

China's Civil Protection Mechanism: concept, actors and working mechanisms

Jin Ling

China Institute of International Studies, Beijing, China

Introduction

China's government has continuously put the protection of people's life and property at the top of its agenda. Acting on the principle of always placing people first, China has listed disaster prevention and protection in its economic and social development plan as an important guarantee of sustainable development (Information Office of the State Council of the PRC 2011). This paper will mainly discuss the actors, institutions and policy making in China's civil protection mechanism. Subsequently, the essay will further explore the changing practices of Chinese government toward international cooperation in civil protection.

1. The concept of 'Civil Protection' in the Chinese perspective

1.1 Civil defence and disaster relief

Civil defence, an international phrase, has evolved different ways in different countries. Culturally and historically, 'civil defence' is quite different from 'civil protection'. Civil defence, 'born out of wartime efforts to organize air-raid precautions, sheltering arrangements and alarms for non-combatants' (Minfangyuan 2007), has military origins and focuses on protection against foreign military attacks. Civil protection, on the other hand, has disaster origins and focuses on many forms of natural and man-made disasters and other public safety issues.

Actually, in China, two concepts co-exist, that is, 'renfang' (civil air defence) and 'minfang' (civil defence). In 1996, the Chinese government adopted the law of 'civil air defence'. The law is mainly about how to protect citizens against air strikes without mentioning protection from non-traditional threats. Now, there is still no law on 'civil defence' or 'civil protection'. But both in practice and theory, there are lots of theories and discussions on the integration of 'renfang' and 'minfang'. Three years after the adoption of civil air defence law, in 1999, Shanghai adopted the regulation of Shanghai civil defence, in which civil defence is defined in article 2, reading:

'the term civil defense refers to that the government mobilize and organize the public to take measures against the air strike, for disaster relief and to undertake rescue operations and hazard mitigation' (Shanghai Civil Defense Regulations 1999).

From the above concept, the broadened concept of ‘civil defence’, and the shift of the system from ‘civil air defence’ to ‘civil defence’ can be clearly seen. Its primary focus widens from protecting citizens from threats from air strikes in case of war to the protection of citizens against all kinds of disasters. In other words, with the increasing of non-traditional threats, especially after the outbreaks of SARS and avian flu and the devastating earthquake in Wenchuan and Yushu, the increasing tasks of civil defence is to prevent, relieve and reduce disasters effectively. By now, many provinces have made this kind of shift: at the province level, the civil air defence office has been renamed as civil defence office. But at the county level, the original institution is retained with expanding functions including disaster relief and reduction. From this point of view, China’s concept of ‘civil defence’, in practice, entails the concept of ‘civil protection’ and ‘civil air defence’, while putting emphasis on the former.

1.2 All hazards approach to define civil protection

China does not have a national law or regulation on civil protection. It is scattered in different laws and regulations and plans, seen from the form below, so in theory, China still lacks a common definition of ‘all hazards’, leading to a deficient legal system to support a unified approach to civil protection.

Laws (by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of PRC)	Regulations (by the State Council)	Plans (by the State Council)
Law of PRC on Protection Against and Mitigation of Earthquake Disasters (adopted in 1997)	Flood Control Regulations of PRC (adopted in 1991 and amended in 2005)	The Disaster Reduction Plan of PRC (1998-2010) (issued in 1998)
Flood Control Law of PRC (adopted in 1997)	Regulations on the Prevention and Control of Geological Disasters (adopted in 2003)	The General State Emergency Response Plan for Unexpected Public Emergencies (issued in 2005)
Meteorology Law of PRC (adopted in 1999)	Regulations on the Handling of Destructive Earthquake Emergencies (adopted in 2005)	The State Emergency Relief Plan for Natural Disasters (issued in 2006)
Law of PRC on the Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases (adopted in 1989 and amended in 2004)	Regulations on post-Wenchuan Earthquake Restoration and Reconstruction (adopted in 2008)	The State Emergency Plan for Earthquakes (issued in 2006)
The Emergency Response Law of PRC (adopted in 2007)	Drought Control Regulations of PRC (adopted in 2009)	The National 11th Five-Year Plan on Comprehensive Disaster Reduction (issued in 2007)

But as seen from the above laws, regulations and plans, China's civil protection also seems to take the all-hazards approach. Besides disaster relief and reduction, which mainly refers to natural disasters including meteorological disasters, earthquake, geological disasters, marine disasters and forest and grassland fires, also included are efforts to protect people's life and property against other man-made disasters such as traffic accidents and public security affairs. Article 3 of the Emergency Response Law of PRC (2007) says:

'An emergency incident as mentioned in this Law shall refer to a natural disaster, accidental disaster, public health incident or social safety incident, which takes place by accident, has caused or might cause serious social damage and needs the adoption of emergency response measures.'

