



International Strategy for Disaster Reduction



# Towards National Resilience

Good practices of National Platforms  
for Disaster Risk Reduction

2008



United Nations



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# Foreword

The impact of disasters has been dramatically increasing over the decades. This is due to the fact that communities and their assets have been more exposed to the impact of natural hazards. Unplanned urbanization, environmental degradation, population growth and poverty are some of the inter-linked factors that increase their vulnerability. Disasters are especially ruinous for developing countries: the smaller the economy and the weaker the infrastructure, the greater the human cost and damage to development prospects. In addition, hydrometeorological disasters already appear to be increasing in frequency and intensity, consistent with climate change predictions. Efforts to build resilience to disasters are therefore more urgent than ever.

To deal comprehensively with disaster risk, 168 countries and organisations gathered in January 2005 at the Second World Conference on Disaster Reduction, where they unanimously adopted the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. The Hyogo Framework (HFA) recommends five priorities for action to create a safer and more disaster-resilient world. Crucially, the HFA gives guidelines on how to implement changes in order to arrive at its goal of "[s]ubstantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries".

A particular emphasis of the HFA is the need for multi-stakeholder involvement and national coordination to reduce disaster risk. Specifically, it recalls earlier recommendations and UN resolutions in asking countries to set up institutional mechanisms (National Platforms) for disaster risk reduction. These National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction will have designated responsibilities to ensure that disaster risk reduction becomes a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation. They will be critical mechanisms for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of disaster risk measures at national level, by harnessing the potential of all stakeholders in this field.

At present, 45 countries have already launched National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction. Several other countries are in a process of establishing them. This publication aims to inspire and support the birth of new National Platforms, and also to strengthen existing ones.

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## Introduction

Governments increasingly recognize the need for comprehensive multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral national coordinating mechanisms to reduce, prevent and manage the impact of natural hazards. This commitment was expressed in several United Nations Economic and Social Council and General Assembly Resolutions adopted at the end of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR 1990-1999). More recently, the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA), adopted by 168 governments at the 2005 World Conference for Disaster Reduction, emphasized the importance of setting up National Platforms with designated responsibilities at national and local level.

A National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is a nationally owned and nationally led forum or committee for advocacy, coordination, analysis and advice on disaster risk reduction (DRR). Ideally, a National Platform is built on existing mechanisms, and is comprised of the full range of stakeholders concerned with disaster risk reduction, harnessing their combined potential to build resilience to disasters. Stakeholders include government (relevant line ministries and disaster management authorities), non-governmental organizations, academic and scientific institutions, professional associations, Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, the private sector, and the media. National Platforms have also invited bilateral development agencies, United Nations organizations and the World Bank to participate.

Following the provisions of the HFA, a National Platform should be *the coordination* mechanism for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development policies, planning and programmes. As such, they should cover all issues and sectors related to disaster risk reduction including agriculture, community development, education, energy, environment, financing for development, housing, infrastructure, planning, science and technology, and water and sanitation.

Government officials and HFA Focal Points gathered for the First Consultative Meeting on National Platforms in Pretoria, South Africa, in October 2006, with support of the UN/ISDR secretariat and ISDR system members. At this meeting, the national representatives requested the UN/ISDR secretariat to document good practices of National Platforms for DRR. This resulting publication of good practices collects nine country cases, giving examples of how National Platforms have been established and how they have worked. The good practices show how to engage in international exchange for mutual learning and improvement of national Disaster Risk Management (DRM) systems (China), how to successfully decentralize DRR moving from national to local coordinating mechanisms (Colombia), how to mobilize funds for DRR (Costa Rica), how to serve as the national knowledge hub and organize international events for DRR (Germany), how to establish and implement comprehensive national action plans for DRM (Iran and Sri Lanka), how to successfully use National Platforms to prepare

for hazardous events through contingency planning (Madagascar), how to integrate DRR in national development plans (Nigeria) and how to ensure multi-stakeholder coordination and sustained commitment over a longer period of time (Switzerland). These examples demonstrate the added value of multi-sectoral National Platforms, and how much countries can learn directly from each other.

This publication is primarily aimed at National Disaster Management Authorities and national disaster risk reduction stakeholders, but also ISDR system partners and bilateral development agencies. It is hoped that it will fuel further national commitment and concrete action in establishing and working through National Platforms to reduce disaster risk.

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# China

## Enhancing regional and international cooperation for building the resilience of nations and communities to disasters

*National Committee for Disaster Reduction (NCDR)*

Community Disaster Reduction Campaign



### Context

China is the most populous country in the world, and with a size of 9.6 million square kilometers, is also one of the largest, stretching over several climate zones and encompassing diverse landscapes and topography. China is a country prone to all kinds of natural hazards, including floods, droughts, landslides, earthquakes, and cyclones. There is increasing vulnerability of communities to natural hazards, due to both the growing impact of climate change, and the impact of the country's rapid industrialization and urbanization. Since the early 1990s, China has entered a period of frequent disasters, characterized by weather and climate extremes and a sharp increase in damage losses. Each year, disasters affect an average of 300 million people in China and require the relocation of four million people. On average, four million houses are damaged by natural hazards. The direct economic losses exceed RMB 200 billion (about US\$29 billion). Nowadays the losses caused by disasters are estimated to be 40% higher than losses in the 1980s. This has become a serious threat to China's sustainable development.

In this context, and in recognition of international moves towards disaster risk reduction, the State Council of China established the China National Committee for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction in April 1989, in preparation for the UN International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) 1990-1999. At the end of the International Decade, the State Council renamed the Committee the National Committee for Disaster Reduction (NCDR). It was declared in April 2005 to be China's National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, with the support of the UN/ISDR secretariat.

The NCDR has the mandate to coordinate emergency management and disaster risk reduction measures. It focuses the national agenda on disaster risk reduction, which is increasingly viewed as critical to realizing sustainable socio-economic development. In 1997, the State Council adopted the National Disaster Reduction Plan of the People's Republic of China (1998-2010), which is being implemented. Disaster risk reduction has become a priority at all administrative levels, through the implementation of projects and related work throughout the country.

## National Platform Structure and Activities

### *Focal Point Institution*

The NCDR is a counselling and coordination structure operating under the guidance of the State Council's Vice-Premier responsible for disaster issues. It is hosted by the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

### *Membership*

The NCDR has 34 members, who represent the range of expertise required for promoting and mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development planning and processes. They come from the following entities:

- Government Ministries: Ministry of Civil Affairs; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Commission of Development and Reform; Ministry of Science and Technology; Ministry of Commerce; Ministry of Education; Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defence; Ministry of Public Security; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Land Resources; Ministry of Construction; Ministry of Railways; Ministry of Communications; Ministry of Information Industry; Ministry of Water Resources; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Public Health;
- State Bureaus: State Bureau of Environmental Protection; State Bureau of Radio, Film and Television; State Bureau of Safety Supervision; State Statistical Bureau; State Bureau of Forestry; State Seismological Bureau; State Meteorological Administration; State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping; State Commission of Insurance Supervision;
- National Defence organizations: Army General Staff Headquarters; Armed Police Headquarters;
- Technical Services: Chinese Academy of Sciences; National Bureau of Oceanography; Society of Natural Science Fund; Chinese Science and Technology Association;
- Civil Society: Red Cross Society of China

### *Operational practices*

The NCDR coordinates with its member organizations to fulfill their respective roles and responsibilities in disaster risk reduction including early warning, disaster relief including search and rescue operations, rehabilitation and reconstruction. It thus orchestrates both policy development and the whole range of disaster related activities 'on the ground' in cooperation with local governments. It also facilitates international cooperation and exchange.

