. A generally grey cloud layer, with uniform base, which may give drizzle, ice or snow.

**Stress** Health: Any strain, anxiety, psychological shock or excessive pressure that disturbs the smooth functioning of a person or organism

(and by extension of a group).  
Disasters are stressful events.

Cf. panic, post-traumatic stress disorder

**Physiology:** The normal response of the body to increased demands.

**Physics:** The force per unit area acting on a material and causing a change in its dimension. Strain.

**Stripping** Sn: denudation

**Stupor** Marked diminution or absence of voluntary movements or response to external stimuli, the person being neither unconscious nor asleep. Dissociative stupor is a form caused by a recent stressful event, such as a disaster, or destabilizing social problem.

Cf. post-traumatic stress disorder, panic, shock

**Stuxnet** The name of a secret military informatics computer virus that can disable military installations. In 2010, it invaded and seriously damaged the computerized uranium enriching centrifuge system at the Nantaz nuclear facility.

Cf. cyberwar, hacking, virus

**Subsidence** Collapse of a land surface area due to underlying removal of earth or overmining.

**Subtropical anticyclone** Anticyclone of the subtropical high pressure regions.

Cf. anticyclone

**Sudden-impact natural disaster** A natural disaster of unexpected (e.g. earthquake) or very quick onset (e.g. cyclone) that usually causes many injuries and deaths, extensive environmental damage and socio-economic upheaval, necessitating major immediate response. Such sudden-impact emergencies may be triggered by earthquakes, cyclones, hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, snowstorms,

blizzards, avalanches, landslides, flash floods, fires, volcanic eruptions.

(The opposite would be a slow-impact, creeping disaster, e.g. drought leading to famine.)

Cf. natural disaster, slow disaster

**Suicide bomber/Suicide attack** A person who, for any special reason, causes or ideal carries out an attack directly against a chosen target, using oneself as the explosive medium by carrying the bomb, grenade or other explosive device dissimulated on the body and dying in the explosion thus created.

Cf. self-immolation, kamikaze

**Summer monsoon** Monsoon of oceanic origin that blows in the summer.

Cf. winter monsoon

**Superfire** The result of merging firestorms and conflagrations caused by the phenomena created by the explosion of a nuclear weapon.

Cf. conflagration, firestorm, nuclear war, catastrophic fires

**Supplementary feeding programme/SFP** Programme that aims at correcting nutritional deficiencies by providing certain population groups with nutrients and appropriate meals or snacks, served in addition to their regular meals. This service is usually free or at low cost.

Cf. food aid, food mixtures

**Supplies** Cf. stockpile, SUMA

**Surface water** Water flowing or stagnating on the surface of the ground.

**Surge** Cf. wave

**Surgeons OverSeas/SOS** SOS is the operational programme of the Society of Humanitarian Surgeons, New York, an NGO of surgeons who carry out training and surgical operations in developing and poor countries on a voluntary, humanitarian basis.



Cf. essential surgery

**Surgical conditions** Conditions that include any pathology for which an externally applied invasive procedure may provide treatment, cure or palliation. Some conditions may not require incision, e.g. setting of a fracture, and modern techniques are becoming increasingly non-invasive. In poorer countries, at least the services of essential surgery must be provided within primary health care.

**Surveillance** System that permits the continuous observation, measurement and evaluation of the progress of a process or phenomenon with the view to taking corrective measures. Example: surveillance of the water quality of a river, of air pollution, of health or a cardiac patient.

Sn: monitoring

**Survival chain** In emergency and critical medicine, the four links in the chain essential for the survival of the victim are (1) early access, to get help, immediate response and call for EMS; (2) early CPR to buy time; cardiopulmonary resuscitation to keep oxygenated blood flowing to the brain until additional help arrives; (3) early defibrillation, to “restart” the heart with an automatic defibrillator and (4) early ACLS, providing advanced cardiac life support with airway clearance, lung ventilation cardiac therapy and necessary monitoring – Laerdal.

Cf. advanced cardiac life support, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, emergency medical services, lifelines, defibrillator

**Susceptible case** Person vulnerable to infection or other disease.

Sn: vulnerable person

**Suspect case** A case or person whose medical history or symptoms suggest

that he may have, or may be developing or carrying, an infection.

Cf. carrier, incubation period

**Sustainable development** Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs – WCED.

Decisions, processes and actions that meet present needs without creating undue burden to society or the environment and without undermining the ability of coming generations to meet and sustain their own needs.

Cf. development, economic development, primary health care, health, WCED, MDG

**Sustainable elimination** Industrial products and material developments require that all such improvements and sustainability must also foresee and contain an inbuilt mechanism to ensure the elimination of such material at the end of its productive span, without causing damage to the environment and without harm to the population in the current and subsequent years. The nuclear industry, for instance, cannot guarantee such elimination and therefore falls short of the needed safety imperative.

Cf. sustainable development, nuclear safety, Chernobyl, Fukushima

**Swedish International Development Authority/SIDA** Commonly known by its acronym SIDA, very important governmental department for international aid for development and in disasters, humanitarian support and cooperation with UN agencies. (Not to confuse with CIDA.)

**Swell** In a catchment area or watershed, the swelling of a stream or water course to levels above normal, following heavy precipitation and snow thaw.

Cf. catchment area

**Swiss Aid/Swissaid** Formally the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), important government-based humanitarian and development organization that provides significant aid in disasters and supports and promotes humanitarian action in a variety of ways.

**Syngism** The cumulative interaction of several factors resulting in a combined effect that becomes greater than the sum of the separate individual effects. Example: malnutrition, plus pregnancy, plus cold temperature have an aggregate effect which is more serious than any of the three conditions separately. Similarly with compound disasters.

**Syphilis** A contagious disease present worldwide, transmitted mainly but not exclusively by sexual contact, caused by the *Treponema pallidum* and resulting in a specific serological reaction (revealed by the Wassermann test).

Cf. sexually transmitted diseases

## T

**Taboo** A prohibition, an unacceptable thing, belief or behaviour according to sacred laws or tribal customs.

**Taeniasis** Parasitic infection, often symptom-free, of the intestinal tract due to beef tapeworm (*Taenia saginata*), pork tapeworm (*T. solium*) or fish tapeworm (*Diphyllobothrium latum*), acquired mainly through eating insufficiently cooked meat.

Sn: tapeworm infection  
also teniasis

Cf. parasitic diseases

**Tapeworm** Cf. taeniasis

**Tar ball** Concretion of petroleum following oil slicks. The spilled oil spreads and breaks into smaller patches, which mix with water and emulsify into a sticky substance, under the influence of wind and waves becoming tar balls that can travel great distances, spreading the pollution. Example: the Gulf of Mexico BP oil disaster.

Cf. oil spill

**Target** The outcome of a plan or action to be attained that should be possible to verify objectively.

**Taro** A tropical plant, the root of which is used as food, particularly in the Pacific Islands.

Cf. conventional food, staple food

**Teaching Eye Surgery Foundation** TES is an NGO active in teaching and practising affordable eye surgery mainly in the Indian Ocean area and Mauritius.

Cf. mercy ships.

**Tear gas/Tear bomb** A variety of gases, including pepper sprays, which are temporarily incapacitating but not lethal, used by police in riot control. Also used by lawless individuals in attacking citizens. Unlike war gases, these gases are usually not prohibited.

Cf. incapacitating agent, riot control

**Technical assistance** The system of providing assistance, on a bilateral or multilateral basis, through technicians, experts, teachers or equipment, to a developing country.

Sn: technical cooperation (now the preferred term)

Cf. international assistance, bilateral cooperation

**Technical cooperation** The provision by a technically advanced country,

on a bilateral or multilateral basis, of technicians, experts, know-how and equipment, to a country that needs them in order to ensure its social and economic development.

Sn: technical assistance

Cf. development, international assistance, TCDC, technology transfer

**Technical cooperation among developing countries/TCDC** The promotion of technical cooperation not from developed to developing country, but between developing countries, for the development of both.

Sn: TCDC

Cf. development, technical cooperation, technology transfer

**Technological disaster** Man-made disaster due to a sudden or slow mechanical breakdown, technical fault, design error, mistake or involuntary or voluntary human acts that constitute a technological hazard and which cause destruction, death, pollution and environmental damage.

Cf. disaster, man-made disaster, major technological accident, human failure

**Technology enabled knowledge translation/TEKT** An advanced system using the technical advantages and connectivity of modern information and communication technologies to enable and support evidence-based health knowledge into routine health protection for the overall improvement of health and health delivery – K. Ho.