Put more clearly, according to the explanation of Article 3, emergency responsive measures will be taken in the following four situations to ensure civil protection:

1. Natural disaster, including flooding and drought, meteorological disaster, earthquake, geological hazards, ocean disaster, biohazard and wild fire etc.
2. Accidents including those in different working areas, such as safety accident, traffic accident, public facilities accident, environmental pollution and ecologically destructive incidents.
3. Public health disasters, including infectious diseases.
4. Social security accidents including terrorism, economic security and some emergencies concerning foreign affairs (China Legal Education Network 2010).

Besides the inclusion of all possible threat types in a threat or risk assessment, China also takes a comprehensive approach to handling emergencies. From the comprehensive disaster reduction plan to the emergency law, the Chinese government attaches great importance to the need to optimize the integration of information, assessment, policies, capacities and capabilities. There has been a national multi-hazard risk assessment with a common methodology available to inform planning and development decisions (Ministry of Civil Affairs 2012). The main tasks of disaster reduction and the emergency response stress the capabilities not only as regards disaster relief and emergency response but also management of hidden risks of disasters, monitoring, early warning and forecasting. Besides that, reconstruction is also an integral part of China's civil protection. By now, much effort has been made to implement civil protection projects and to improve early warning, emergency response, science and technological support and human resource development, and community disaster relief systems.

2. Actors in China's civil protection system

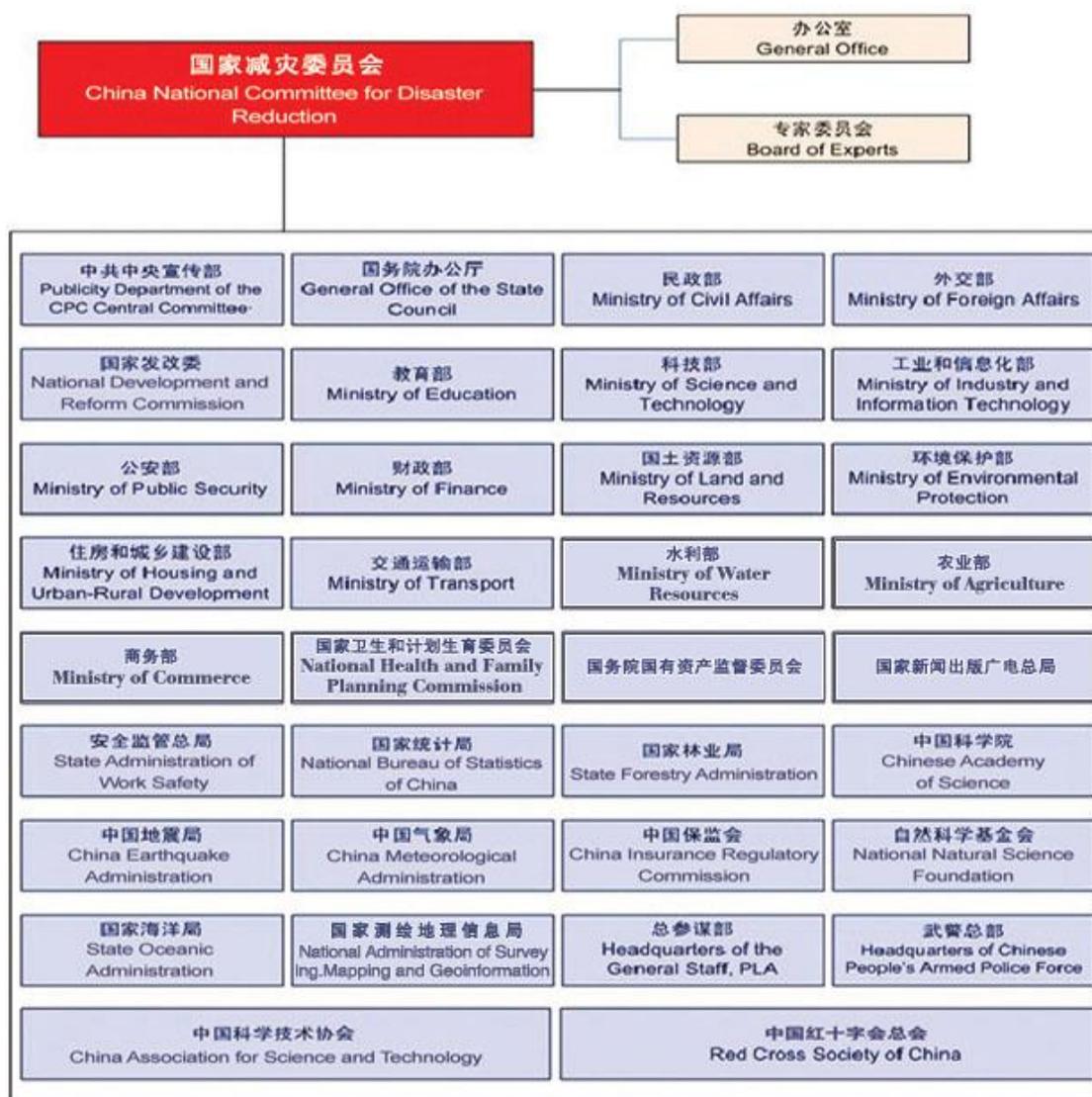
As mentioned above, China does not have a unified civil protection system. Through analyzing the different laws and regulations in related areas, we can find roles played by different actors. According