With regard to its responsibilities for developing guidelines and formulating disaster risk management plans, the NCDR has set up an Expert Committee of academics and other specialists, which serves as a think tank and provides advice for decision-making. Similar committees have also been established at sub-national level. Disaster risk reduction commissions have been set up in eight provinces, while institutions for disaster relief coordination have been set up with similar functions in another 15 provinces.

The NCDR is also responsible for sector analyses to inform decision-makers, meeting at least twice a year on these issues, or more if necessary. In addition, each month the NCDR meets to summarize the disaster situation of the month, and to analyze and predict the potential threats of disasters during the next month.

### *Activities and results*

#### *1) Efficient preparedness for response through better national coordination*

The NCDR has played a critical role in enhancing exchange and cooperation among several ministries and technical committees. This has focused on improving collaboration over reviewing and assessing information on likely hazard risks for China's population. The Ministries of Civil Affairs, Water Resources, Land

Resources and Agriculture, and the State Bureaus for Statistics, Meteorology and Seismology hold regular consultations to identify needs and plan for a coordinated response in the event of a disaster. Additionally, emergency coordination mechanisms have been set up in disaster-prone areas.

The implementation of a nation-wide contingency system has made disaster relief more effective. Thanks to staff training at all administrative levels, disaster monitoring and early warning systems have functioned well. The timely release of alerts has enabled authorities at all levels to take precautions and reduce the impact of hazards.

National Platform members have also been instrumental in coordinating with municipalities and autonomous regions. This has resulted in the pre-positioning of relief equipment including tents in 30 provinces, 251 cities and prefectures and 1079 counties.

### *2) Defining standards to reduce risks*

The Expert Committee of the NCDR and the National Disaster Reduction Center of China (NDRCC) have provided technical support to devise standards on disaster risk reduction. These have included Standards for Disaster Relief Materials and Standards for Emergency Relocation Sites. They have helped ensure that decisions are based on sound scientific evidence.

### *3) Investments in reducing underlying risks*

The central government has provided financial resources for flood prevention and fighting drought, supporting the livelihoods of disaster-stricken people, and for rehabilitation and reconstruction. The annual investment in disaster reduction is about RMB 11 Billion (US\$ 1.6 billion).

### *4) Promoting education on disaster management and disaster reduction*

The Ministries of Civil Affairs, Water Resources, Land Resources and Agriculture, and the State Bureaus for Statistics, Meteorology and Seismology conducted a range of education activities. In a comprehensive 'Community Disaster Reduction Campaign', information was widely publicized among urban and rural communities and in private and public enterprises. It effectively raised awareness, and improved people's capacity for protecting and rescuing themselves, reducing potential human casualties and financial losses.

Overall, the NCDR, under the guidance of the State Council, has played an important role in setting up a comprehensive disaster management system, especially in disaster relief. The NCDR is slowly - but surely - influencing an even more pronounced paradigm shift from disaster emergency management to disaster risk reduction. The NCDR is determined to promote disaster risk reduction and facilitate its mainstreaming into development planning and activities in China.

## The Good Practice

### Enhancing Regional and International Cooperation for Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters

#### *The Initiative*

Strengthening regional and international cooperation in disaster risk reduction has been one of the NCDR's priorities since the January 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction. The objective has been to enhance China's contribution to building nations' and communities' resilience to disasters for the sake of sustainable development, and to learn from other countries' experience. In preparing the ground for international engagement, the NDCR has mobilized decision-makers, built the capacities of government officials in disaster risk reduction, and exchanged experience and information on disaster reduction and management at a national level.

China's motives for engagement were based on the belief that regional cooperation for disaster risk reduction is needed, in order to cope with disasters in the most efficient way - in particular when a country faces similar risks to its neighbors. This assessment has been confirmed by findings following the 2004 tsunami disaster in South East Asia, showing that coordination and cooperation between stakeholders across national borders are essential to effectively reduce risks, avoid duplication, learn from experience and establish an efficient system to reduce human and economic losses. International cooperation is urgently needed to help countries implement global and regional strategies with sufficient human and material resources.

Disaster risk reduction is a global issue and concerns every country without exception. Since 2005 China has started implementing several initiatives to enhance international and regional cooperation on facing disasters, in a world increasingly exposed to natural hazard risks.

#### *Organization of the First Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction*

The NDCR successfully organized the First Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which took place in Beijing in September 2005, and was attended by 385 participants from 42 Asian countries, including 33 Government ministers. The Conference resulted in a document called the Beijing Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. The Framework set the scene for sharing and exchanging best practices and lessons learned. It also promotes regional cooperation among Asian countries on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA).

#### *Establishment of an International Centre for Drought Risk Reduction (ICDRR)*

China has also established an International Centre for Drought Risk Reduction (ICDRR) in Beijing as part of the NCDR activities. The ICDRR's main objective is to provide a platform for governments and experts to share information, experience and expertise to address common concerns and needs for drought risk reduction, in order to reduce people's vulnerability to drought. The ICDRR's work is guided by a Drought Risk Reduction Framework developed by experts and the UN/ISDR secretariat. The ICDRR will focus on international and inter-regional cooperation and collaboration in drought risk reduction, using space technology and other means to monitor and assess drought risks across Asia. The initiative will also concentrate on building databases and a knowledge pool, developing applied technology, building capacity, and increasing public awareness of how to reduce drought risk. The ICDRR has already developed a work plan. Its website is under construction and will provide information on drought in Chinese and English.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Organization of Workshops and Training Courses on Disaster Risk Management*

Workshops and training courses covered a wide range of subjects, including early warning, disaster response, and application of space technology in disaster management and disaster rehabilitation and reconstruction. One example is a study course on Disaster Risk Management

for officials of the Tsunami affected countries, which took place in May 2005. From 2006 to 2008, the NCDR has supported capacity-building for staff from countries prone to natural hazards. It successively organized a Training Course on Disaster Prevention and Emergency Management with the cooperation of the International Civil Defence Organization (ICDO), a seminar on Comprehensive Disaster Management for Developing Countries, and a Study Course on Disaster Emergency Response and Recovery for APEC members among others.

In 2007, six international training courses were held for 123 trainees from 45 countries, targeting primarily disaster management staff from Asian countries. High-ranking government officials from countries in Africa and Latin America have also been involved. Between four and six training courses have been organized by the NCDR each year since 2006.

#### *Signing of Bilateral Agreements on Disaster Risk Reduction*

China has signed with Russia and other member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), an agreement on mutual aid in disaster relief. With the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre, China has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding for regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction. China has developed close working relations with the UN/ISDR secretariat, which has led to the signature of a letter of understanding, support for UN/ISDR regional offices, and joint efforts in preparation and follow-up of the Asia Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2005. In 2006, cooperation between China and the UN/ISDR secretariat led to the establishment of the above-mentioned International Centre for Drought Risk Reduction (ICDRR). The work of the ICDRR is advancing steadily. An International Conference on Drought Risk Reduction will be organized on 2-4 April 2009 in Beijing and the result will inform the second session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in June 2009.

#### *Impact and results*

##### *Increased Political Commitment to Implementing the HFA in Asia*

A major result of the above-mentioned initiatives - in particular the 2005 First Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction - is Asian Governments' enhanced commitment to regionally implementing the HFA. At the 2005 Beijing meeting, Asian Governments agreed to hold the Ministerial Conference every two years in a different Asian country. The Second Asian

<sup>1</sup> For more information, please contact: Ms. Yan Guan, [guanyan@ndrcc.gov.cn](mailto:guanyan@ndrcc.gov.cn)

Ministerial Conference was organized recently by the Government of India on 7 and 8 November 2007 in New Delhi, where the Government of Malaysia announced that Malaysia would host the Third Asian Ministerial Conference in 2009. Such conferences not only help increase political and government commitment to disaster risk reduction; they also help advance understanding and knowledge of the subject among government officials.