Cf. telematics, telemedicine

**Technology transfer** Transmission from a technologically developed country to one less advanced in economic, industrial or other techniques, of information, knowledge, equipment and training facilities,

with the view to strengthening a particularly weak sector or promoting general development in the receiving country.

Cf. international assistance, technical cooperation, appropriate technology

**Tectonic earthquake** Cf. plate tectonics, earthquake

**Telecommunication** Transmission, emission or reception at a distance, of signs, signals, messages, imagery, sounds or any other information by wire, radio, laser, optics, satellite, Internet or other system.

Cf. International Telecommunication Union, social network

**Telematics/Telehealth/Telemedicine** Also health telematics, telemedicine, telehealth. Telecommunications for health-related activities, services, systems, carried out over a distance by means of information and communication technologies, for the purposes of global health promotion, disease control and health care, as well as education, management and research for health – WHO.

Sn: eHealth

Telematic techniques can also be applied in many other fields.

**Telemedicine** Cf. telematics/telehealth

**Telemetry** The measuring of distances, obtained by a stationary receiving station through acoustical, optical and radio-electric procedures.

**Telenursing** The use of telecommunications and telemedicine facilities for nursing care.

Cf. telematics, telemedicine

**Telesurgery** The use of telematic technology for on-site computer aided surgery, remote operations and robotic surgery. Also e-Surgery.

Cf. telematics, surgical procedures, essential surgery

**Temperature inversion** Sudden increase in the vertical gradient of temperature in the atmosphere.

Cf. atmosphere, stratosphere

**Ten-ninety gap/The 10/90 disequilibrium** Huge sums, amounting to billions of dollars, are spent on health and health research. However, less than 10% of these are devoted to diseases or conditions that account for 90% of the global diseases or to conditions that account for 90% of the global disease burden, a misallocation that reveals and widens the gap between the healthy and the sick and between the developed and developing countries – WHO.

Cf. burden of disease, technology transfer, orphan diseases

**Tephra** Ashes and fragments of pyroclastic material ejected by the explosion of volcanic bombs.

Cf. ash, volcano

**Terracing** Horizontal cuts, benches or embankments made along hillsides to reduce erosion, improve cropping, hold back run-off, improve rain infiltration or other conservation function – OFDA.

**Terrestrial longitude** Cf. geographic longitude

**Territorial asylum** Temporary or permanent admission by a State, on its territory, given to a refugee or asylum seeker.

Cf. asylum, diplomatic asylum, refugee

**Terrorism** Term referring to various kinds of criminal acts of violence, especially against non-combat civilians, such as bombing, setting fire, abducting, poisoning, intimidating, hijacking, killing and other forms of illegal occult actions, with the aim of creating terror, panic or submission

among the public, state or individuals. Some forms are bioterrorism, environmental terrorism, political terrorism.

A UN definition is any act by which pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person with such purposes as obtaining from him/her or third person information or a confession, punishing him/her for an act he/she or third person is suspected of having committed or intimidating them.

Cf. arson, hijacking, kleptocracy, piracy, mafia, bioterrorism, booby trap

**Tertiary health care** The superior level of health-care facilities where highly complicated and specialized conditions that cannot be treated at the general secondary health-care level are referred to for study and treatment.

Cf. primary health care, secondary health care

**Tetanus** A non-epidemic, highly toxigenic, often fatal disease, due to the contamination of wounds or burns or the newborn's umbilicus with *Clostridium tetani* or its spores. Vaccination protects and is included in the WHO programme of immunization.

Cf. Expanded Programme on Immunization

**Thalidomide** A drug that, given to women during pregnancy, in the 1960s, caused a worldwide pharmaceutical disaster, with thousands of babies born with serious body defects, flippers instead of limbs and other abnormalities. Prior unbiased research is always essential to avoid such disasters.

Cf. technological disaster, bioethics

**The Hunger Project** An international NGO committed to the elimination of hunger in the world, particularly in the developing countries and in difficult situations. It promotes nutritional studies and agricultural projects and searches for solutions. It is not a relief organization.

Cf. hunger, aridity, drought, famine, Food and Agriculture Organization

**Thermal agent disaster** Disaster causing severe losses in human lives and material goods as a result of massive heat production. It indicates the relationship between the cause of the event (massive heat production) and its consequences on man and the material environment, as a mathematical expression of the damage caused, i.e. the number of dead and injured and the extent of material damage – Masellis.

Cf. burn disaster, burn, burn centre

**Thermograph** Thermometer fitted with a device for continuously recording the temperature chronologically on a rotating graph.

**Thermonuclear bomb** A nuclear weapon in which a part of the explosive power results from fusion reactions, as in the hydrogen bomb.

Sn: hydrogen bomb, fusion bomb

Cf. atomic bomb, fission bomb, nuclear war

**Third World** Term originally used during the Cold War for the politically non-aligned countries of the world (Group of 77) with allegiance neither to the West nor to the Communist bloc. The term has extended to refer generally to the lower-middle income countries. It is becoming meaningless.

**Threatened epidemic** A situation in which an epidemic of a specific disease may be reasonably anticipated because of (a) the existence of a

susceptible population, or (b) the presence or impending introduction of a disease agent and (c) circumstances, e.g. contaminated water supply, that make such transmission possible – Brès.

Sn: potential epidemic

Cf. epidemic, WHO epidemic alert degrees

**Three Mile Island accident** A place near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, USA, site of a nuclear reactor which failed during mechanical handling, on 28 March 1979, causing the most serious nuclear industry accident up to that date, with partial meltdown of fuel rods and some release of radioactive gases. Accident rated as level 5 on the INES scale. Commonly referred to as TMI.

Cf. Chernobyl, Fukushima, nuclear reactor, technological disaster, International Nuclear Event Scale

**Threshold** A limit below which a reaction does not occur. A level below which danger increases.

In disease statistics, critical threshold denotes reduction of health facilities below which the crude mortality rate increases.

**Threshold State** A country considered to have a high potential of becoming a nuclear-weapon State either because of its scientific, technical and economic development, e.g. Brazil, or due to its political and military motives, e.g. North Korea. South Africa has voluntarily discontinued its threshold status.

Cf. nuclear war

**Thunderstorm** A sudden, local, relatively short cloudburst of cumulus with lightning and rumble but usually without a frontal system.

Cf. frontal thunderstorm

**Tick-borne typhus** One of a group of acute, febrile rickettsial diseases

transmitted by ticks, with manifestations similar to typhus.

Cf. rickettsial fever, typhus

**Tidal range** Sn: amplitude tidal range

**Tidal wave** Catastrophic wave(s) arriving on the coast accompanied with strong winds and storm surge.

The term is commonly used for the huge waves associated with submarine earthquake and tsunami, but technically, it should be reserved to waves associated with tides, i.e. due to lunar effect.

Cf. tide, storm surge, tsunami

**Tide** The periodic rise and fall of the earth's oceans and seas due to the attraction by the moon and the sun. The cycle is generally about 12–24 h.

Cf. amplitude tidal range

**Tide coefficient** Cf. coefficient of tide

**Tide forecast** Prediction for a particular place, of the height of the tide at a given time or of the heights and times of high and low tides. (Printed in tide tables.)

Sn: tide prediction

**Tide land** Low coastal land partly under sea water, at least at high tide, and possessing special ecological characteristics.

Sn: tidal wetland

**Tide-generating force** The resultant of the astral attraction on a particle and of the inertia force of that particle in its movement on the terrestrial orbit.

Cf. force, tidal wave

**Tissue engineering** The use of bioengineering theories and techniques to design, create, apply materials and devices that replace tissues which have been impaired or have lost function, e.g. artificial skin.

**TNT** The popular abbreviation for the chemical explosive trinitrotoluene used in conventional weapons. Also used as reference to measure the

energy liberated in the explosion of nuclear weapons. Thus, a 1 Mt nuclear bomb has the destructive capacity of one million tons of TNT.

Cf. nuclear bomb, trinitrotoluene

**Tobin tax** With the aim of introducing more equity and some fairness to less prosperous countries in global monetary mechanisms, a currency transaction tax (CTT) known as the Tobin tax has been proposed – not generally operational to date.

**Topography**

1. The fixed characteristics and physical features of an area, particularly portraying elevations and landmarks.
2. The geographic science of mapping the positions, elevations, forms, dimensions and other elements of the fixed and permanent features of the surface of the ground at a given time.

**Tornado** The North American name for a violent whirling wind, generally cyclonic in direction, about 100 m in diameter and extremely destructive in its path. It is measured by the Fujita-Pearson scale.

Sn: twister

Cf. twister, Fujita-Pearson scale.