to the White Paper on ‘China’s actions for Disaster Prevention and Reduction’ and the ‘emergency law’, the main actors are the government at different levels, army and armed police and different social organizations.

2.1 The core role of government and departments at different levels

China adopts a hierarchical management system for civil protection, with the central government as the top leader and different government departments shoulder various responsibilities, as can be seen from the chart below. Government and its departments lead and coordinate all the stages of civil protection from prevention and preparedness, monitoring and warning to emergency response and reconstruction.

Figure 1



Sources: China National Committee for Disaster Reduction, at: <http://www.jianzai.gov.cn/2c92018234b241340134b2466b2e0011/index.html>

The White Paper says: *'China has adopted a disaster reduction and relief system featuring central leadership, departmental responsibility and disaster administrative at different levels with major responsibility on local authorities. Under the unified leadership of the state council, the central organs coordinating and organizing disaster reduction and relief work are the national disaster reduction committee, state flood and drought control headquarters, State Earthquake Control and Rescue headquarters, State forest fire control Headquarters and National Disaster Control and Relief coordination office. Local governments also have set up corresponding coordination offices to handle disaster reduction and relief work'* (Information Office of the State Council (2009).

China's emergency response management system features uniform leadership, comprehensive coordination, categorized management, graded responsibility and territorial management as its main principle. According to the Emergency Response Law, the top level leadership is within the state council in response to the emergencies. Different departments should be responsible for the emergency handling and management within its mandate according to relative laws and regulations. Local governments at different levels are the administrative leading organs responsible for the handling of emergencies within its territories. The specific regulation reads as follows:

The people's government at the county level shall be responsible for responding to an emergency incident within its administrative region; After the occurrence of an emergency incident, the people's government at the county level at the place of occurrence shall immediately take measures to control the developments of the incident, organize and carry out the emergency response rescue and operations, and immediately report on it to the people's government at the next higher level, or report without regard to the levels when necessary ('Emergency Response Law of PRC' 2007, Article 7).

Under the leadership of the Premier, the State Council shall study, decide and deploy response to an especially serious emergency incident; as needed in reality, shall form a state emergency response command body to be responsible for responding to the emergency incident; and when necessary, may send a task group to guide the relevant work (ibid., Article 8).

The State Council and all local people's governments at and above the county level shall be the leading administrative organs for emergency response, and their operating offices and specific duties and responsibilities shall be provided for by the State Council (ibid., Article 9).

