



**MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL DEFENCE ORGANIZATION (ICDO)
ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD CIVIL DEFENCE DAY (WCDD) 2022**

Honorable Actors in civil defense,

On this eve of the celebration of World Civil Defense Day 2022, allow me, from the start of the traditional message from the General Secretariat of the International Civil Defense Organization (ICDO), to reiterate to all actors in the civil defense chain around the world, the sincere encouragement of the ICDO regarding management of the current crisis relative to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Indeed, the end of 2019 was marked by the arrival of the Coronavirus, which has evolved in several successive forms, causing despair within human communities due to its virulence and, in the sphere of decision-making, a certain vehemence due to the rapid search for solutions to a problem whose contours are not all clear but against which we have the duty to protect populations.

In addition, the world of civil defense is confronted with managing this pandemic, which has begun its third year of existence, fortunately in a more serene environment.

The impact of this pandemic should not allow us forget the suffering of populations in the face of crises of other kinds. This is all the more so since the virus has emerged at a time when the planet is affected by the effects of climate change and communities are impacted by socio-political crises, the main corollary of which is the displacement of populations.

Under these circumstances, the ICDO invites civil defense actors to focus on the involvement of volunteers in prevention of the displacement of people, and in providing care to Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees in a context of pandemic and weakening of the economic fabric. For this reason, the ICDO is calling upon the international community to strengthen national legislation for the development and sustainability of volunteerism for communities that are more resilient to the risks of disaster.



Volunteers, it should be remembered, are an indispensable link in risk and disaster management, which is sometimes forgotten or ignored. Volunteers constitute the broadest layer of civil defense actors; they are closest to the realities of their communities and are also the least expensive resource.

Thus, it was by design that the ICDO chose the following theme to celebrate World Civil Defense Day on 1 March 2022: ***“CIVIL DEFENCE AND MANAGEMENT OF DISPLACED POPULATIONS IN FACE OF DISASTERS AND CRISES; ROLE OF VOLUNTEERS AND THE FIGHT AGAINST PANDEMICS”***.

Therefore, I call on the international community to capitalize on the potential of this category of actors in a momentum of coordinated management of the movement of people and the fight against the ongoing pandemic.

The mobilization of volunteers for disaster risk management is recommended at all levels of society. This is more so the case, in the prevention phase, in environments that bring together people on a continuous basis, such as schools, markets, hospitals, etc. In all cases, whether in risk prevention or disaster response for which more specialized volunteers are required, volunteering must be taken into account in national, sectoral or specific response plans.

In the event of an emergency, people always intervene first; if they are better trained and recognized as volunteers, this will facilitate the task of professionals and, as a result, the communities will be more resilient.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm the commitment of the ICDO, as in the past, to support national structures with implementation of this concept.

N. YAP Mariatou

General Secretary