**Torture** Any act by which pain and acute physical or mental suffering are intentionally inflicted upon a person in order to obtain a confession or information, to punish for an act committed by him or another suspected person, to intimidate, degrade or exercise pressure, or for any other discriminatory motive, when such pain and suffering are inflicted by a public servant or any other person acting on behalf of an official, with or without the latter's consent – UN Convention Against Torture, 1984. In 2002, the UN adopted the Optional Protocol to the Convention, making

it possible to take further measures against torture. Amnesty International, the Association for Prevention of Torture and the Robben Island Guidelines are strong initiatives.

Cf. Geneva Conventions, International Humanitarian Law, United Nations, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine, Robben Island, man-conceived disaster, OPCAT, APT

**Totem/Totemism** Derived from the Ojibway *Ototomen*, the word means kin or relation, expressing the belief that all individuals have an animal kinship and thus totemic representation in the spiritual world; a non-religious clan or personal concept of animal ties with the supernatural, without the need of a shaman, medium or priestly intermediary. In certain areas, as among the First Nations of North-West America, privileged initiates can act as medicine-men. – Kwe Kwala Gila  
Cf. shamanism, traditional medicine, aborigine

**Toxic chemical** The Chemical Weapons Convention defines a “toxic chemical” as any chemical which through its chemical action on life processes can cause death, temporary incapacitation or permanent harm to humans and animals. This includes all such chemicals regardless of their origin or of their method of production and regardless of whether they are produced in facilities, in munitions or elsewhere – CWC.

Cf. chemical weapons, Chemical Weapons Convention, biological weapons, chemical warfare

**Toxicological disaster** Serious environmental pollution and illness caused by the massive accidental escape of toxic substances into the air, soil or water and to man, animals or plants.

Cf. toxic chemical, dioxin, man-made disaster, Seveso, Bhopal, technological disaster, major accident hazard

**Toxicology** The science of poisons, harmful chemical substances, organic toxins and of their detection, effect, elimination and antidotes.

Cf. toxicological disaster.

**Toxin** Substance secreted by certain living organisms, capable of causing harmful (toxic) effects in the receiving organism.

**Trace elements** Chemical and mineral elements, usually beneficial, that exist in minimal traces (oligo-quantities) in various media, e.g. the body, in foods, in the air, in soil.

Sn: oligo-elements

**Trachoma** A contagious viral eye disease (keratoconjunctivitis), endemic in many countries where it is a major cause of blindness. A neglected tropical disease.

**Trade wind** Regular winds that blow throughout the year between the tropical high pressures and the equatorial low pressures.

Cf. atmospheric pressure

**Traditional birth attendant** A person who assists the mother at childbirth and who initially acquires her skill of delivering babies by herself or by working with other traditional birth attendants – WHO.

(In contrast to midwife who requires a formal medical education.)

**Traditional medicine** Local folk medicine, native indigenous healing. “...It is part of the tradition of each country and employs practices that are handed down from generation to generation of healers. Its acceptance by people receiving care is also inherited from generation to generation” – WHO/SEARO.



**Transboundary pollution** Pollution and pollutants that have been produced in one country and that have passed international boundaries through water or air to other countries, causing pollution. The effects can be mitigated only through international agreements as the damage is caused outside the boundaries of the victim's country.

Sn: transfrontier pollution

Cf. acid rain, Chernobyl, ozone depletion, global health

**Transform fault** Sn: sliding fault

**Transit centre** A centre which houses refugees (or other disaster victims) awaiting the completion of formalities for departure.

**Transmission (of disease)** The passage of a disease – commonly an infectious disease, less commonly a hereditary condition – from one individual to another.

Sn: disease transmission

Cf. communicable disease, infectious disease, carrier

**Transparency International/TI** An NGO founded in 1993 that seeks out and publicizes corruption in political, international and corporate bodies with the view to promoting transparency and fairness in development. Publishes the annual “Corporate Perceptions Index” which compares and ranks corruption worldwide.

Cf. transparent

**Transparent** Vision: Easily seen through; bright.

Social: Person or statement without affectation, lie or disguise.

Organization/government: Political, governmental or corporate activity whose record is clear, accountable, not corrupt.

Cf. Transparency International, glasnost

**Transuranium elements** Elements, such as plutonium, neptunium, that occur above uranium in the periodic table, generated in nuclear power reactors. They also disperse dangerously following atom bomb tests.

Cf. uranium, plutonium, nuclear reactor

**Trauma/Trauma score** Bodily injury due to any cause, any extent and any gravity. The trauma score is a numerical grading system for estimating the severity of injury, each parameter receiving a number (high for normal and low for impaired function). The severity of injury is estimated as the sum total of the numbers, the lowest score being 1 and the highest 16.

Cf. Glasgow coma scale, survival chain

**Trauma and injury severity score/TRISS** A physiological and anatomical formula to evaluate the likelihood of survival following severe injuries, marking the probability from 0 to 100%.

Cf. trauma injury classification, Glasgow trauma scale

**Trauma, injury classification** The ITACCS classification of injuries related to trauma defines the following: *Major injury*: Injury severity score >15, comprising at least one severe life-threatening regional injury. OR at least two severe non-life-threatening regional injuries. OR at least two severe non-life-threatening injuries plus at least two injuries of moderate severity.

*Multiple trauma/Polytrauma*: Injury to one body cavity such as head, thorax, abdomen, plus two long-bone and/or pelvic fractures. OR, plus injury to two body cavities.

Cf. trauma score, ITACCS

**Treaty** An international contract in writing between two or more States, negotiated, signed, ratified and binding to the States parties. Some terms used interchangeably for the same are covenant, pact, convention, agreement, protocol, international treaty.

**Trend analysis** A tool in decision-making and quality control that takes one criterion from an operation category and compares it against another criterion over time. The more criteria compared to one another, the more sensitive, reliable and specific will the analysis be. Example: food distribution vs. crude mortality rate analyzed over time – Burkle.

**Trial** A Swiss association of lawyers and of impunity victims, active in tracking down and denouncing impunity. It aims at putting the law at the service of victims of international crime, such as genocide, war crimes, torture or forced disappearances. Cf. impunity, war crimes, genocide, torture, disappearance

**Triage** Selection and categorization of the victims of a disaster with the view to appropriate treatment according to the degree or severity of illness or injury and the availability of medical and transport facilities.

**Trinitrotoluene/TNT** The chemical name for the explosive TNT, the main substance in conventional weapons. Also used for measuring the energy liberated in the explosion of a nuclear weapon. Thus, a 1 Mt nuclear bomb has the destructive capacity of one million tons of TNT. Cf. TNT

**Tropical air** Mass of air which has stayed over tropical latitudes for several days and which, accordingly, has become relatively warm. Cf. tropical zones

**Tropical climate** The prevailing climate in the subtropical and tropical zones, characterized by a well-marked dry season (in the months when it is winter in the northern hemisphere) and an equally distinct rainy season (during the summer in the northern hemisphere).

Cf. climate, dry season, rainy season

**Tropical cyclone** A strong meteorological depression, generated in the tropics and giving rise to extremely violent winds. The term tropical cyclone covers typhoon, hurricane and cyclone. Seasonal cause of disaster. Wind force Beaufort 12, over 58 knots.

In the northern hemisphere, the cyclonic winds spin counterclockwise around a warm centre core, the eye, while in the southern hemisphere, they rotate clockwise.

Cf. cyclone, hurricane, typhoon

**Tropical depression** Tropical perturbation with maximum winds below 34 knots.

Cf. depression, tropical storm, wind

**Tropical Health and Education Trust/THET** An organization that promotes and conducts training programmes for frontier health-care and essential surgical workers, particularly in Egypt, tropical and developing countries.

Cf. essential surgery

**Tropical storm**

1. Any tropical cyclonic disturbance.
2. Tropical cyclone with maximum winds between 34 and 64 knots.

Cf. cyclone, tropical cyclone, tropical depression

**Tropical zones** Countries which are continually warm, situated between the tropical latitudes, where the seasonal differentiation is in function of the rainfall, expressed as a dry season (corresponding to winter in the northern hemisphere) and a humid season.

Cf. rainfall, rainy season, dry season, season

**Troposphere** The region of the atmosphere immediately above the earth’s surface in which the temperature falls with increasing altitude.

**Truth and Reconciliation Commission:**

**TRC/SA** Following the demise of the apartheid regime in South Africa in 1994, the new Constitution and Bill of Rights introduced the bold pioneering concept of a national Truth and Reconciliation Commission as part of the country’s peaceful transformation and establishment of democracy. It granted “amnesty in respect of acts, omissions and offences associated with political objectives and committed in the course of conflicts of the past”.