So it is clearly seen that China also has a tendency to decentralize policy responsibilities for emergency response and 'scales up' the national level only when needed. But there exist the problems that lack of clear lines between the competences and responsibilities, lack of ownership at the local level because of the over intervention of the central government as well as the over dependence of the lower level of government on the upper one.

2.2 PLA, the armed police's pillar role in emergency response

In China, the legal basis for the participation in civil protection system is found in different levels of laws and regulations. The constitutional basis is laid as following that: 'The military's task is ... to

protect the people's peaceful work', which provides for the army to undertake non-military tasks. The National Defence law rules more clearly '...to fight against emergency and relieve disasters' (Article 58). And the emergency law also says that '*The People's Liberation Army of China, People's Armed Police Force and militia organizations shall participate in the emergency response rescue and operations in accordance with the provisions of this Law and other relevant laws, administrative regulations and military regulations as well as orders of the State Council and the Central Military Commission*' (*ibid.*, Article 14). The more specific role of the military and armed forces in civil protection is laid out in the 'regulation on the military participation in emergency response and disaster relief'.

Based on the principle of 'emergency rescue as the first priority', the regulation rules that 'the main task of military participation is to be the emergency task force to guarantee the military force mobilized at the key time and key space'. The principle of emergency rescue as the first priority means 'the military should take the tasks that are emergent, difficult and risky, with the systemic spillover effects and threats to citizens' lives. Military participation in emergency rescue and the disaster relief should be upon the request of the government. Under rare emergencies, the military could take active participation by the way of 'acting while reporting.' Under the unified leadership of different levels of government, the military also takes joint leading role with the locals to effectively coordinate the civil protection process, which is regulated by the article 6 of the regulation. It says that: 'It there is a headquarters established in emergency rescue and disaster relief at the county or above level, there should include the chair from the military organization on the same level as the member.'

The main tasks for the military forces in the emergency rescue and disaster relief are defined as follows:

- Rescue and evacuate stranded personnel;
- the security of important targets;
- transporting vital supplies;
- to participate in the road (bridges, tunnels) repair, maritime search and rescue, CBRN rescue, epidemic control, medical care and other specialized rescue;
- to eliminate or control other dangers and disasters.

When necessary, the military can assist local governments to carry out reconstruction work. Facing the task of disaster relief, China's military has taken a lot of specific measures to enhance the army's capabilities in emergency rescue, including taking measures to strengthen the systems for information sharing and mechanisms for coordination between the military and local residents. For example, during the 2010 earthquake which happened in Yushu, Qinghai province, the military were informed within 12 minutes. The defence ministry has established joint meeting mechanisms with more than twenty state council departments. Besides that, the military have also increased their technical capacities with regard to the handling of emergencies and have strengthened the legal framework through the adoption of a 'Regulation on the command of military emergency handling' (Xinhua undated).

Of course, there are still a lot of areas that need further clarification. For example, according to the regulation of military participation in emergency rescue, the military could self-initiate rescue if the

military don't have time to report. But the regulation does not specify the situations when the self-initiative could be launched. The same grey areas exist as to military participation in reconstruction. The military's role in other related laws and regulations such as the Emergency Response Law that is expanded by the 'regulation of military participation in emergency rescue and disaster relief is to rescue without participation in reconstruction. But there is also a lack of specific regulations, giving rise to some problems as to under what conditions the military should take part in reconstruction and at whose cost.

2.3 Social organizations' supporting role in civil protection

There is no law or regulations in China to regulate public participation in the civil protection mechanism. The Emergency Response Law articles 29 and 34 to some extent regulate the role of social organizations in civil protection: *'The residents' committees, the villagers' committees, enterprises and institutions shall carry out the publicity and dissemination of knowledge on the response to an emergency incident and necessary emergency response drilling, according to the requirements of the people's government at the place where they are located, in combination with their respective realities; The state shall encourage citizens, legal persons and other organizations to provide materials, funds, technical support and donations to the people's governments in the work on the response to emergency incidents.'*

