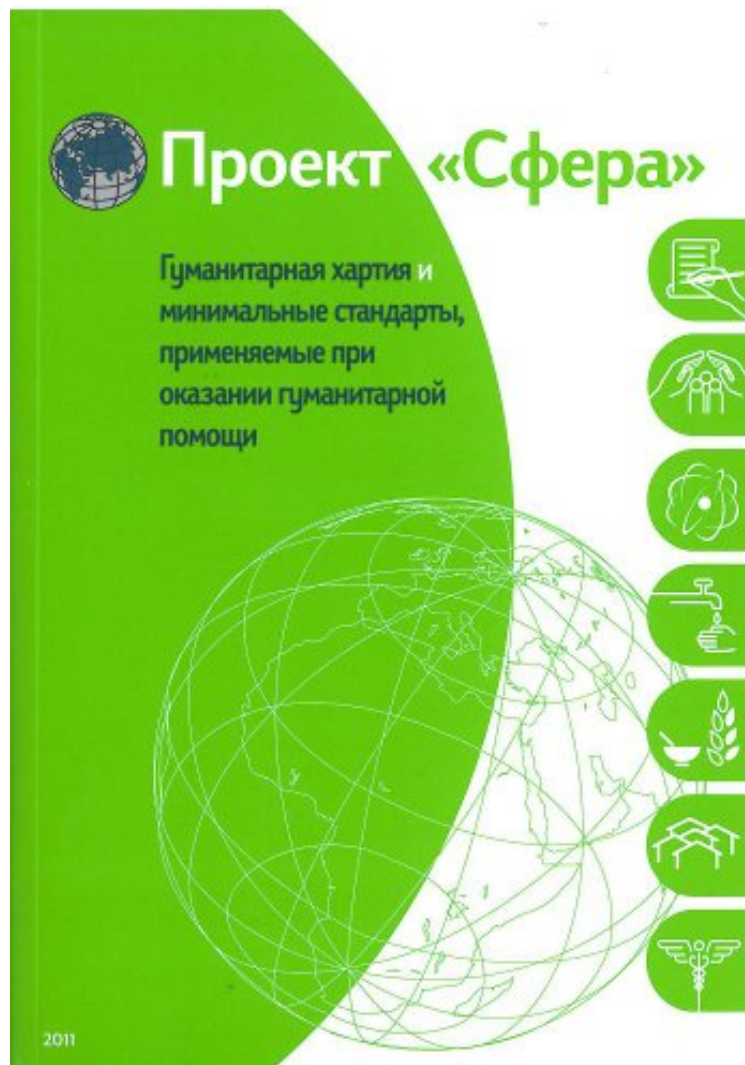


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The Sphere Project is an initiative to determine and promote standards by which the global community responds to the plight of people affected by disasters. With this Handbook, Sphere is working for a world in which the right of all people affected by disasters to re-establish their lives and livelihoods is recognized and acted upon in ways that respect their voice and promote their dignity and security. This Handbook contains: * A Humanitarian Charter: legal and moral principles which reflect the rights of disaster-affected populations * Protection Principles * Core Standards and Minimum Standards in four key life-saving humanitarian sectors: Water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion; Food security and nutrition; Shelter, settlement and non-food items; Health action. They describe what needs to be achieved in a humanitarian response in order for disaster-affected populations to survive and recover in stable conditions and with dignity. The Sphere Handbook enjoys broad ownership by agencies and individuals, offering the humanitarian sector a common language for working together towards quality and accountability in disaster and conflict situations. The Sphere Handbook has a number of companion standards, extending its scope in response to needs that have emerged within the humanitarian sector. The Sphere Project was initiated in 1997 by a number of humanitarian NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

About the Author The Sphere Project is a program of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response and InterAction with VOICE, ICRC, ICVA. It is an NGO and Red Cross/Red Crescent initiative to enhance the accountability of the humanitarian system, primarily to those persons who have a right to protection and assistance in disasters.