Cf. ICTR. Compare with the UN-created International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda

**Trypanosomiasis** Sn: sleeping sickness

**Tsunami** Huge ocean waves generated by an underwater upheaval such as submarine earthquake or volcanic eruption. The waves move out fast in all directions over hundreds of miles, causing great destruction. The worst recent tsunami occurred on 26 December 2004, off Sumatra, Indonesia, spreading as far west as the African coast, causing over 250,000 deaths. In 2011, the concurrent tsunami-earthquake-nuclear meltdown at Fukushima-Daiichi, Japan, was the worst compound disaster.

Cf. seismic sea wave, tidal wave, compound disaster

**Tuberculosis/TB/Tb** Infectious and contagious disease, with particular localization in the lungs, caused by the *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. BCG vaccination is important, but the disease is still endemic in many regions and a real hazard in crowded unsanitary

conditions following disaster. One of the six diseases in the WHO immunization programme. In recent years, it has been spreading in a virulent form with, currently, new attack strategies. Commonly used abbreviation: TB.

Active TB: Positive presence of the signs, symptoms and findings of the disease.

- Infectious TB: Active TB with the infection transmissible to others.
- Latent TB: Bacteriology and laboratory tests positive but no clinical evidence of the disease.
- Multi-drug resistant TB: TB strains resistant to at least isoniazid and rifampicin (MDR-TB).

Cf. Expanded Programme on Immunization, The Global Fund

**Twister** Sn: tornado

**Typhoid fever** A serious enteric infectious disease, transmitted by patients, carriers, water or food, such as contaminated shellfish. It is characterized by fever, slow pulse, skin eruption, abdominal signs, enlarged spleen and prostration. Many enteric diseases are labelled typhoid fever, but the latter only is caused by *Salmonella typhi*.

It is a popular belief that typhoid frequently follows floods and other disasters; it is in fact unusual, and mass vaccination is not recommended. Personal hygienic practices constitute the best prevention. (Do not confuse typhoid with typhus.)

Cf. diarrhoeal diseases, enteric diseases, carrier, oral rehydration, salmonellosis

**Typhoon** A Chinese term, now universally adopted, for tropical cyclone in the Western Pacific, same as “hurricane” in the Atlantic and “cyclone” in South East Asia. Winds force 12 Beaufort, over 58 knots.

Cf. cyclone, hurricane, tropical cyclone

**Typhoon warning** Meteorological message to warn of the existence or expected arrival of a typhoon, often coupled with advice on protective measures.

Cf. cyclone, hurricane, typhoon, weather forecast

**Typhus** One of the serious rickettsial fevers, the classically notorious epidemic typhus, transmitted by lice. Immunization and louse control are highly effective. (Not to be confused with typhoid.)

Cf. rickettsial fever, tick-borne typhus, typhus exanthematicus

**Typhus exanthematicus** Cf. rickettsial fever, typhus

**Tziganes** Groups of populations believed to have originated in India and since the sixteenth century spread across Europe, living mostly in a nomadic manner, without fixed residence, defined state or boundaries. Much discriminated against, they deserve all human rights. The Schengen accords on free movement in Europe apply to them also. Without clear distinction, they are also variously known as Gypsies, Roma, Sinti, travellers.

Cf. nomad, racism, discrimination, human rights

## U

**Unaccompanied minor** A child under 15 years of age who has been separated from both parents following a disaster, exodus or refugee displacement and for whose care no person can be found who by law or custom has primary responsibility. Humanitarian organizations usually take care of unaccompanied minors/children pending family reunion. (It is the usual practice of UNHCR to

allow unaccompanied children over 15 to take decisions concerning durable solutions for themselves).

Sn: unaccompanied child

Cf. Refugee, Rädä Barnen, child

**UNAIDS** Acronym for Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the principal worldwide programme on all aspects of financing, monitoring, research, evaluation and treatment of this pandemic. (It has affinities to but should not be confused with UNITAID.)

### Undernutrition

1. Inadequate intake of food, hence of energy, over a period of time.
2. Pathological state arising from inadequate intake of food and hence of calories, over a considerable period, manifest by reduced body weight.

Cf. energy requirements, malnutrition, famine

**UN hazard classification** 9 Classes: (1) explosive, mass explosion hazard, very insensitive substances; (2) flammable gases, non-flammable non-toxic gases, toxic gases; (3) flammable liquids; (4) flammable solids, spontaneously combustible substances, substances dangerous when wet; (5) oxidizing substances other than organic peroxides, organic peroxides; (6) poisonous (toxic) substances, infectious substances; (7) radioactive substances; (8) corrosive substances and (9) other dangerous substances – IPCS.

Cf. chemical accident, major accident hazard, Bhopal, Seveso, environmental pollution, IPCS, Basel Convention, hazardous material

**United Nations/UN** The supreme inter-governmental world body established in 1945 with the purposes of (1) maintaining international peace and

security, (2) developing friendly relations among nations, (3) solving international problems through international cooperation and (4) harmonizing the actions of all nations for these common ends. The UN acts through various mechanisms, such as specialized agencies, e.g. WHO; Councils, e.g. for Human Rights at UNHCHR; High Commission Offices, e.g. UNHCR for Refugees; Committees, e.g. on Atomic Radiation, Funds, e.g. UNICEF; major programmes, e.g. UNDP; peace-keeping forces, e.g. UNIFIL; institutes, e.g. UNITAR

OCHA is responsible for the direction and coordination of the UN response and capability in natural and other disasters. The following UN bodies are involved in disaster assistance:

Cf. UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO); International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR); International Telecommunication Union (ITU); United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA); World Food Programme (WFP); World Health Organization (WHO); World Meteorological Organization (WMO). (See these organizations separately.) The UN also maintains

non-governmental relations (NGLS/NGO).

**United Nations Headquarters/Secretariat** The main seat of the United Nations, situated in New York. Houses the General Assembly building, the Executive Office of the Secretary-General and the main political bodies of the UN that establish the general policies and provide overall guidance to the organization. There are three other main UN offices in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi.

**United Nations Office at Geneva/UNOG** Second largest UN establishment, housing mainly the centres for conferences, diplomacy, disarmament, human rights, refugees, disasters, specialized agencies for health, telecommunications, labour, intellectual property, meteorology. Inter alia, seat of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

Cf. OHCHR, OHCR, OCHA

**United Nations Office at Nairobi/UNON** Headquarters for activities in the fields of environment and human settlements. Seat of UNEP.

**United Nations Office at Vienna/UNOV** Headquarters for activities in the fields of nuclear energy, drug control, crime prevention, international trade law. Seat of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

**United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs/OCHA** Better known by its acronym OCHA, principal Office under the direction of the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator, for the organization and operation of the UN capability for assessing, responding to and managing natural and

other disasters. It includes ISDR, the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction. Operates in coordination with other UN, NGO and expert bodies, including WHO, FAO, HCR, UNICEF, ITU, UNEP, WFP, WMO, UNDP.

Sn: OCHA, previously UNDRO

Cf. see these organizations separately, ISDR

**UNFCCC** Cf. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, global warming, glasshouse effect, climate change

**United Nations Children's Fund/UNICEF** Better known by its acronym UNICEF, principal organization that acts to protect children's rights; ensures that children get the best possible start in life and grow harmoniously. Collaborates with WHO in primary health care. Protects children's rights in disasters.

Sn: UNICEF

Cf. rights of the child, primary health care

**United Nations Civilian Police/UNCIVPOL** Civilian police, mainly UN civilian police, are being increasingly employed in post-conflict situations and reconstruction stabilization efforts. To the traditional work of monitoring, observing and reporting are now added such tasks as reforming and restructuring of local forces, training, advice and sometimes law enforcement. But they do not carry out executive policing.

Cf. democratic control of armed forces

**UNICEF** Acronym for United Nations Children's Fund. Name most commonly used instead of the longer title.

**Unilateralism** The position of one State, acting singly in the international arena

and in international affairs, on its own initiative without consideration of the position or agreement of others. The opposite is bilateralism and multilateralism.

**United Nations Democracy Fund/UNDEF** A voluntary fund with the purpose of investing in democratization processes and thus encouraging the progress of nations towards the ideals and practice of democracy.

Cf. democracy, development

**United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations/DPKO** Key activity in the UN for mounting and operating peacekeeping actions and humanitarian ceasefire orders. Also serves as the focal point for mine action.

Cf. humanitarian, antipersonnel mines

**United Nations Development Programme/UNDP** The principal UN programme for multilateral technical and pre-investment cooperation for development. The funding source for most of the technical assistance provided by the UN. Represents OCHA in disaster situations.