#### *Enhanced exchange with counterparts in other countries and support in disaster situations*

Thanks to contacts made during above-mentioned meetings organized by China, international cooperation has been strengthened, facilitating Chinese assistance in disaster response. For example, the Chinese Government and people contributed about US\$100 million to countries affected by the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. After the Pakistan earthquake in 2005, China air-shipped 1,930 tonnes of relief materials to the disaster affected regions, transported 10,000 tents on land and also dispatched rescue teams and medical teams.

#### *Good Practice*

The above-mentioned activities should be considered as a good practice by a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. This is because they have been successful in the following areas:

##### *1) Active participation of National Platform members:*

The activities have been coordinated by the NCDR but implemented together with full support from the NCDR member organizations, based on the topics of each workshop or training course. The NCDR member organizations that have been particularly involved are the Chinese Earthquake Administration, China Meteorological Administration, Chinese Academy of Science, China Architecture Design and Research Group, the Ministry of Water Resources, the Chinese Academy of Agriculture Science and the Chinese News Agency.

##### *2) Multiple methods used for workshops and training courses:*

Workshop and training participants are government officials and professionals in disaster management. To better engage the participants and trainees, different methods have been used, including presentations, case analyses, study tours, group discussions and cultural events. This was highly appreciated among participants and trainees.

##### *3) Enhanced cooperation with UN agencies:*

Above-mentioned activities hosted by the NCDR have mainly involved Asian government officials. However, in a bid to enhance collaboration between UN agencies - especially country-based ones - and national governments, the NCDR has successfully engaged the UN/ISDR secretariat, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and the World Food Programme (WFP). Their participation provided added value to the establishment of National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction, programme management, and the management of post-disaster psychological interventions in Asia.

##### *4) Better information and knowledge sharing on disaster risk reduction:*

Another success is the fact that government policy makers and decision makers can now come together to share experience, information and success in their disaster-related work. Although the primary focus remains on Asian countries, high-ranking government officials from other countries are increasingly involved too.

## Lessons Learned

As a result of above-mentioned commitments, the capacity to resist and reduce disaster risks in China has been enhanced. Joint efforts started since 2005 made it possible for the NCDR to gradually improve the national coordination mechanism, increase the efficiency and effectiveness of emergency relief, strengthen disaster management capacity, improve the search and rescue network, enhance education and disaster risk reduction, and promote international cooperation in disaster reduction and management.

China has made great progress in devising strategies and coordinating action for disaster preparedness and response. However, the country still faces great challenges in disaster risk reduction. Many weaknesses have been observed in the country's comprehensive disaster reduction system. As a result, the Chinese National Platform has found it difficult to organize comprehensive training courses on disaster risk reduction. Most of the workshops and training courses focus on early warning, contingency planning, disaster response mechanisms and disaster recovery and reconstruction. To address the issue, the NCDR has embarked on an initiative to develop an international training program which will pay special attention to disaster risk reduction as a tool to reduce people's vulnerability to disasters and make development investments resilient to the impact of disasters.

Another lesson learned is that user-friendly tools and training manuals are urgently needed. Even though many countries endorsed the HFA, its implementation has not been easy, due mainly to lack of understanding of the subject. As the NCDR will continue promoting regional and international cooperation in disaster management, capacity building and information sharing, it hopes that the UN/ISDR secretariat, the UNDP, and regional organizations can prioritize support of the development of user-friendly tool kits and training manuals.



### Potential for Replication

Provided that government officials' understanding of the subject has been secured, and some valuable capacity for disaster risk reduction is available, the Chinese experience focusing on enhancing regional and international cooperation can be replicated easily by any hazard-prone country with the same rising socio-economic status as China. India has already organized the Second Asian Ministerial Conference, and Malaysia will host the third. Meanwhile, countries of all levels of development have been able to organize workshops and training courses around the world.

Often we cannot prevent disasters but we can reduce their impacts by reducing our vulnerability to hazards and making disaster risk assessment part of development planning and practices. As every citizen is involved in development, reducing disaster risk is every citizen's responsibility; national governments should build an environment that enables every citizen to exercise that responsibility. Hence the urgent need to raise understanding of and building capacity for disaster risk reduction among government officials.

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# Colombia

## Integrating disaster risk reduction at the local level

*Sistema Nacional de Prevención y Atención de Desastres (SNPAD)*

Rehabilitation of houses to make them hazard resistant



### Context

Colombia is a disaster-prone country due to its physical characteristics and concentration of economic activity in the country's mountainous areas. Risk management in Colombia is a complex issue, given the high rate of migration to urban areas, which is partly motivated by the internal conflict. It is thus necessary to take a community-based approach to risk management, based on capacity development at town and district levels.

The National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Colombia is called the National System for Disaster Prevention and Response (SNPAD). It was created in 1988 by Law 46, which was passed in the aftermath of the 1985 volcanic eruption of the Nevado del Ruiz. This event generated lava flows, landslides and turned into a major disaster, killing 25,000 people in the town of Armero. Learning lessons from this catastrophe, the new Law's main purpose was to define responsibilities and functions of all stakeholders involved in disaster risk reduction, management, reconstruction and recovery issues, i.e. public, private and community-based organizations.



The disaster management system was built up following a decentralization process. It is based on cooperation between national, district and local levels, following the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity. The system is based on a legal framework (Decree-Law 919 in 1989 and National Plan Decree 93 in 1998) which assigns responsibilities to each institution and organizes the system through

the coordination of committees and bureaus at all levels. It is systematic because each level is firstly ruled by the relevant officer of each entity, that is to say the president, district governors and mayors.

In 2004, the SNPAD was officially designated as National Platform of Colombia, anticipating the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe in 2005.

## National Platform Structure and Activities

### *Focal Point Institution*

At national level, the Disaster Prevention and Response Office (DGPAD) coordinates the entire system through two main committees: the National Technical Committee and the National Operational Committee. Administratively the DGPAD depends on the Ministry of the Interior and Justice. It is also the official HFA focal point of Colombia.

### *Membership*

The National Platform is made up of public, private and community-based entities. It has also set up sectoral committees, such as those on seismic and volcanic risks (supported by the National Seismological and Volcanological Network), the Technological Risk Committee or the National Hydrometeorological Network.

### *Operational practices*

The SNPAD's work is mainly guided by the National Plan for Disaster Prevention and Response, which provides planning strategies and policy vision. Law 388, relating to land planning and soil use management, establishes that each town and department has to identify risk areas and define strategies and priorities to manage them according to risk types, available resources and national policies.

The national, regional and local committees meet on a regular basis.

The DGPAD plans and monitors the implementation of activities at national level, following a specific action plan. For this it consults with the SNPAD members mainly through the work of the National Operational Committee, which is coordinated by the Colombian Civil Defence, under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Defence.

The Technical and Operational committees normally meet twice a year and convene extraordinary meetings

in the case of alerts or a disaster. Strategies and recommendations are adopted during every committee meeting.

Each ministry has also an office or committee in charge of disaster prevention and response.

At regional and local level, each decentralized entity has its own action plan. The regional and local committees for disaster risk prevention and response (CREPAD, CLOPAD) work differently, depending on the level of development of the entity and the commitment of the local authorities. Committees in Bogotá, Medellín or Manizales for instance have been well implemented and strengthened. They have become champions in establishing integrated disaster risk management.