The 'White Paper on disaster reduction and relief' also confirmed the role of the public and social organizations' participation. *'The Chinese government regards it as important to give full play to the role of the public in disaster prevention and reduction, and encourages and promotes wide public participation in such work by making people more aware and capable of disaster prevention and reduction.'* *'The Chinese government is very supportive of making public contributions a part of part of daily and social life, encouraging and guiding volunteers to take part in disaster prevention and reduction work.'*

After the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, Chinese people, enterprises and social organizations were actively involved in related emergency relief work, with over 3 million volunteers from both inside and outside China working in the quake hit areas and more than 10 million volunteers participating in relief work in the rear across the country. According to the survey conducted upon the 60 civil organizations, 14 per cent of the organizations took immediate action after the earthquake, and 73.2 per cent acted within 24 hours. The wide involvement of social organizations in the disaster reduction to a large extent eased the negative impacts resulting from the 'government failure' in some aspects with personalized services provided to the victims.

But generally speaking, government Non-Governmental Organizations still lack initiative and independence, and their acts are more task-oriented than need-oriented. Besides that, they are still short of capabilities in dealing with the sudden influx of donations, hindering the maximization in effect of the donations. Secondly, those organizations, generally based on very loose structures and a shortage of resources, still lack effective coordination mechanisms. Thirdly, social organizations' involvement in disaster reduction also lacks sustainability, which means they may only be actively involved at the beginning of disaster. According to the statistics, one year after the devastating

earthquake in Sichuan/Wenchuan, most of the social organizations had left. Actually, they are expected to play a bigger role in reconstruction after the quake, which is contrary to the foreign civil protection experiences (Xiao Chao (2013)).

3. Working mechanisms of China's civil protection

As mentioned above, China lacks a unified mechanism for civil protection. But in practice China has developed its working mechanisms in related areas.

Institutionally, on the national level, China established a national disaster reduction committee, in charge of coordinating nationwide disaster prevention and relief. The chairman of the committee is the Vice Prime Minister who is responsible for the affairs of agriculture, disaster reduction and civil administration. The committee has 34 membership institutions which include the military, the armed police and the Red Cross. In order to better coordinate disaster relief, there are four working institutions on the national level, which are the Office of National Disaster Reduction, the Comprehensive Coordination Office of Disaster Rescue and Relief, the Department of Disaster Rescue in Civil Affairs and the National Center of Disaster Reduction.

Legally, besides the 'Emergency Response Law' adopted in 2007, China revised the 'Natural Disaster Relief Emergency Plan' in 2011, which specifically regulates the organizations and the procedures regarding emergency preparedness, information management, warning, emergency response and reconstruction. Thus, we could conclude from the above-mentioned laws, with the years of experience in disaster reduction and relief, that the Chinese government has established working mechanisms in civil protection geared to the nation's situation, including prevention and preparedness mechanisms, warning mechanism, emergency response and post-emergency reconstruction mechanisms.

3.1 Prevention and emergency response preparedness

For prevention and emergency response preparedness, China's government has established sound working mechanisms as to the emergency plan, relief materials reserve system and information sharing system in natural disaster rescue and reduction.

The emergency response plan of the central government is formed of 2 levels:

- The State Council makes the overall state emergency response plans; organizes and makes the specialized state emergency response plans;
- The relevant departments of the State Council make the departmental state emergency response plans in their respective capacities in line with the relevant emergency response plans of the State Council.

The local people's governments at all levels and the relevant departments of the local people's governments at and above the county level make the corresponding emergency response plans in accordance with the relevant laws, administrative regulations and rules, emergency response plans of the people's governments at higher levels and their relevant departments, and local realities (see

Information Office of the State Council (2011); also the 'Emergency Response Law of PRC' 2007, Article 17).

To offer timely and effective support for the decision-making of the central government and local departments in case of emergency, China has initiated the construction of a disaster information database and launched a public platform of national geographical information and a disaster information publishing and sharing system, as well as a platform for national disaster reduction and risk management (see Information Office of the State Council 2011).

China has built a relief materials reserve network based on special storehouses, which has seen year-on-year improvements. The country has now ten such storehouses for daily necessities at the central level. Coupled with the reserve relief supply centers established in some provinces, cities and counties, a preliminary disaster control and relief materials reserve system has taken shape. To guarantee the timely purchase of relief supplies, a list of commissioned relief supply manufacturers is established, and emergency purchase agreements signed with them for the supply of relief materials in case of emergency.