Cf. development, technical assistance, Millennium Development Goals

**United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific/ESCAP** UN Commission to facilitate regional economic development in the Asia-Pacific region, to alleviate poverty; strengthen the environment, transport, communications; help least developed countries and maintain good relations among the region's nations.

Similar Economic and Social Commissions apply also to Africa (UNECA), Europe (UNECE), Latin

America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and Western Asia (ESCWA).

**United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/ UNESCO** Better known by its acronym UNESCO, the lead organization for education, cultural development and cultural heritage, press freedom, human sciences, natural sciences, environmental research. Is the depository of information on earthquakes and has a programme on the protection of the lithosphere.

Cf. earthquake, culture

**UNESCO** Acronym and the usual term used for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

**United Nations Environment Programme/UNEP** Special programme of the UN to promote a harmonious interrelationship between environment and development, by wise and technically sound utilization of resources and by reducing the degradation and pollution of the environment. Acts in natural environment catastrophes (earthquake, drought, deforestation) and man-made disasters (chemical explosion, oil spill, pollution).

Sn: UNEP

Cf. deforestation, environment, United Nations

**United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change/ UNFCCC** Scientific and organizational efforts to stabilize greenhouse gas concentration, to ensure that food production and sea levels are not threatened and to enable the continuity of sustainable development.

Cf. greenhouse effect, Kyoto protocol, climate change

**United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights/ UNHCHR** UNHCHR has a wide

mandate covering all aspects of human rights as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Inter alia, it promotes the right to development, recognition of social, economic and cultural rights, gender equality, and the rights of the child and helps states implement human rights plans and actions. Through its Council on Human Rights, it oversees and evaluates a state's obligations in implementing human rights and calls for correction of breaches of human rights.

Sn: UNHCHR, also OHCHR, HCHR

Cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Human Rights Council

**United Nations Human Rights Council/HRC** Created in March 2006 as successor to the Human Rights Commission, this is a permanent intergovernmental body of 47 States, responsible for the examination, promotion and protection of human rights around the globe, within the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Cf. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

**United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research/UNIDIR** In cooperation with the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs, UNIDIR provides member states with objective research on all aspects of disarmament and on all forms of human security.

**United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service UN/NGLS** An inter-agency programme of the UN mandated to promote and develop constructive relations between the United Nations and civil society non-governmental organizations (NGLS).



Cf. civil society, NGOs, voluntary organizations

**United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime/UNODC** Addresses the worldwide issues of narcotics trafficking, drug control, crime prevention and international terrorism in all forms. It consists of the UN Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention at Vienna.

Cf. drug trafficking, Palermo protocol, Farc, terrorism

**United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office/UNSO** Integrates dry land problems into national development programmes. Is concerned with dry lands and poverty, drought preparedness and mitigation, land tenure, knowledge in and management of desertification

**United Nations Millennium Declaration** To encourage improvements and modernization of the 60-year-old United Nations and to accelerate development for all peoples in the coming century, the General Assembly in 2000 adopted the Millennium Declaration, with ambitious programmes to usher in the twenty-first century. Of these, the principal initiative that continues is the significant programme of Millennium Development Goals, MDGs, with eight specific objectives for 2000–2015.

Cf. Millennium Development Goals, United Nations, AIFOMD, development

**United Nations Population Fund/UNFPA** The world's largest international source of financing for reproductive health programmes, population studies and related disease and social issues. A key goal is to reduce maternal mortality by 75% by 2015.

**United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East** Full official designation for UNRWA.

UNRWA is the popular acronymic term used for the agency.

**United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation/UNSCEAR** Set up in 1955, official scientific body to evaluate doses, effects, risks and remote dangers of radiation from any source on a worldwide basis.

Sn: UNSCEAR

Cf. radiation, atomic war, Hiroshima, Fukushima, GLAWARS

**UNISDR** Cf. International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, OCHA

**UNITAID/WHO** Launched at the World Health Organization, it is essentially an international drug purchasing facility to acquire affordable medicines and diagnostics mainly to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. An imaginative aspect is that it is financed primarily through the proceeds of a tax levied on airline tickets, which ensures a fair and steady flow of funds.

**United Nations University/UNU** Academic centre in Tokyo for advanced training and knowledge in all aspects of the UN's concerns, in particular peace and governance and sustainable development. Publishes a wide array of studies and books in these fields.

Cf. UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research

**UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research/UNU-WIDER** The economics research arm of the United Nations University, with particular interest in poverty and

inequality, refugees, migration, social development, globalization, finance and growth.

Cf. United Nations University, Millennium Development Goals

**United Nations Watch** Believing in the beneficial mission of the United Nations, this non-profit NGO undertakes the task of monitoring and watching over the performance of the UN and its adherence to the UN Charter and any eventual shortcomings.

Cf. United Nations, NGO

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights/UDHR** Universal declaration, proclaimed on 10 December 1948, by the United Nations General Assembly, guaranteeing every citizen certain inalienable rights, through the 30 separate articles, as follows:

1. The right to equality
2. Freedom from discrimination
3. The right to life, liberty and personal security
4. Freedom from slavery
5. Freedom from torture or degrading treatment
6. The right to recognition as a person before the law
7. The right to equality before the law
8. The right to fairness by a competent tribunal
9. Freedom from arbitrary arrest or exile
10. The right to a fair and public hearing
11. The right to be considered innocent until proven guilty
12. Freedom from interference with privacy, family, home or correspondence
13. The right to free movement in and out of any country
14. The right to asylum in other countries from persecution

15. The right to a nationality and freedom to change it
16. The right to marriage and family
17. The right to own property
18. Freedom of belief and religion
19. Freedom of opinion and information
20. The right of peaceful assembly and association
21. The right to participate in government and free elections
22. The right to social security
23. The right to a desirable work and to join trade unions
24. The right to rest and leisure
25. The right to an adequate standard of living
26. The right to education
27. The right to participate in the cultural life of a community
28. The right to social order assuring human rights
29. The right to community duties that are essential to free and full development
30. Freedom from state or personal interference in the above rights

**Universal health coverage** Equitable provision of and access to health care for all citizens, at all ages and for all health conditions and services, ensuring social health protection for all.

Cf. national health service, Health for All, access to health

**Universality of human rights** The doctrine that all human rights are held unconditionally by all humans without distinction. (A contrary view is held by a minority doctrine of cultural relativism.) But human rights are universal, indivisible and apply to all persons of all cultures and creeds. Cf. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, cultural relativism

**Universal suffrage** The political human right of every adult citizen to

vote for or against a principal institution or an agent of the State. Certain institutions oppose this right on the basis of cultural relativism.

Cf. cultural relativism, universality of human rights, empower

**Universal Time Coordinated/UTC** The coordinated time recorded by an official uniformly running clock, the measure of Greenwich mean time corrected for seasonal variations in the earth's rotation.

Sn: UTC

Cf. Greenwich mean time, GMT

**Universitas-21/U-21** U-21. A consortium of initially 21 (now more) universities representing academics, scientists, sociologists, doctors, students and other intellectuals concerned with international higher education, high social standards, the UN, development and academic freedom.

Cf. ACUNS

**Unnecessary suffering** According to International Humanitarian Law, it refers to inflicting physical, mental or psychological suffering which exceeds that needed to neutralize an enemy irrespective of the weapon used.

Cf. law of war

**UNRWA** Modified acronym and usual term for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, organization that since 1950 has been assisting and protecting Palestine refugees – who are not included in UNHCR's mandate.

Cf. refugee, UNHCR, United Nations

**UNSCEAR** Sn: United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation

Cf. refugee, nuclear reactor, atom bomb

**Upper-middle income country** The World Bank (2008) categorizes countries according to gross national income (GNI, previously GNP) per capita: upper-middle income country: US\$3,856–11,905.

Cf. emerging countries, developed countries, high-income countries, country income categories, least developed countries

**Uranium/U235/U308** A mineral element that exists in the soil as 0.7% U235, symbol U, atomic number 92. This is the only naturally occurring fissile isotope and, with due processing, is used for military and civilian nuclear reactors. Extracted from the soil, it is purified by removal of the gangue. The concentrate thus obtained is U308, a powder also known as “yellow cake”. To utilize this for civilian or military purposes, it is further transformed into uranium fluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>). For use in reactors, this needs further “enrichment” to go much higher than 0.7%. The process is physical, utilizing a great number of successively powerful centrifuges. For civilian use, 5% of U235 is needed. For military use (atom bomb), more than 90% is required. This process is highly controlled by the UN International Atomic Energy Agency. The atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima was of the uranium type. Cf. atom bomb, Hiroshima, plutonium, caesium, posturanium elements, nuclear reactor, IAEA Sm: U

**Uranium enrichment** Enhancing uranium for military purposes. Process highly controlled by Treaty and by the IAEA.

Cf. uranium

**Urbanization** Transformation of rural land to urban use, under the influence of economic, demographic and spatial pressures of an urban centre, with consequent problems.