A regional committee gathers all governors of the country and meets each year, headed by the regional governor and coordinated by the DGPAD. These regional meetings, which gather stakeholders from different administrative levels, also take place in case of a disaster or emergency.

### *Activities and results*

Several projects have been implemented in the last few years. According to the law for land use planning for example, all cities and municipalities must draw up hazard and risk maps in order to better manage risks, e.g. when considering the construction of buildings. Local budgets also have to dedicate specific resources to implement disaster risk reduction and mitigation activities.

The following provides an overview of some key activities and results that have been achieved:

#### *1) Ensuring that disaster risk reduction is a national priority*

For some years, the President of Colombia and his ministers, through their membership of the National Platform, have been strongly committed to

advocating disaster risk reduction to all officials and stakeholders, and have taken the message around the country to different towns and regions.

2) *Improving the information & research system:*

Colombia has been progressively strengthening its technical capacity to monitor and study natural hazards and risks. Many experts are now spreading this knowledge by working within government institutions, local authorities, universities, research centers and private consulting firms. Information and data gathered from seismological and hydrometeorological networks at local and national levels have been integrated in specific analyses, aiming to model and/or anticipate risks and define early warning situations.

3) *Strengthening of the role of women in disaster risk reduction:* A programme called “Guardianas de las laderas” (Guards of the hillsides) has been launched

in Manizales. Mothers with sole responsibility for their family have been hired by local government to help implement risk mitigation activities. They are for instance responsible for waste management in the city, keeping evacuation roads and river beds clean. This programme has been replicated throughout the country and has produced excellent results in reducing risks.

4) *Stimulating participation of civil society:* Disaster risk management has become a politically neutral issue in Colombia. The issue concerns all parties involved in the armed conflict which has affected the country for years. Disaster risk reduction is particularly taking hold in areas such as the Antioquia department (especially in the city of Medellín), in the Montes de Maria on the Atlantic Coast, in the Llanos Orientales, where local contingency plans are being developed, and mitigation and capacity building are being implemented with support from the United Nations.

## The Good Practice

### Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction at the local level

Since the above-mentioned Armero disaster, the authorities of Colombia have become more and more aware of the need to mainstream disaster risk management into development policies through a systematic approach, focused on prevention and reconstruction. In Colombia, disaster risk reduction is now considered a national priority. This process can thus be considered as a good practice.

The decentralization of decision-making power represents a turning-point in the country, providing more autonomy to local authorities to make progress on disaster risk reduction. The mayors became responsible for disaster risk and emergency management. When a disaster happens, following the principle of subsidiarity, it is only if the disaster’s magnitude goes beyond the local area that department authorities become responsible for initiating actions. This principle escalates up to the national level.

Many cities have actively taken up these new responsibilities. The administrators of Bogotá, Manizales and Medellín have shown a very strong political commitment. Local governments of other big cities have established disaster risk management systems and coordinating bodies. These systems are part of the national system for disaster management. In every city

this process has been based on an appropriate legal framework, with strong support from the population.

*The Initiative: Reducing disaster risks in Medellín*

Medellín is the second most populous city in Colombia, with 1.8 million inhabitants. It is made up of many poor districts characterized by a high population density and situated amid steep hills (Medellín is located at an altitude of 1,500 metres). Floods and landslides occur each year, and earthquakes often strike the area. In 1987, 500 people died because of a landslide and 3,500 lost their houses. This disaster raised awareness in the population, which realized that Medellín had to become more resilient to disasters. Thus the Local System for Prevention, Response and Recovery was created, within the framework of the city’s Development Plan.

The Local Committee adopted Medellín’s Development Plan after public consultations. It integrates disaster risk management. Thanks to recent changes within the national constitution, which aimed to devolve decision-making to local authorities, it has been easier to implement disaster risk reduction strategies at local level. Local governments have since been accumulating new experiences in spearheading disaster risk reduction issues.

The initiative to develop a disaster management strategy at a local level in Medellín was coordinated by the Mayor and an executive body made up of 12 sectoral committees (education, planning, etc.). They succeeded in integrating risk management strategies into local development plans and economic and social plans in general. Specific resources from the local budget have been dedicated to make the whole system work.

Many stakeholders participate in the system. They come from the academic and scientific sectors to engage in risk and vulnerability analyses or to disseminate geographic information or the environmental protection sector, with the special participation of the Mi Río (My River) Institute, which aims to protect Medellín's rivers through better risk management.

The inhabitants of Medellín have been strongly committed to the implementation of the plan because of their exposure to natural hazards and related risks. The citizens' role has been crucial for integrating this issue into the general planning process and following through with implementation. In Medellín there are 174 Citizen Emergency Committees (called Comités barriales) which are composed of district leaders trained in specific emergency techniques. These Committees are carrying out specific funded by the city budget. In an emergency situation, these Committees are self-reliant and can take action immediately.

On top of this successful mobilization, further efforts to raise awareness in the population include engaging the mass media - TeleMedellín and TeleAntioquia - to promote disaster risk reduction. Local stakeholders also train leaders of emergency committees and school committees.

In 2003, the local government also set up the emergency number 123, which is linked to an operational platform gathering all State and rescue organizations. This enables them to act rapidly and efficiently in case of a hazardous event or a disaster. Medellín was the first city in Colombia to set up such an emergency number, and its example has been followed in Bogotá and other regional capitals.

To implement disaster risk reduction activities at local level, Medellín allocates annually a dedicated amount for risk management in the municipal budget. In 2008 around US\$5 million have been dedicated to this purpose. The system also benefits from support from international financial institutions.

### *Impacts and results*

The disaster management system of Medellín has been working efficiently for 15 years. The city's authorities have been very successful at integrating risk management into ordinary activities of environmental protection, public construction, scientific and technical research and education. Furthermore, better zonal risk management has been initiated. Families living in landslide prone areas have been relocated to safe areas and a reforestation process has been launched.

The system is successful because from the beginning, it has received strong support from local governments and the wider population despite all political changes (four different local administrations have supported the system). Disaster risk reduction activities have also been supported by high-quality technical and scientific advice.

Overall, the local initiatives to reduce disaster risks have been very successful. This is reflected in national statistics which show a very significant reduction in the number of landslides. Whereas 533 landslides occurred in the country in 1993, only 191 occurred in 1995. While this may be partly explained by natural processes, the mitigation efforts conducted at local level were a significant contribution to this achievement.

### *Good Practice*

#### *1) Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development planning*

The Government of Colombia has been integrating disaster risk reduction issues into all national development plans for 16 years and through 4 different administrations. A specific chapter dedicated to risk management was included in the Development Plan for 2002-2006, and in the 2006-2012 Plan. This process was mirrored in the regional and local development plans, embodying the country's process of decentralization. Risk management has become a tool integrated into the country planning process.

#### *2) Risk reduction measures uniting divided communities*

Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in local development plans and activities adds value, as it helps overcome social problems and divisions that are not directly related to risk management. Medellín is a good example, where disaster risk reduction is implemented in districts with high incidence of socio-political violence or other problems. Even in this context, disaster risk issues are considered by the whole population to be neutral. People-centered initiatives promoted by the municipality are thus able to create a strong sense of

unity within otherwise divided communities. People often gather within public forums to discuss and raise problems of common concern, overcoming, at least temporarily, social, cultural or political differences. Underprivileged citizens have been involved in retrofitting or construction, and have

participated in awareness-raising through cultural events. By mainstreaming risk management issues into the planning process of Medellín, the whole population of the district has improved its way of life, contributed to reducing violence and poverty, and raised awareness.

