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**NATO SECRETARY GENERAL SIGNS  
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON CIVIL EMERGENCY PLANNING  
AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS WITH RUSSIA**

This morning, on the occasion of the Secretary General's visit to Moscow, a Memorandum of Understanding on Civil Emergency Planning and Disaster Preparedness was signed between NATO and the Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters (EMERCOM of Russia).

The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Secretary General Javier Solana and Minister Sergei K. Shoigu of EMERCOM within the framework of Partnership for Peace. This agreement notes the commitment of the Russian Federation to develop cooperation in disaster preparedness with NATO Member States. In addition, the MOU underlines the strong commitment of both NATO and the Russian Federation to protection of population in case of disaster, natural or man-made (including the trans-boundary effects of technological disaster).

Moreover, it provides for the continuation of close cooperation between NATO and the Russian Federation to improve the international mechanism for disaster relief. In this regard, both EMERCOM and NATO agree to increase their efforts in support of UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 and, in particular, their continued active support for the United Nations - Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-DHA) Project "On the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief". In this field, NATO and EMERCOM continue to have active military and civil cooperation in various disaster relief exercises organized within the framework of Partnership for Peace and under the aegis of the UN.

Building upon the work of NATO's Civil Protection Committee, NATO's "Policy on Cooperation for Disaster Assistance in Peacetime" and the activities carried out by the Russian Federation in this field, NATO and EMERCOM have agreed to:

- accelerate support for practical cooperation and mutual assistance in disaster prevention, warning and detection, mitigation and response with emphasis on pre-disaster planning;
- continue, as provided for in the Partnership Work Programme and the Individual Partnership Programme of the Russian Federation, sponsorship

of and participation in seminars, workshops, and exercises to develop further the ability to operate in such fields as, search and rescue and humanitarian operations; and

- cooperate in the development of arrangements to expedite and facilitate the provision of international aid in times of disaster.

In order to bolster the lasting mutual commitment to and importance of enhanced cooperation in Civil Emergency Planning including disaster prevention, mitigation and response, it was planned that a meeting of NATO's Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPC) involving all Partner Countries would be held in 1997 in the Russian Federation. At this meeting, the first of SCEPC to be held in a Cooperation Partner country, national heads of Civil Emergency Planning organizations from NATO and Partner countries will focus on practical, concrete steps for further cooperation.

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