Cf. conurbation

**Utilities failure** Sudden breakdown of public utilities, including electricity, telephone, Internet, water supplies, pipelines, refrigeration systems, etc., due mainly to power failure or other malfunction, causing a serious emergency. In a disaster, such failures are a part of the damage and complicate the situation further.

**Utstein standards** Named after a centre of study, research, contemplation and conference in Norway, where standardization templates and quality control systems are formulated and proposed, particularly concerning the quality of management in various emergencies. Example: the Task Force on Quality Control in Disasters, initiated by the Nordic Society for Disaster Medicine and the World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine.

Cf. WADEM, disaster management, damage probability formula

## V

**Vaccination** Method of preventing certain infectious diseases by conferring active immunity in a person through the introduction – by injection/ingestion/application – of certain preparations called vaccines, which reinforce the resistance of the body.

Sn: immunization

Cf. infection, vaccine

**Vaccine** Antigenic preparation that has the property of causing the formation of protective antibodies in the receiver, used for the prevention of

certain microbial, viral or parasitic diseases by vaccination.

Cf. immunization, vaccination

**Varicella** Chickenpox. Highly contagious viral infection, mainly among children.

**VD** Popular abbreviation for venereal disease. Sexually transmitted disease.

Sn: venereal disease

**Vector** Medicine: Animal or insect that acts as intermediate host or carrier, transmitting disease from one to another, especially to humans.

Cf. carrier, infection, transmission

Ballistics: A missile that carries a military nuclear device.

**Vegetation fire(s)** Term covering fires of all types of vegetation, such as forest, grassland brush, woodland, wildland or agricultural.

Cf. forest/vegetation fires

**Vehicle** In medicine, an object, e.g. an infected handkerchief, an animal, e.g. a dog, or a pathogen, e.g. a virus, that acts as a medium of transmission of disease.

Cf. vector

**Venereal disease** Disease transmitted by the genital tract. The classically mentioned are syphilis and gonorrhoea, but there are many others, now named under sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.

Sn: VD

Cf. sexually transmitted diseases

**Verruga (peruana)** Sn: bartonellosis

**Vienna Convention, 1969** According to jus cogens, customary norms become acceptable as law.

Cf. jus cogens

**Vienna Declaration, 1993** The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in 1993, fights against impunity, to provide a firm

base for the rule of law, to punish all those responsible for violations of such acts as torture. Gives power to the Human Rights Council to despatch Commissions of Inquiry when governments are unwilling to investigate human rights violations.

Cf. impunity, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Violence** The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, or another person or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation – WHO.

**Violence against women** Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life – UN.

Cf. female genital mutilation, violence

**Violent conflict risk factors** Factors that constitute risks of violence among states include, inter alia: lack of democratic process, unequal access to power, social inequality, monopoly of or unequal access to resources, poverty, uncontrolled rapid demographic changes.

Cf. conflict, violence, democracy

**Virucide** Chemical compound used to destroy viruses.

Cf. pesticide

**Virulence** The ability of a pathological organism to produce a disease of any degree of seriousness.

**Virus** Bacteriology: Self-reproducing infectious agent smaller than bacteria, containing only one type of

nucleic acid and multiplying only in cells and responsible for a wide range of diseases and often of epidemics.

Cf. epidemic, human immunodeficiency virus, avian influenza, porcine influenza

Information technology: Electronic bug illegally introduced by hackers into a computer system with the view to disrupting the communication.

Cf. cyberwar, hacker

**Viral hepatitis (A, B, C)** Infection of the liver, due to a virus, probably of three types: type A (previously known as acute infectious hepatitis), type B (usually called serum or post-transfusion hepatitis) and type C (that can be chronic).

Type A is spread mainly by faecal-oral contact and contaminated water or food. It is a real risk in congested, insalubrious areas following disaster. Type B is mainly transmitted through blood transfusions. It has become a major problem among drug addicts through the repeated use of infected needles. Type C predisposes to cancer.

**Virgin population** A population that has to date not been exposed to a particular infectious organism.

**Visceral leishmaniasis** A tropical and subtropical parasitic disease transmitted by sandflies.

Sn: kala azar

Cf. leishmaniasis

**Vitamin A deficiency** Nutritional deficiency in vitamin A or retinol. The leading cause of blindness in infants and xerophthalmia (night blindness).

Sn: hypovitaminosis A

**Vitamin B<sub>1</sub> deficiency** Sn: beriberi, hypovitaminosis B<sub>1</sub>

**Vitamin B<sub>2</sub> deficiency** A nutritional deficiency due to lack of vitamin B<sub>2</sub> (riboflavin) and characterized by tongue and lip lesions.

Sn: ariboflavinosis, hypovitaminosis B<sub>2</sub>

**Vitamin C deficiency** Sn: hypovitaminosis C, scurvy

**Vitamin D deficiency** Sn: hypovitaminosis D, rickets

**Vitamin PP deficiency** Sn: hypovitaminosis PP, pellagra

**Vitamin deficiency** Lack of vitamin intake, without specifying the particular vitamin deficiency. There is no deficiency in all vitamins, specific deficiencies lead to specific diseases. Sn: hypovitaminosis

Cf. beriberi, pellagra, rickets, scurvy, vitamin A deficiency, vitamin B<sub>1</sub> deficiency, vitamin B<sub>2</sub> deficiency, vitamin C deficiency, vitamin D deficiency

**Volcanic eruption** The sudden explosive ejection of superheated matter – lava, cinders, ashes, gases and dust – from a volcanic crater or vent.

Cf. volcano

**Volcanic risk map** The approaches to active volcanoes are divided into three zones according to the degree of risk: exclusion zone: no admittance except for scientific monitoring and national security matters; central zone: residential area only, all residents on heightened state of alert. All residents to have hard hats and masks and to be able to exit within 24 h; impact zone: area with significantly lower risk, suitable for residential and commercial occupation – IDNDR.

Cf. volcanic eruption, risk map, zoning

**Volcano** A conical mountain with an opening on the earth’s crust through

which magma of molten rock or gases or both erupt to the surface.

Cf. ash, magma, solfatara, stratovolcano, tephra

**Voluntarism** A personal or group expression of altruism, providing free assistance and services to persons or people in need.

Cf. altruism, voluntary agency, philanthropy

**Voluntary agency** Non-profit, non-governmental, private association, maintained and supported by voluntary contributions. Among its activities, assistance in emergencies and disasters is notable. ICVA, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies, represents their federation.

Sn: VOLAG, voluntary organization

Cf. international assistance, altruism

**Voluntary organization** Sn: voluntary agency.

Cf. non-governmental organization, NGO

**Voluntary repatriation** The freely consented return of a refugee to his country with the view to his reestablishment there.

Cf. principle of non-refoulement, refugee, repatriation

**Vortex** The “eye” or centre of the spiral clouds of a cyclone, hurricane or typhoon.

**Vulnerable** Susceptible to injury, illness, damage or loss. Weak.

Cf. susceptible case, vulnerability

**Vulnerability** Degree or potential loss (from 0 to 100%) resulting from a possibly harmful phenomenon that causes victims and material damage – After UN-OCHA.

The susceptibility of a person, population, structure or environment to varying degrees of injury or damage,

depending on the assaulting force and the recipient's condition.

In disaster response: A significant weakness in safety or security due to failure in design, structure, maintenance, operation, assessment or age. Cf. susceptible case, vulnerable, elements at risk, hazard

**Vulnerability study** Study and investigation of all the risks and the hazards susceptible to cause a disaster.

Cf. disaster, hazard, prevention, risk indicator

**Vulnerable group** A section of the population, especially infants, pregnant and lactating mothers, the elderly, the homeless, who are particularly prone to sickness and nutritional deficiencies. They are likely to suffer most in a disaster.

**Vulnerable person** Individual who is at risk.

Cf. vulnerable, susceptible case, vulnerable group, risk

**Vulnerology** From the Latin *vulnus* = wound, injury, damage. A new term for all aspects of study, prevention, treatment and recovery of wounds. – Costagliola Vulnerable is derived from the same root.

Cf. vulnerability, injury, trauma, casualty, violence

## W

**WADEM/Utstein damage formula** Cf. damage probability formula

**War** A state of declared hostilities, use of force and armed conflict between two or more nations internationally or between parts of one nation, factions or tribes internally. International Humanitarian Law (laws of war), the Geneva Conventions (1947) and the Hague Rules (1907) apply, but in recent years, these rules of conduct

have been increasingly breached. War is the worst man-made disaster.