## Lessons Learned

While the disaster risk management system developed in Medellín has been successful in many ways, several challenges persist:

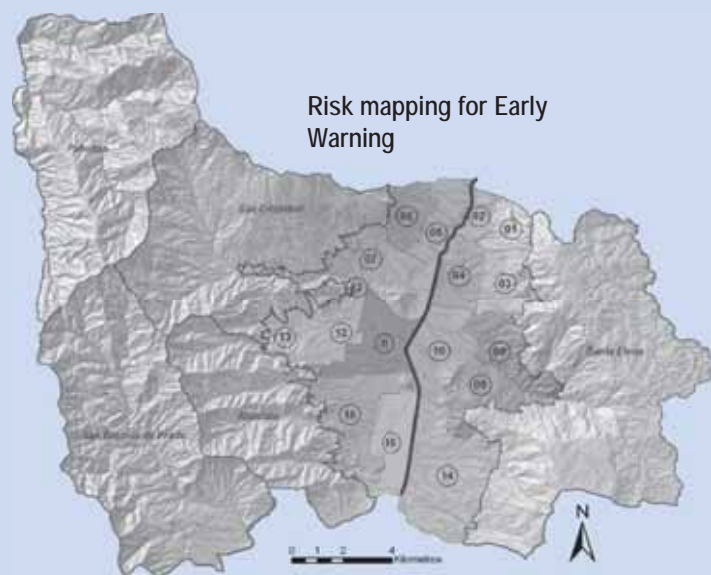
1. There remains a need to have an all-hazard risk transfer mechanism for all citizens.
2. There is need to set up an early warning system to prevent floods caused by the rivers.
3. At present there are still some 24,000 families living in high-risk zones. Mostly internally displaced persons from the internal conflict, they urgently need to be relocated to safer areas.

Reflecting on local authorities' engagement in general, it has to be noted that aside from the good examples of several cities, some mayors do not convene local disaster risk management committees as often as they should. This leads to sub-optimal disaster response and tragic consequences. The Colombian experience so far shows that while it is important to ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national priority through strong political commitment at highest level, it is even more important to have the same sustainable commitment at local level, where action is taken. This often remains a challenge, as administrations change and it is difficult to predict whether newly elected authorities will assume the same responsibilities and consider disaster risk management a priority – even for cities like Medellín, which has gone a long way in the field of disaster risk reduction already. The main challenge facing Medellín is thus to keep the momentum to systematically integrate risk issues into all urban development projects carried out in the city.

Overall, the experience of Colombia in decentralizing authorities for risk management and mainstreaming disaster risk management at a local

level represents a good practice because it shows that it is possible to institutionalize and mainstream risk management into development policies with very positive results, in spite of complex social problems. This process has been implemented for almost two decades in Colombia, steadily increasing the country's capacity to cope with disasters.

The Colombian case shows how a National Platform can be instrumental in providing the legal basis, strategies and policies to strengthen the responsibility and autonomy of local authorities in disaster risk management. The decentralization of a multi-stakeholder coordinating mechanism for disaster risk management has been successfully replicated not only in Colombia, but also in other countries in Latin America.



## Potential for Replication

Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into national plans is an ambitious process which takes time to be efficient. However awareness is rising in the population and in government at all administrative levels.

To deal with risks in an efficient way, local authorities need three things: a wide knowledge of risks, a strong political commitment to disaster risk reduction, and support from the population. In Medellín these three elements have been developed, providing a replicable model.

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# Costa Rica



## Financing disaster risk reduction

*Sistema Nacional de Prevención de Riesgos y Atención de Emergencias (SNPRAE)*

Awareness-raising on DRR among children



### Context

Over the last few decades, Costa Rica has become more and more threatened by various types of disaster risks. Throughout the 20th century the country witnessed 22 earthquakes and 11 volcanic eruptions, resulting in various scales of devastation. The most extreme events have been the eruptions of the Irazu volcano between 1963 and 1965 and that of the Arenal volcano in 1968. Since then, the government of Costa Rica has been institutionalizing and consolidating its disaster risk reduction system, which included officially establishing a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

In 1969, a National Emergency Law was adopted, stipulating three main actions 1) The executive branch obtained the power to declare a state of emergency everywhere in the country, 2) A National Emergency Fund was created and 3) The National Commission of Emergency (CNE) was established. To start with, the CNE was only responsible for managing the resources of the National Emergency Fund. Later on, the CNE became the lead institution for what is now the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Costa Rica. An important step towards this was the amendment of the National Emergency Law in 1999, which extended the CNE's mandate to cover prevention activities.

Another legislative amendment in 2006 paved the way for the creation of the National System for Disaster Risk Management (SNPRAE). The CNE became the coordinating office and the guiding institution of the Costa Rican disaster risk system. The law defined risk management as a cross-cutting issue, and required all public institutions to mainstream disaster management in their development planning and implementation. Since then, public institutions have had to dedicate resources to disaster risk reduction. Furthermore, the amended law made it obligatory to produce a National Plan for Disaster Risk Management to serve as a strategic planning document for public institutions, helping them to carry out their disaster risk management responsibilities. These amendments emerged from a nation-wide dialogue among scientists and public sector experts.

Several factors created the favourable environment for the above-mentioned institutional achievements.

Firstly, they should be viewed in an overall global context of increased focus on disaster risk reduction, resulting from the 1990-99 International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR), the Yokohama Framework for Action (1994) and more recently the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005-2015). In terms of Costa Rica's local context, the impact of Hurricane Mitch in 1998, one of the most traumatic disasters in Central America, blended with the political and social context of Costa Rica, hit by a huge number of disasters throughout its history, heightened national attention to disaster issues and increased support for addressing disaster risks instead of emergency response.

A shift within the legal context of the country, embodied by the amendments of the National Emergency Law, has permitted Costa Rica to develop a new strategy for disaster risk management that shifts the emphasis from disaster response to disaster prevention.

## National Platform Structure and Activities

### *Focal Point Institution*

The National Platform in Costa Rica is called the National System for Disaster Risk Management. According to the law, the National Commission of Emergency (CNE), which also serves as the HFA focal point institution, is responsible for organizing and coordinating the whole system, and for defining the guiding principles. The above-mentioned law gives the CNE's Directory Group the responsibility for setting the general policies and for connecting all parts of the National System for Disaster Risk Management. The CNE Directory Group is the highest decision-making body within the National Platform.

### *Membership*

The Directory Group is made up of representatives of:

- Ministries and public services: The President's Office, who serves as Head of the Directory Group, the Ministries of Health, Public Security, Transportation and Civil Engineering, Finance, Social Services and Housing, Environment and Energy.
- Other State institutions: Head of the Mixed Institute for Social Assistance (Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social/ IMAS), Head of the National Insurance Institute.
- Civil Society: The Costa Rican Red Cross.

The Directory Group normally meets once a month. Special sessions can be convened at any time by the Head of the Group.

The National Platform organizes its work through 'process management', which connects the work of the following three sub-systems:

- The Prevention and Mitigation sub-system
- The Preparedness and Response sub-system
- The Recovery and Rehabilitation sub-system.

All stakeholders and sub-systems are connected by the national system, through coordinating bodies set up by the Law. These are:

- Monitoring Committees for the sub-systems, made up of representatives of the institutions related to each sub-system's field of work.
- Institutional and Sectoral Committees, organized according to the institutional structure defined by the Secretary for Planning, made up of civil servants from each sectoral institution.
- Emergency Committees, organized into regional (according to the decentralization process defined by the Secretary for Planning), municipal and local committees.
- Scientific and Technical Bodies, which are the Technical Monitoring Committees and the Thematic and Territorial Networks. They are made up of

scientists and experts, representing their institutions or working on their own, who have specific knowledge of the issues raised by disaster risk management. They give accounts of their work to the CNE and other bodies of the National System on a regular basis.