Besides the above rather sound mechanisms, there are other measures taken to prevent and prepare for emergencies, including routine public mobilization to increase the public awareness of hazards, and inspecting and monitoring procedures required in the daily management of local governments. For example, 'The people's government at the provincial level or the people's government of a city with districts shall investigate, register and assess the risks of, organize the inspection and monitoring of, and order the relevant entities to take safety preventative and control measures for the danger sources and danger areas liable to cause especially serious and serious emergency incidents within its administrative region.' (Emergency Response Law of PRC' 2007, Article 20).

3.2 Surveillance and warning system

The surveillance and warning system mainly consists of the emergency incident information system and the information reporter system.

According to the Emergency Response Law, there should be a uniform emergency incident information system established both by the state council and every local people's government at or above the county level. The emergency incident information system at the local level should make the interconnection with the emergency incident information systems of the people's governments at higher levels and their relevant departments. A full-time or part-time information reporter system should be established by the local government in the residents' committees, the villagers' committees and the relevant entities.

With the incident information gathered, local people's government at or above the county level should quickly summarize and analyze information on the hidden risks and warning of emergency incidents, and when necessary, organize consultations and make assessments of the possibility of occurrence of an emergency incident and the effects likely to be caused by the incident; and when deeming that a serious or especially serious emergency incident is likely to occur, should immediately report it to the relevant departments of the higher people's government, and notify the locally

stationed army and the people's government at the adjacent or relevant place likely to be affected.

The warning system regulates the different procedures initiated and different measures taken.

The levels of warning of natural disasters, accidental disasters and public health incidents that may be warned of are divided into level 1, level 2, level 3 and level 4 according to the degree of emergency, trend of development and degree of damage likely to be caused by an emergency incident, and should be marked in red, orange, yellow and blue respectively, with level 1 being the highest level. The criteria for division of levels of warning shall be made by the State Council or the department as determined by the State Council.

Where a natural disaster, accidental disaster or public health incident that may be warned of is about to occur or the possibility of occurrence grows, in accordance with the powers and procedures as provided for by the relevant laws and regulations and the State Council, a local people's government at or above the county level should issue a relevant level of warning, decide and declare that a relevant region enters a period of warning, and report on it to the people's government at the next higher level at the same time, and when necessary, may report without regard to the levels, and notify the locally stationed army and the people's government at the adjacent or relevant place likely to be damaged (see 'Emergency Response Law of PRC' 2007, Articles 37-47).

3.3 Emergency response operations and rescue

Maybe because of the difficulty in regulating response procedures for a wide variety of emergency incidents referred to in the Emergency Response Law, it does not specify the operation mechanisms. The law only regulates the kinds of measures that should be taken under different emergencies. But the mechanisms can be perceived through the revised emergency plan for natural disasters. This plan lays out the response operation mechanism in great detail.

According to the plan, there are four different response mechanisms according to different scale of disasters:

- The highest level will be initiated by the State Council upon the decision of the vice prime minister under one of these four conditions: the casualties are more than 200; more than 1 million inhabitants need evacuation; over 200,000 houses collapse; or food and water shortages due to the disaster or drought affect over 30 per cent of inhabitants (or more than 4 million). As long as the highest level plan is initiated, the response operation will be conducted under the unified leadership of the National Disaster Reduction Committee with the participation of relevant ministries and the experts committee. The ministries should take responsibility within their competence.
- The second level one should be initiated by the ministry of Civil Affairs under one of the following conditions: the casualties are over 100 but less than 200; more than 800,000 but less than 1 million people need evacuation or emergency aid; more than 150,000-200,000 houses collapse; or food and water shortages due to the disaster or drought affect over 25 per cent of inhabitants (or more than 3 million). Under this level of emergency, the response operation will be coordinated by the vice president of National

Disaster Reduction Committee (Minister of Civil Affairs)

- The third level of responding system will be initiated upon the decision by the General Secretary of National Disaster Reduction Committee on one of these four conditions: the casualties are between 50 and 100; the displaced between 300,000 and 500,000 thousands and between 100-150 collapsed houses.
- The lowest level is in the hands of the bureau of Disaster Relief under one of the following conditions: more than 30 but less than 50 deaths; more than 100,000 people displaced; more than 10,000 houses falling down; or an earthquake that is above 5 in magnitude with 20 deaths.