Cf. International Humanitarian Law, International Red Cross, complex disaster, non-violence

**War crimes** During hostilities, crimes committed in breach of established customs and principles of international law or the laws of war. They include (a) grave breaches of the four Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols, such as wilful killing, unnecessarily excessive destruction; (b) other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable to international armed conflicts, such as targeting civilians, pillaging; (c) violations of laws concerning armed conflicts of not an international character, such as cruelty against those not taking part in the conflicts and (d) other serious violations of laws in non-international conflicts, such as attacks on peaceful buildings. War crimes are considered as crimes against humanity and come under the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. Cf. crimes against humanity, Geneva Conventions, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Humanitarian Law, man-conceived disaster, International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court

**War Crimes Tribunal** Cf. International Criminal Court, International Court of Justice, war crimes

**War/Law of Sn:** International Humanitarian Law

Cf. war, Geneva Conventions

**War Trauma Foundation/WTF** Organization that studies and assists in effects of trauma due to war and other disasters. With WHO has produced a guide to strengthen



humanitarian relief especially in psychological first aid.

Cf. post-traumatic stress

**War wounded**

1. In the strict sense, regular member of the armed forces wounded in an armed conflict in the course of military operations.
2. In a wider sense, any person wounded during an armed conflict in the course of military operations.
3. Handicapped war veteran.

Cf. armed conflict, Geneva Conventions

**Warehouse** In transport and shipping, represents a shed or storehouse where cargo is kept pending dispatch or retrieval. Bonded warehouse is an official warehouse under customs control where transit cargo is kept or where cargo is stored pending customs clearance.

**Warning** Cf. early warning system, alert

**Washout** Sn: rainout

Cf. scavenging, nuclear explosion

**Wastage** Misuse of the forces, resources, material, human capabilities and financial means

**Waste water** Water rendered unsafe and polluted in the course of its domestic or industrial use, comprising household (kitchen, laundry), drainage (lavatories) and residual (industrial) effluents.

Cf. sanitary engineering.

**Wasting** Depletion of the essential biological, cellular constituents of the body, reflects in the loss of fat and muscle tissue, resulting from prolonged food deprivation and often associated with infections or other diseases.

Sn: emaciation

**Water** Water is essential to life, for drinking, cooking, personal care and domestic hygiene. Its availability in

sufficient quantities and cleanliness is critical in disaster situations, refugee camps and poor environments.

Sn: H<sub>2</sub>O

In disaster and refugee situations, the average basic requirement for water is 20 l per person per day.

Cf. water needs

**Water harnessing** The process of capturing and channelling the water of a spring, lake or river into a network for utilization.

Sn: river basin

**Water needs** The absolute physiological requirement per person is 1–1.5 l per day. A minimum of 3–5 l daily are necessary for survival in disaster and difficult situations. The average needs are 20 l.

Cf. water, essential bodily needs

**Water purification** Cf. chlorine, bleaching powder

**Waterboarding** One barbaric form, among many, of inflicting torture during interrogation of a suspect, consisting of the victim tied to an inclining board, repeatedly being immersed in water simulating drowning but not allowing to drown, extending the suffering, inciting mortal fear and psychological breakdown. A cruel, unlawful practice against all Red Cross and humane principles and human rights.

Cf. torture, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

**Wave** Agitation of the surface of the sea caused by local winds. The numerical code representing the state of the sea is the Douglas scale.

Sn: surge

Cf. Douglas scale, tsunami

**Wave-generating area** Oceanic surface upon which winds blow in constant direction and force.

Cf. force, wind, wind force

**Weapons of mass destruction/**

**WMD** Offensive weapons whose destructive capability is derived from nuclear, chemical or biological sources. Sometimes referred to as ABC: atomic, biological, chemical. Their use is prohibited by UN and other international conventions. WMDs are the opposite of conventional arms/weapons.

Cf. biological warfare, chemical warfare, nuclear weapons, conventional arms

**Weather forecast** Announcement of meteorological conditions anticipated for a specific area and period of time. Weather forecasting is important in disaster prevention and climatological forecast.

Cf. cyclone warning, meteorology, climatological forecast

**Weather map** Topographic map on which the national meteorological services record data – temperature, humidity, winds, nebulosity, pressure, etc. – every six hours, using symbols, isobars, etc.

Cf. meteorology, topography, climate change

**Welfare** A general state of a person's or community's satisfaction, health, prosperity, well-being and social support.

Cf. well-being, health, welfare state

**Welfare state** A nation or state, like the United Kingdom, that provides free health coverage and social services for its entire population – “from cradle to grave” – irrespective of age, wealth or other status.

Cf. welfare, health, national health service, society

**Well-being** The physical and psychological state that makes an individual feel adjusted to his environment. Also, well being.

Cf. environment, health, needs, World Health Organization

**Wheat-soya blend** Nutritive food mixture consisting of:

73.1% wheat, precooked

20.0% soya flour

4.0% salad oil, stabilized

2.9% vitamin and mineral premix

Sn: WSB

Cf. food mixtures

**Wheat-soya-milk** Wheat-soya mixture prepared in milk.

Sn: WSM

Cf. food mixtures

**Whirlwind** A small scale rotating column of air.

Sn: twister

Cf. tornado

**Whistleblower** A person in a group, establishment or government who, openly or anonymously, discloses to the public or someone in authority alleged misconduct, fraud, covert or illegal activities in an organization or government. May be damaging or beneficial.

Cf. accountability, transparency, WikiLeaks

**WHO Essential Medicines List** Cf. Essential medicines

**WHO pandemic alert phases/degrees** WHO has a system of six phases for assessing the gravity of an impending major epidemic or pandemic and informing health authorities to take the necessary measures, e.g. in a situation of a new virus A(H1N1) porcine influenza. The decision to pass from one phase to the other and to take the necessary steps is the prerogative of the director general, upon consultation and expert advice.

*Phase 1:* Small risk of human cases, when there is presence of the virus in animals but not in man.

*Phase 2:* Slightly elevated risk, with appearance of a few human cases.

*Phase 3:* The virus starts causing human cases, but not extensively. Early pandemic alert.

*Phase 4:* Increasing man-to-man transmission. There is risk of a pandemic, but not inevitable.

*Phase 5:* Heavy man-to-man transmission. High risk of a potential pandemic. The infection has foci in more than two countries of the region. There is little time left to be prepared.

*Phase 6:* Sustained man-to-man transmission. As of this phase, there is pandemic due to the new dangerous virus. This is officially declared immediately upon noting the presence of the infection in at least two distinct regions in the world – After WHO.

Cf. pandemic, epidemic, A(H1N1) virus

**Whooping cough** A common, highly infectious communicable disease of childhood characterized by paroxysmal coughing. A significant cause of death in infants in developing countries. Easily preventable and included in the WHO programme of immunization.

Sn: pertussis

Cf. Expanded Programme on Immunization

**WHOPAX Report** Abridged designation for the Report of the WHO Management Group on the Role of Physicians and Other Health Workers in the Preservation and Promotion of Peace, published under the title “Effects of Nuclear War on Health and Health Services”. It concludes that “the only approach to the treatment of health effects...is the prevention of nuclear war”.

Cf. World Health Organization, nuclear war, GLAWARS Report

**WikiLeaks** A not-for-profit, non-governmental organization founded with the purpose of assuring transparency in governmental and international actions by whistle-blowing, retrieving, exposing and publishing diplomatic, secret, private and classified information that concerns society.

**Wikipedia** A valuable, extensive and varied source of online encyclopaedic information that can be accessed free electronically by anyone. Very useful by its coverage. Can be particularly helpful in the field, remote or disaster site when compiling records or completing reports under conditions where normal sources and reference facilities are not available.

**Wildfire** Any fire occurring on wildland, of any source, except a fire under prescription – After FAO.

Sn: wildland fire

**Willy-willy** The Australian term for a tropical cyclone.

Cf. tropical cyclone

**Wind** Air movement relative to the earth’s surface. Unless otherwise specified, only the horizontal component of the movement is considered. The coding of wind velocity is shown by the Beaufort scale.

Cf. Beaufort scale

**Wind erosion** Erosion of the land due to the action of winds.

Sn: aeolian erosion

Cf. erosion, soil erosion, wind, anthropic erosion

**Wind force** Force exerted by the wind on a building, plantation, object, etc.

**Windhoek Declaration** Formal declaration on the freedom of the press, made in 1991, based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and endorsed in 1993, calling for free,

independent, pluralistic media worldwide, characterizing free press as a fundamental right.