- The Emergency Operations Center (Centro de Operaciones de Emergencia/ COE), which also works as Monitoring Committee for the Preparedness and Response sub-system.
- The National Forum for Disaster Risk Management, made up of institutions convened each year by the CNE to discuss the Disaster Risk Management policies. All representatives of the Coordinating Bodies of the National System intervene in this Forum.

### *Operational Practices*

The main purpose of the Costa Rican National Platform is “to reduce the causes of human losses and related social, political, economic and environmental impacts of natural and man-made disasters which affect the territory of Costa Rica.” To achieve this overall goal, in 2007 the CNE developed an institutional four year plan to implement the National System and make it work efficiently, following a joint work approach to disaster risk management.

To carry out its work, the CNE and as its corollary the National System, rely on financial resources from the national budget and the National Emergency Fund. Ten per cent of the CNE’s work is thus financed by the national budget, while 90 per cent is covered by the Fund. Additional resources come from donors and international cooperation programs, but these remain tiny compared to the investments made by the country.

### *Activities and results*

The following points are milestones in the setting up of the disaster risk reduction system in Costa Rica. Several of these activities were initiated following an earthquake, which struck the area of Limón in 1991. In 1994, the efforts of Costa Rica to improve emergency preparedness were awarded the United Nations Sasakawa Award for Disaster Reduction.

#### *1) Preparedness for response*

Emergency committees have been created at various administrative levels: six regional, 115 local and more than 300 community-based committees were set up country-wide. Their work is facilitated through the Emergency Operation Center.

In 1993, the first National Emergency Plan of the country was adopted by an executive decree. On

the basis of this plan, the CNE has been organizing government institutions and NGOs’ work for emergency assistance, and more recently for prevention activities.

#### *2) Setting up an efficient Early Warning System*

The Early Warning System in Costa Rica is made up of several research institutes and a citizens’ network, who act as watchmen. On a day-to-day basis, these actors watch, monitor and control the country’s areas that are potentially threatened by hazardous events. Measuring tools, 300 radio handsets and sirens have also been dispatched. Early warning and evacuation plans have been made, which reduce human and material losses in the concerned areas. Nowadays eight early warning systems are working in the country. Thirty areas prone to landslides, 12 at risk of lake outbursts and five volcanoes are regularly monitored.

In 1993, a country-wide emergency number (‘the Emergency System 911’) has been set up. This emergency number is toll free thanks to a tax deducted from other phone calls. This system is now the basis of an efficient communication process between response agencies and one institution which gathers all the emergency calls. A response protocol to emergencies has also been implemented. It clearly defines the role of each institution in case of a disaster. Thanks to the system, it is now possible to gather all the calls and historical statistics related to disasters, to improve future risk analysis, prevention and response operations.

The setting up of the Early Warning system is also the result of a larger Education Programme for Emergency Preparedness. Under this programme, training programmes for emergency institutions have been organized, which consist of training paramedics in pre-hospital assistance and emergency assistance in various terrains, including sea rescue techniques.

#### *3) Mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Management in sector development plans and activities*

The Chapter ‘Social Development and the fight against poverty’ within the National Development Plan contains four strategic goals for risk management, directly under the authority of the CNE: one of them concerns setting up the National System for Disaster Risk Management, another the development and implementation of the National Plan for Disaster Risk Management.

Every state institution has to mainstream risk management issues within its planning process,



meaning dedicated resources for implementing disaster risk reduction activities. They must also participate in the coordinating bodies of the National System. Sector and institutional plans have to reflect the guiding principles related to disaster risk management. Also, every institution has to work with the institutional emergency committee and appoint representatives for the coordinating bodies convened by the CNE.

#### 4) *Strengthening the Emergency Information system*

Thanks to the work of disaster management stakeholders involved in the National Platforms, information on hazards and risks is now available in electronic format. Hazard maps have been designed for each specific area of the country. This information supports decision-making and urban planning. It is also a basis for developing scenarios, models and templates, drawing up disaster risk prevention plans, and serves as reference for protecting public infrastructure. The CNE now produces a National Atlas for Natural Hazards.

#### 5) *Supporting municipalities through local consulting*

The CNE provides expertise and consulting to local authorities to help them identify potential hazards, and to better use information related to risks. For example, the CNE organizes and carries out field missions to draw hazard and risk maps, which it distributes to local authorities. The CNE also facilitates the sharing of information on codes and standards to support urban development. Thanks to this expertise, local authorities are able to develop appropriate town plans. The primary focus of action is disaster-prone communities, in particular those whose administrators often appeal for emergency assistance.

#### 6) *National Education Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction*

By developing a National Education Strategy and Plan, Costa Rica has made major progress in raising awareness of environmental management and risk issues, and reducing disaster risk in the education sector. Disaster risk issues and environmental awareness have been mainstreamed in respective curricula. School buildings are designed to withstand hazardous events.

#### 7) *National Volunteer Programme*

The National Programme for Volunteers aims at stimulating the participation of civil society

in disaster preparedness workshops. It consists of recruiting and training individuals and representatives of public and private organizations who want to participate in emergency committees. Since the beginning of the programme in 2007, 400 volunteers have joined the programme.

#### 8) *Risk transfer to protect public infrastructure*

Incorporating risk transfer options to secure public infrastructure against risks is increasingly relevant in the country's planning process. Since 2007, an insurance plan for public infrastructure has been designed and implemented, supported by financial resources from the CNE and organized by the National Insurance Institute. Besides, the Ministry for Planning, through its Office for Public Investment, is now steadily controlling the process of building public infrastructure to save investments and most importantly, lives. This will ensure that designers will in the future more systematically integrate risk analysis and pre-investment studies into building plans. The objective is to reduce the threat caused by public buildings in case of a disaster.

#### 9) *Communication campaigns*

The CNE's department for institutional communication is responsible for launching and coordinating communication and information systems and strategies, for leading change processes, to draw up programmes, and for evaluating and planning communication strategies, according to targeted audiences. Various communication strategies aim to disseminate a positive image of the CNE, raising public awareness about risks and creating a culture of prevention which could contribute to reduce people's vulnerability. The idea of prevention is disseminated among most vulnerable communities through TV spots. The CNE website gathers publications related to disaster risk issues. Workshops for journalists have been organized to raise their awareness toward risk related issues. Finally the department coordinates the Consulting Committee for Public Information for Disaster Risk Prevention and Emergency Response (SIPAE), which aims to coordinate, organize and plan the work of government press officers who are involved in the different steps of emergency response.

# The Good Practice

## The National Emergency Fund

A National Platform cannot carry out risk reduction activities without appropriate mechanisms and sufficient financial resources. In Costa Rica, a financing mechanism created in 1969 has been functioning efficiently and supporting specific activities of prevention and response and the entire system of disaster risk management at a national level.

### *The Initiative*

The National Emergency Fund was created by the Emergency Law in 1969. The law applies constitutional provisions to the field of disaster risk management, which state that the Executive has the power to declare a 'state of emergency' in case of 'internal unrest, political or social calamity or war'. Such a situation enables it to use financial resources in an extraordinary way and to apply emergency measures to face the problem.

In 1983, the Legislative Assembly amended the first article of the Law, which increased the financing capacity of the National Emergency Fund. More financial resources have been dedicated to it since that time, allowing the growth in the CNE's functions. In 1986, the Executive reinforced the CNE's mandate, which became responsible for national disaster response operations.