Besides that, there is also a very specific working mechanism for disaster response. The Disaster Relief bureau should be on duty , and a joint working group will be established and go to the disaster area within 24 hours , the relief materials should be accessible within 24 hours while emergency funds should be allocated within 72 hours.

3.4 *Post-emergency response, rehabilitation and reconstruction*

Both the Emergency Response Law and the revised emergency plan for the natural disaster consider the reconstruction after the disasters as the indispensable parts of Civil Protection. According to the Emergency Response Law, 'After the end of emergency response operations, the people's government performing the responsibility for uniform leadership shall immediately organize the assessment of losses, organize the affected areas to restore the production, living, working and social order as soon as possible, make rehabilitation and reconstruction plans, and report them to the people's government at the next higher level'.

Where the rehabilitation and reconstruction to be carried out by the people's government in an area affected by an emergency incident require the support of the people's government at the next higher level, a request may be submitted. According to the losses suffered by the affected area and its actual conditions, the people's government at the next higher level shall provide funds, material support and technical guidance and organize other areas to provide funds, materials and human resource support (see 'Emergency Response Law of PRC' 2007, Articles 58-62).

But China's government is still on the way to recognizing the importance of comprehensive approaches to post-emergency rescue. Currently, rescue is mainly focussed on financial and material support led by the government. There is still a lack of mobilization of social actors to participate in post-emergency reconstruction.

4. **International cooperation in civil protection**

Adopting an open and cooperative attitude, China takes an active part in international efforts in the field of disaster reduction, the establishment and improvement of international cooperative mechanisms of disaster reduction, the building up of worldwide capacity in this regard, and the provision of mutual aid with other countries in major natural disasters. China has provided Asian, African and Latin American countries with official aid in disaster relief, incorporating disaster

reduction and relief into bilateral aid (Information Office of the State Council 2009).

In 2001, China's international search and rescue team (CISAR) was established. Its main task is to search for and rescue the victims of earthquake and other disasters. The members of CISAR consists of the China Seismological bureau, the engineering department of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the staff from the general hospital of the armed police, totaling 230, which has been expanded to 480 in 2010. By now, CISAR has participated in many relief tasks in different regions including search and rescue in Algeria and Iran in 2003, a medical care team in Indonesia in 2004 after the devastating tsunami, and other comprehensive rescue tasks in Pakistan, Haiti and Japan, amongst others. There were also exchanges between CISAR and other countries including, a CISAR delegation joining the training programme in Europe in 2002.

4.1 Cooperation with UN organizations

China has actively participated in international disaster reduction cooperation within a multilateral framework and has stepped up efforts to promote regional cooperation in the field of disaster reduction and relief. China has established close cooperative partnerships with disaster-related United Nations (UN) agencies in the field of disaster reduction and has actively participated in disaster reduction cooperation within the UN framework.

In March 2006, China donated USD 1 million to the UN central Emergency Response fund. In November the same year, the Chinese government and UN organization in China jointly held a symposium on emergency aid in retrospective of the India Ocean tsunami, reviewing the use of China's multilateral emergency aid. China has cooperated with the international strategy committee for disaster reduction in establishing the International Center for Drought Risk Reduction, and has been involved in the work of the United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) whose Beijing office was set up in 2010. In more than three years' operation, the office has provided many of emergency services, expert consultations and technical support in international disaster rescue including help in the African drought in 2011, the earthquake in Japan and flooding in Iraq, though providing data and imaging services. Experts sent from China have joined the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) , repeated undertaking UN tasks. Actively involved with UN international search and rescue activities, China has been actively promoting global cooperation in the area of disaster emergency relief.

4.2 Cooperation with Asian countries

China has played an active role in building up a dialogue and exchange platform for disaster reduction between Asian countries. In September 2005, the Chinese government hosted the first Asian ministerial conference on disaster risk reduction in Beijing, which adopted the Beijing Action Plan for reducing disaster risks in Asia and laid the basis for further cooperation between Asian countries in this regard.