Cf. freedom of the press

**Windscale accident** Site of a military nuclear facility in England. On 10 October 1957, the annealing of the graphite moderator at this air-cooled reactor caused the graphite and uranium to catch fire, releasing radioactive material into the atmosphere; important accident rated level 5 on the INES.

Cf. nuclear accident, International Nuclear Event Scale, Sellafield, Mayak, La Hague

**Winter blizzard** Very cold snowy weather, characterized by strong winds, cold snowy conditions and low visibility. Officially to qualify as w.b., the following are required: (a) temperature at least  $-12^{\circ}\text{C}$ , (b) winds of minimum 40 km/h, (c) visibility less than 1 km and (d) these must last for at least 3 h.

Cf. blizzard, wind

**Winter monsoon** Continental monsoon which blows in the winter.

Cf. monsoon, summer monsoon

**Workshop (educational)** An organized series of training sessions that emphasizes free discussion and exchange of ideas, interacting concepts, skills and methods for problem solving and professional development.

**World Association for Disaster and Emergency Medicine/WADEM** Major worldwide organization of professionals from a wide range of health disciplines engaged in or promoting better knowledge and practice of all aspects of emergency medicine and disaster management. Publisher of "Prehospital and Disaster Medicine".

Cf. disaster medicine, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine

**World Bank – IBRD** More formally called the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, a specialized agency of the United Nations set up for economic development, particularly in those two purposes. Also concerned with the interrelationships of health, social development, poverty and globalization.

Cf. sustainable development, health, United Nations, Copenhagen Declaration

**World Commission on Environment and Development/Rio** The Commission that organized the international "Our Common Future" meeting in Rio in 1987 on policies concerning the environment and development and established the now classic concept of sustainable development.

Cf. sustainable development, development, WCED, MDGs

**World Council of Churches/WCC** Fellowship of some 300 Christian, mainly non-Catholic churches to promote the unity of the Church and mankind. Active in international affairs with particular attention to conflict situations, human rights, peace, ethics and disaster assistance.

Sn: Oecumenical Council, WCC

Cf. non-governmental organization

**World Family Organization** Important social NGO in particular upholding women's and family values and health in development. Part of the UN-NGO-IRENE network.

**World Federalist Movement/WFM** An organization of citizens worldwide that advocates global government, just governance and development of a global community based on practical rule of law, democratically accountable to international

institutions. Strives for non-violent improvement of international relations and a more just UN.

**World Food Programme/WFP** The organization of the United Nations system for food aid, both for development projects and emergency relief in drought or famine, by mobilization of bulk food-stuffs (while FAO mobilizes resources). Has a food-for-work mechanism for refugee and disaster situations.

Sn: WFP

Cf. drought, food aid, Food and Agriculture Organization, United Nations

**World Health Organization/WHO** The health arm of the United Nations aiming at "the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health" as a human right. Coordinates efforts to raise health levels worldwide and promotes the development of primary health care. Besides multiple public health programmes and actions, it is engaged in disaster preparedness and humanitarian relief both at headquarters and at six Regional Offices and coordinates the health sector of any UN involvement in major emergencies. Has compiled the Emergency Health Kit. Eradicated smallpox.

Sn: WHO

Cf. Emergency Health Kit, primary health care, public health, United Nations, WHOPAX Report, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine Brock Chisholm. (Note: Dr. Chisholm was the first director general of WHO.)

**World Institute for Development Economics Research/UNU-WIDER** World Institute for Development Economics Research, the development study arm of the United Nations University. (Cf.)

**World Medical Association/**

**WMA** Worldwide federation of the principal medical associations that represent physicians. It works to ensure the independence of the medical profession and is concerned with medical ethics, medical education, socio-medical affairs, rights of the patient and health legislation. With WHO, it formulated the International Code of Medical Ethics.

Cf. bioethics, Nuremberg

**World Meteorological Organization/**

**WMO** UN specialized agency that promotes the effective use worldwide of meteorological and hydrological information, especially in weather forecasting, water resource prediction and climatology.

A priority function is to oversee the World Weather Watch and World Climate Programme. Important and active in the meteorological aspects of disaster management.

Sn: WMO

Cf. meteorology, World Weather Watch, United Nations

**World Open Hospitals/WOH** An

expanding worldwide voluntary network of hospitals in which the hospital authorities as well as practising physicians have undertaken to receive and treat without charge, on a purely humanitarian basis, patients from developing countries or disaster areas where the necessary specialized care is lacking or cannot be delivered adequately. Founded by the International Association for Humanitarian Medicine Brock Chisholm.

Sn: WOH

Cf. humanitarian, humanitarian medicine, international assistance, International Association for Humanitarian Medicine

**World Summit for Social Development** Cf. Copenhagen Declaration

**World Vision International** Major international humanitarian non-governmental organization widely present in needy areas for relief and development. Active in assistance in disasters and conflicts, promotes health education in and support for indigenous populations.

Cf. development, international assistance, indigenous, primary health care

**World Weather Watch** The global system of the World Meteorological Organization for observing, monitoring and exchanging meteorological information in real time through satellite and other advanced data collecting methods.

Sn: WWW

Cf. satellite, World Meteorological Organization

## X

**X-rays** Electromagnetic rays, same as gamma rays, but produced in processes outside the atomic nucleus.

Sn: Roentgen rays

**Xenophobia** Dread, dislike or hatred of and opposition to foreigners or ethnic groups. It is an unacceptable discrimination, against human rights.

Cf. discrimination, human rights

**Xenotransplantation** Transplanting or grafting in a person a tissue or organ that has been derived from a species different from the recipient.

**Xerophthalmia** A serious eye disease due to the total ocular syndrome associated with vitamin A deficiency, causing lens opacification, keratomalacia and night blindness.

Cf. vitamin A deficiency

## Y

**Yam** Tropical edible plant, the roots of which are rich in starch and constitute the staple food in certain regions.

Cf. conventional food, staple food

**Yaws** A treponemal disease akin to pinta.

Cf. pinta

**Years Lost due to Disability/**

**YLDs** Years lost due to disability are calculated as the number of incident cases  $\times$  average duration of the diseases  $\times$  weight factor to account for severity – WHO.

**Yellow cake** Following purification of uranium 235 by removing the soil gangue, the resulting concentrate is a yellow powder, U308, also known as yellow cake, used for civilian and military purposes.

Cf. uranium

**Yellow fever** A highly contagious, acute, lethal viral disease of Africa and South America, transmitted by the *Aedes* mosquito. Death is due to liver and kidney failure. One of the few remaining quarantinable diseases, successfully preventable by vaccination.

Cf. endemic, epidemic, jaundice, quarantine

**Yoghurt** A nutritious, easily digestible, inexpensive dairy product, primarily based on curdled milk, suitable as nutrition in camps and for the physically ill.

Also yaourt, yogurt

**Yokohama Strategy** World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction, 1994, in Yokohama, Japan, promoting the UN International Decade for Disaster Reduction 1990–2000 and establishing strategies for a safer world.

Cf. IDNDR, ISDR, OCHA, Hyogo

**Z**

**Zaschita** Russian word for protection, the name of the All-Russian Centre for Disaster Medicine (ARCDM). Major governmental facility in Moscow for research, prevention, education and response in disaster medicine.

A WHO Collaborating Centre

**Zero option** The possibility of agreement between the nuclear powers to reduce the stockpiles of long-range nuclear missiles to nil. Double-zero applies to long-range and medium-range missiles.

Cf. nuclear war, WHOPAX, missiles

**Zone Zero/ZZ** In a disaster, the immediate area of maximum impact is the epicentre, Ground Zero. A further area of great damage, but less than at the epicentral GZ, surrounds this, with considerable but less destruction and where danger, search-and-rescue, exclusions and restrictions still apply. This secondary area is Zone Zero (ZZ). Example: In the Fukushima

disaster, Ground Zero was the area immediately around the damaged reactors, about 5 km. Beyond that, over a perimeter of 20 km, extends Zone Zero – Gunn.

Cf. Fukushima, epicentre, ground zero, Chernobyl

**Zonation/Microzoning** The division and subdivision of a geographical area – country, region, etc. – and mapping into sectors that are homogeneous with respect to given criteria, microzoning, e.g. according to population density, or a perceived use, resource, hazard, avalanche, seismic fault, flooding or other degrees of risk. It also includes regulations according to each zone or microzone. Also zonation, hazard mapping, resource mapping.

Cf. risk map

**Zoonosis** Any disease of animals that can be transmitted to man. Examples: rabies, yellow fever, dengue, foot-and-mouth disease, mad cow disease. Cf. dengue, rabies, yellow fever, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, epizootic