In terms of funding, at the beginning, the CNE worked only with resources transferred from the National Emergency Fund. Since 1995, these resources have been strictly dedicated to emergency response, whereas the ordinary work of the CNE started to be financed by resources from the national budget of the Republic.

A major step toward allocating more funds for disaster risk reduction was achieved after a new amendment adopted in 2006. Since then the National Emergency Fund has also been dedicating resources to prevention and preparedness activities.

The National Emergency Fund is comprised of financial resources from:

- Extraordinary transfers from state institutions
- Taxes, donations and loans from individuals, national and international organizations, governmental or non-governmental organizations
- Ordinary and extraordinary allocations from the national budget
- Income from bonds

- Interests from temporary placements
- Transfer of 3% of the accrued profits and a surplus from public institutions, which aims to support and finance the National System for Risk Management.

### *Impact and results*

In 2008, the National Emergency Fund gathered US\$18 million by June. However, if a state of emergency is declared, resources will increase due to transfers and donations from the above-mentioned institutions.

At present, US\$11 million are used to carry out recovery activities in areas which have been declared under state of emergency. The CNE is responsible for investments in this case, according to a specific mechanism which permits immediate and flexible responses. US\$4.5 million are integrated into the ordinary budget of the CNE and are used to carry out prevention activities, such as supporting the ordinary functioning of the National System for Risk Management.

In 2008, the CNE carried out 20 prevention activities aiming to reduce risks, like building embankments, supporting walls, pipes, enlarging river banks, etc. The National Emergency Fund usually finances various types of prevention activities, such as: 1) Mitigation activities, especially through construction work, in which the CNE invests US\$800,000, 2) Community-based prevention projects for which the CNE provides materials to communities, 3) Research activities, 4) Early warning projects, like river monitoring.

In case of response and recovery after a disaster, the National Emergency Fund is used to finance reconstruction. However no one can guarantee that recovery will be complete, given that it is not possible to cover all the losses caused by a disaster.

As prevention issues have been incorporated into the law only since 2006, it is too early to thoroughly assess the results achieved with this new mechanism. The country needs at least four more years to define the added value of such a fund for disaster risk reduction in Costa Rica. However, from preliminary reviews, the value added by the system has been recognized.

### *Good Practice*

The National Emergency Fund assigns resources to the CNE to help it carry out disaster risk reduction and

response activities. It supports the wider disaster risk management system set up and lets the country work with autonomy and efficiency to face emergencies related to natural hazards. Among the good practices of the National Platform of Costa Rica can be seen:

*1) A strong political commitment to support the National System for Risk Management*

Since 2006, the Fund has been used through a more technical and systemic way. Indeed, now the CNE has to establish a link between the damage caused by a disaster and the financing engaged before using the resources of the fund. Besides, the fund could not exist without a strong political commitment, which can be seen in Costa Rica through the Executive's ability to declare a state of emergency in case of a disaster.

*2) A shift from emergency response to disaster risk reduction*

Thanks to an amendment of the law, the resources of the National Emergency Fund can be used for local emergency activities, without a state of emergency being declared. Also, the National Emergency Law establishes that every public institution has to dedicate a part of their budget to disaster risk prevention, preparedness and response. Each of them has to determine a certain amount of money to dedicate in case of disaster, following the recommendations of the CNE and the National Plan for Risk Management.

## Lessons Learned

Positive experience with the National Emergency Fund demonstrates the added value of having a separate financing mechanism for disaster risk management. To have the Emergency Fund as a distinct funding source for disaster risk management has been useful for more easily mobilizing and allocating resources.

Despite its successes, the CNE is faced with the specific challenge that the Fund's resources constantly fluctuate, depending on the declaration of an emergency. Although the fund also receives other resources, these do not make it self-financing. To improve the efficiency of the fund, it would be useful to establish a financial mechanism that lets the fund grow and become self-financing.

Given that the country has little experience in disaster prevention activities, it is difficult to determine now if the fund will have sufficient resources in the future to carry on supporting the system efficiently. The demand for prevention activities will surely increase, and if the Fund's financial basis will not increase the same way it will be difficult to support all demands.

The case of Costa Rica shows that strong political commitment is necessary to sustain such a disaster risk financing system. The country's objectives of disaster prevention and response would not have been achieved without resources from the Emergency Fund. This system would not exist without a strong commitment from stakeholders and decision-makers. Overall, the Costa Rican experience shows that both human and financial resources are needed to carry out disaster risk reduction.



Flood-prone housing

## Potential for Replication

It is possible to establish a similar National Emergency Fund in all countries. A National Platform can play a pivotal role in preparing the ground for such an initiative and help to make it work. For years, Costa Rica has been engaging with civil society in a process of awareness-raising about disaster risk issues. Clearly, the involvement of many actors has supported the government's lead role in changing the legal framework of the country to institutionalize disaster risk reduction.

Overall and despite the National Platform's achievements, the country still faces several challenges. It is necessary to strengthen the system, to coordinate and dedicate more national resources, to benefit more from international cooperation, to improve decentralization and local implementation of disaster risk measures (including the application of rules and regulations, like safety standards), to coordinate the involvement of the private sector and to further disseminate information among institutions taking part in the system. Costa Rica and its National Platform and HFA focal point institutions have shown what they can achieve. They have the potential to tackle these challenges with the support of all stakeholders in the country.

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# Germany



## Boosting knowledge sharing and networking for risk reduction

*Deutsches Komitee Katastrophenvorsorge (DKKV)*



Meeting of the German National Platform

### Context

The International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) was marked by a number of tragic disasters with serious consequences resulting from vulnerability to hazardous events. These included the earthquakes in Killari/Maharashtra (1993), Northridge/Los Angeles (1994), Kobe (1995) and Izmir & Düzce (1998), severe winter storms Wiebke (1990) and Lothar (1999) in Europe and the hurricanes and typhoons Mireille (1991), Andrew (1992), Georges (1998) and Mitch (1998). Compared with the 1980s, the number of major disasters caused by natural hazards increased by almost one third. More than two and a half times as many people were killed by disasters and the economic losses tripled. These developments drove home the importance of redoubling efforts in the field of disaster risk reduction and of rapidly implementing the IDNDR's findings.

At the end of the decade, the United Nations appealed to member states to establish organizations for disaster risk reduction, or to support any existing national and international

committees and organizations. Germany, which held the European Union Presidency at the time, drafted the EU position on the institutional framework for continuing international disaster risk reduction efforts. Germany thus conveyed the EU member states' plea for the United Nations to continue steering international processes and to establish a separate secretariat for disaster risk reduction. Accordingly, the UN/ISDR secretariat was established through the ECOSOC-Resolution 1999/63 and the General Assembly Resolution 54/219.

As a logical consequence of its international efforts, in 2000 Germany established its National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction - the German Committee for Disaster Reduction (DKKV). DKKV was the successor to the German IDNDR Committee, with the same structure, and simply a name change. In Germany, there was a clear consensus among all stakeholders that disaster reduction activities should continue beyond the IDNDR. The Federal Foreign Office as main donor affirmed its continued support, meaning that the new DKKV could continue the work of the previous IDNDR Committee without any interruption.

## National Platform Structure and Activities

### *Focal point institution*

Based in Bonn, the DKKV is the German Government's designated National Platform for disaster reduction. It also serves as the German Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) focal point institution. It is the national focal point and information hub for organizations and initiatives involved in disaster reduction, and it promotes the implementation of the HFA. It is also a center of expertise in all matters relating to national and international disaster reduction issues. DKKV is a non-governmental organization, registered as non-profit association under private law.