China's cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in disaster relief and

reduction also achieved a significant amount. For example in 2013, China hosted a series of symposium and emergency practices under the framework of 10+1. China and ASEAN have decided to jointly set up a marine cooperation fund which is mainly for disaster prevention and reduction. During Premier Li Keqiang's visits, he put forward a set of initiatives, for example, to set up the China-ASEAN disaster reduction cooperative action plan, to drill marine search and rescue and earthquake practices. During the recently held 13th Disaster Relief meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum, China's delegation strongly advocated institutionalized cooperation with ASEAN in disaster relief and reduction including the establishment of surveillance and warning mechanism for the serious natural disasters, the setting up of a space information data sharing platform and a mutual personnel exchange mechanism to share experiences.

Besides that, China's government also actively promotes a warning and disaster reduction system in the South China Sea. Under China's leadership, the systematic construction plan for the tsunami warning and disaster reduction has been accepted by the relative UN bodies. Now China is undertaking to build the tsunami consulting centre.

4.3 Cooperation within the SCO framework

China has prompted the inter-governmental cooperation in disaster relief among the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states. In April 2002, leaders of emergency relief departments of the SCO member states held their first meeting in St Petersburg. In 2003, an expert conference was held in Beijing to discuss the Inter-Governmental Mutual Aid Agreement among SCO members and the agreement was signed in 2005. Following the agreement, SCO member states has adopted two action plans which laid the framework for carrying out activities in disaster relief communications, information exchange, disaster relief in border areas, personnel training and technical exchanges. A joint disaster relief drill code named 'Rescue Cooperation 2013' was held among SCO members in Zhejiang province, to exchange experiences in handling disasters in big cities. Disaster relief teams from China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan participated in the drill, and more than one thousand people attended. The first such drill was held in 2009 (Yan Yiqi 2013).

4.4 Cooperation with Europe

Whether compared with the cooperation between China and other regions or with cooperation with the EU in other areas, China-Europe cooperation in disaster relief and reduction or in other civil protection areas is very limited. There is no mention of China-EU cooperation in China's disaster reduction action plan and there is also no related information from the EU's side except the joint project for managing disaster risks. Under the China-EU 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation, signed during the December 2013 summit held in Beijing, both sides advocate promoting cooperation and policy dialogue in the area of disaster prevention, preparedness for natural and technical disaster and emergency response. Now, however, there is still a lack of specific plans or institutionalized cooperation between the two sides still remains.

However, there is some non-institutionalized cooperation between the two sides, which could be the

basis for further cooperation. Between 1995 and 2010, European Commission funding of EUR 25.8 million was provided in response to floods, snow storms, droughts and earthquakes which hit China. After the 2008 devastating earthquake in Sichuan the European Commission offered its support to China's disaster risk reduction work. In November 2010, in the presence of Commissioner Georgieva and State Counsellor Ma Kai, the European Union and the Government of China signed a 6 million EUR Financing Agreement to establish the 'EU-China Disaster Risk Management' project. Funds come from the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI). China is providing 3 million EUR of in-kind support to the project (European Commission 2012).

Under the cooperation framework, there will be a high level workshop annually. The workshop has now been held twice. Both sides exchanged ideas extensively on strengthening international cooperation in emergency management, improving emergency response speed and emergency prevention. They also exchanged ideas about good practices in emergency disposal as well as lessons gleaned from experience in dealing with emergency situations, achieving the intended goal of mutual advancement.

On the member states' level, there is also some scattered cooperation between China and Britain, France and Germany amongst others. In 2009, China and Germany jointly launched the programme of 'China-Germany disaster risk management' to promote the effectiveness and efficiency of China's disaster risk management system at different administrative level. In 2011, China and Germany started a joint Master's degree education project to explore the Chinese disaster emergency response system.

In January 2013 China's Ministry of Civil Affairs and the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) jointly launched the Sharing and Learning Program on Community-Based Disaster Management in Asia (CBDM Asia) with the aim to increase resilience to disasters like earthquakes, floods and typhoons in developing countries by strengthening regional cooperation on community-based disaster risk reduction.

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