



UEM Guidelines for Emergency Support

1. Definitions

What is an emergency?

“An emergency is an unexpected and difficult or dangerous situation, especially an accident, which happens suddenly and which requires quick action to deal with it.”¹

What is a disaster?

“Disasters are serious disruptions to the functioning of a community that exceed its capacity to cope using its own resources. Disasters can be caused by natural, man-made and technological hazards, as well as various factors that influence the exposure and vulnerability of a community.”²

What is a hazard?

Natural hazards are naturally occurring physical phenomena. They can be:

- Geophysical: a hazard originating from solid earth (such as earthquakes, landslides and volcanic activity)
- Hydrological: caused by the occurrence, movement and distribution of water on earth (such as floods and avalanches)
- Climatological: relating to the climate (such as droughts and wildfires)
- Meteorological: relating to weather conditions (such as cyclones and storms)
- Biological: caused by exposure to living organisms and their toxic substances or diseases they may carry (such as disease epidemics and insect/animal plagues)

Man-made and technological hazards are events that are caused by humans and occur in or close to human settlements. They include complex emergencies, conflicts, industrial accidents, transport accidents, environmental degradation and pollution.³

2. The UEM Emergency Support

In the past, emergencies, disasters, hazards as defined above have occurred time and again in the area of the UEM member churches in Africa, Asia and Germany including those related to volcanic eruptions, droughts, typhoons, tsunamis, floods, epidemics, pandemics, warfare and civil war. Such or similar events can be expected in the future as well. In this regard the UEM Council adopted a position paper on dealing with emergencies already in 2006.

An appropriate approach to emergencies – which in most cases occur suddenly and unexpectedly – requires competent and rapid responses also on the part of the UEM. At the same time, prudent and strategically wise actions are required, with a timely coordination with the member churches being an indispensable element.

¹ <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/de/worterbuch/englisch/emergency>

² <https://www.ifrc.org/what-disaster>

³ <https://www.ifrc.org/what-disaster>



→ Therefore the UEM encourages member churches to have disaster preparedness measures/ disaster management systems/ plans in place as a precaution.

When an emergency happens in countries where the UEM members are located, the most vulnerable and marginalized are the most affected. Natural disasters and emergencies can quickly destroy communities. **That is why the response to a crisis must be as rapid as possible. The response is expected from all the UEM members following their capacity, building on the UEM belief of sharing gifts and responsibilities in a world torn apart.**

The UEM coordinates all emergency relief and the UEM member on the ground ensures that the most vulnerable, the most suffering and the most affected receive the attention and donations as soon as possible. Emergency relief shall be distributed responsibly, fairly and transparently by a UEM member. It is important to ensure that emergency aid helps affected people to recover quickly and lead normal lives.

The possible scale of an emergency and the extent to which financial or personnel support is to be provided is not always clear when the emergency occurs for the first time. As a general rule, the first assessment of an existing emergency or disaster and the fundamental definition of the resulting immediate measures shall be made by responsible UEM Secretaries for the regions Africa, Asia and Germany with their teams in cooperation with the applying church.

2.1 The UEM Emergency Support – Procedures

The UEM has a special basket to provide emergency relief to applying UEM members in the three regions.

The UEM will always inform all the UEM members of a certain emergency situation in one of the member churches and will issue an emergency appeal – if a relief of minimum 30.000 EUR is applied for and has been granted by the UEM Management Team.

Based on the definitions above, the UEM considers as an emergency situations which result from:

- Emergencies
- Disasters
- Hazards

The affected UEM member church can submit a project application – an “Emergency appeal” – to the respective Department for Africa, Asia or Germany – including a risk assessment (if possible) and no later than two weeks after such an event took place.

The contractual basics of an emergency support, namely the criteria, standards and processes are set in the document UEM Financial Support for Projects.

Emergency funds are intended for direct intervention by a UEM member.

→ *“Emergency relief means providing immediate assistance to the victims of conflicts or disaster situations.”⁴*

⁴ <https://www.wfp.org/emergency-relief>