ISTANBUL CONVENTION

Its full name is "Convention on temporary admission" (done at Istanbul, 26 June 1990). It is a new convention which has combined within one international instrument all existing Conventions on temporary admission, including the A.T.A. Convention. It provides simplified and harmonized procedures and standardized model Customs documents for temporary importation of goods (including means of transport) specified in the Annexes to this Convention. It entered into force on 27 November 1993.

One annex deals directly with humanitarian assistance, namely:

Annex B.9. concerning goods imported for humanitarian purposes

This annex contains provisions for temporary admission of goods imported for humanitarian purposes, namely medical, surgical and laboratory equipment and relief consignments ("all goods, such as vehicles and other means of transport, blankets, tents, prefabricated houses or other goods of prime necessity, forwarded as aid to those affected by natural disaster and similar catastrophes").

By definition, the provisions of this Annex apply only to those goods involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance which are imported temporarily and are subject to re-export from the country of importation.

As some of the goods imported for humanitarian purposes (e.g. all disaster relief items and, occasionally, some equipment of disaster relief teams) might eventually have to stay in the recipient country, their "temporary admission may be terminated by clearance for home use, when circumstances justify and national legislation so permits" (Article 13 of the body of the Istanbul Convention).

Several other annexes are also relevant to the delivery of humanitarian assistance:

Annex A concerning temporary admission papers (ATA carnets and CPD carnets)

This Annex replaces the A.T.A. Convention, Brussels, 6 December 1961 (see above) and contains the provisions of this convention in full. In addition, it contains provisions related to the temporary importation of means of transport.

Appendices I and II provide model forms for international Customs documents for temporary admission of goods (ATA carnet) and of means of transport (CPD carnet - Carnet de Passage en Douane). These documents may also be issued and used for transit. (The first pages of the ATA and CPD carnets are reproduced for information in Annex 3 and Annex 4 to this paper.)
The remarks concerning the A.T.A. Convention are valid for this Annex.

Annex B.2. concerning professional equipment

It contains provisions for temporary admission of, inter alia, transmission and communication equipment, instruments and apparatus necessary for doctors, surgeons, veterinary surgeons, midwives and members of similar professions, measuring, checking or testing equipment, etc.

This Annex replaces the Customs Convention on the temporary importation of professional equipment, Brussels, 8 June 1961. Its provisions might be applied for movement of disaster relief teams' equipment which, though not directly involved in relief operations, is forwarded to fight and eliminate consequences of natural and similar disasters, e.g. for elimination of pollution of all types, decontamination of buildings and territories, inspection of industrial structures, etc.

Annex B.6. concerning travellers' personal effects and goods imported for sport purposes

It contains provisions for temporary admission of, inter alia, personal effects, including portable personal computers, portable sound recorders and reproducers, video cameras etc., being brought by any person who temporarily enters a Customs territory for professional meetings, business etc.

This Annex replaces the application of Articles 2 and 5 of the Convention concerning Customs facilities for touring, New York, 4 June 1954; its provisions cover movement of personal effects of disaster relief team members, which must be imported on a team member or in his/her baggage (whether or not accompanied) and which include all articles, new or used, which the team member may reasonably require, taking into account all circumstances of his/her journey, but excluding any goods imported for commercial purposes.

Annex C concerning means of transport

It contain provisions for temporary admission of means of transport and of spare parts and equipment for their repair. The provisions of this Annex would be applied when the means of transport arrive as disaster relief items or as search and rescue team equipment.

Annex D concerning animals

It contain provisions for temporary admission of animals, in particular, for rescue operations. The provisions of this Annex would be applied when a search and rescue team is accompanied by specially trained dogs.