### *Membership*

The DKKV brings together all key players in disaster reduction. With structure and composition that are unique both in Germany and internationally, the DKKV has special strengths in linking theory and practice, linking national and international initiatives, and linking public-sector and private-sector structures. It currently has 49 voluntary committee members and about 20 long-term guests from different Ministries, who join committee meetings as observers. Members of DKKV include:

- Government agencies: e.g. Federal Agency for Environment, Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW), Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK).
- Scientific institutes and organizations: e.g. Geoforschungszentrum Potsdam (GFZ), Helmholtz Association, German Weather Service (DWD), United Nations University-Institute for Environment and Human Security (UNU-EHS), Max-Planck-Institute, Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC).

- Media: e.g. First (ARD) and Second (ZDF) German public television channels.
- Private sector: e.g. German Insurance Association (GDV).
- Humanitarian and development cooperation organizations: e.g. German Red Cross (DRK), GTZ, InWEnt, Knights of St. John, and others.

The diversity of backgrounds represented within the Committee provides a broad basis of expertise. This enables the Committee to work on interdisciplinary, multi-sectoral topics, linking different scientific disciplines and practitioners.

### *Operational practices*

The DKKV strives to cover all areas of disaster reduction. It does not handle operational projects itself, although some of its members provide emergency and humanitarian assistance.

The structure of DKKV provides a number of possibilities for information exchange, decision making processes and joint member initiatives:

- DKKV is directed by an Executive Board, currently chaired by Dr. Irmgard Schwaetzer, former Federal Minister for Regional Planning, Building and Urban Development. Composed of ten representatives of DKKV member organizations, the board meets four to five times a year. Its members make decisions on work plan implementation and strategic goals.
- The Executive Board is supported by a Scientific Advisory Board and an Operative Advisory Board. The Scientific Advisory Board and the Operative Advisory Board meet twice a year each. Members exchange information on ongoing and upcoming initiatives. Temporary working groups

are established from the membership of these two boards, to provide expertise on DKKV's defined areas of interest.

- A Secretariat with four staff members coordinates DKKV's different activities, and ensures the flow of information among network members and with national and international partners.
- The Member Assembly is the main body of the DKKV and meets at least once a year. The assembly elects the Executive Board and is the decision-making body for longer-term strategic decisions and legally binding agreements.

Core funding for DKKV and its activities is provided through a membership fee. The biggest share of project funding is provided by the Federal Foreign Office. DKKV also receives various types of financing tied to specific projects, and limited in duration and scope. The DKKV is also entitled to accept tax-deductible donations, as it has been certified as a non-profit organization.

#### *Activities and results*

DKKV defines itself as the German National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, a hub for national and international information, and a center of expertise in all issues pertaining to national and international disaster reduction.

The following are some examples of DKKV and member activities and results since 2006, which are complemented by the case study further below:

#### *Contribution to UN/ISDR processes and initiatives*

The Committee provides substantive input to ISDR processes and initiatives. It proactively facilitates the participation of German disaster risk reduction stakeholders and organizations in international initiatives and meetings, including thematic platforms. It also served as a partner for the UN/ISDR secretariat by carrying out assessments of the European institutional environment for disaster risk reduction, and by promoting capacity development tools. DKKV has been a staunch supporter of promoting the concept of National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction at global and regional levels.

#### *Linking disaster risk reduction and climate change*

DKKV is an official partner to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

(UNFCCC) Nairobi Work Programme. As chair of a European network of National Platforms, DKKV gathered and submitted European National Platforms' and HFA focal points' joint comments on a number of European Commission initiatives, like the Green Paper on Adaptation to Climate Change. At national level, DKKV participates in developing the German National Adaptation Plan. DKKV has also organized several workshops and other meetings to discuss climate change and disaster risk reduction.

#### *Founding member and current chair of a European network of National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction*

DKKV stresses the importance of networking. International networks provide the basis for concerted action, at various national levels and across national boundaries. Following a number of initiatives over the last few years, in April 2007 the Swiss, French and German National Platforms signed an agreement of cooperation, establishing a European Network of National Platforms and HFA focal points. Since its start the three partners have already provided a number of coordinated inputs into disaster reduction relevant developments at European Commission level, including:

- Joint comments on the Green paper on adaptation to Climate Change
- Coordinated follow-up on the Green paper negotiation process
- Submission of two proposals to DG Research Calls on 'Natural hazards' and 'Coordinating action'

#### *Improvement of disaster management*

DKKV members believe that conceptual enhancement of disaster management is key to the integration of disaster risk reduction. This includes analyzing relevant topics, both national and international, and developing key concepts in topic areas. Disasters and their intersections with conflicts, poverty and trends in global change were identified as key starting points. DKKV has been providing information on how these areas relate to disaster risk reduction, and how to mainstream disaster risk reduction into these areas, through workshops and publications.

# The Good Practice

## Boosting knowledge sharing and networking for risk reduction

A key activity of DKKV has been its proactive approach to boosting knowledge sharing and networking for risk reduction. DKKV regards information management as one of its core functions to be provided to its members and the wider public, and will work to improve its existing instruments. The following are some examples of recent initiatives:

### *Organization of conferences and workshops*

Together with its members and partners, the DKKV secretariat has identified topics, developed programmes, provided logistical support, published outcomes, and disseminated them to relevant governmental stakeholders, experts and the public. To reach its target audiences, DKKV uses a number of different formats, including workshops for experts, international events to link science and practice, events to attract decision makers and others for the public at large.

Annually, DKKV organizes in partnership with one of its member organizations the German Disaster Forum. In October 2006 this meeting was convened under the title *Out of the blue?*, dealing with the important role of knowledge transfer in disaster reduction. In 2007 it discussed links between disaster risk reduction in a changing climate.

Another example of its activities is the Bonn Dialogue series, which was developed by DKKV together with its members, the United Nations University (UNU-EHS) and the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP), an international, interdisciplinary science programme, dedicated to promoting, catalyzing and coordinating research, capacity development and networking on the human dimensions of global environmental change. Bonn Dialogue started in 2007. It is a one day event, with an expert workshop which is then carried over to a moderated public panel discussion at the German international radio channel Deutsche Welle. The first Bonn Dialogue workshop was held in March 2007 with the theme of *Climate Change – Control, Adapt or Flee?* The second meeting entitled *Melting Ice – Vanishing Lives* (November 2007) analyzed the effects of climate change on the polar region while the third in May 2008 discussed the role of diversity as resilience factor under the title *Diverse Future or Future in Diversity*.

The Committee also organized workshops on the role of land-use planning for the reduction of vulnerability

(2006), on Cross boundary Early Warning in Europe (2007) and on Severe Storms over Europe (2007).

### *Communication and knowledge management*

The DKKV produces a range of different publications, including a series, special publications, online information for journalists, and flyers for the public with information on how to behave in case of hazardous events. It sends these publications to interested people upon request.

The following publications have been produced since 2006:

- *Wandel von Vulnerabilität und Klima* (Changes of vulnerability and the climate) - This publication provides the abstracts and a synthesis report of a workshop on the role of spatial planning in risk reduction with a special focus on expected changes due to Climate Change)
- *EWC III – From Concept to Action* – DKKV/ UN/ ISDR publication on the proceedings and outcomes of the Third Early Warning Conference
- *Second International Symposium on Global Change* - Synthesis report of a workshop on global trends such as urban development, environmental change, climate change and their relevance for disaster reduction.
- *Out of the blue? – Disaster Reduction: Knowledge, Transfer, Practices* - Extended abstracts of the 7th Forum of DKKV at GTZ on the role of knowledge transfer in disaster reduction.
- *Disaster Risk Reduction in a changing climate* – Extended abstracts on the 8th Forum at University of Karlsruhe on different aspects of disaster risk reduction in the adaptation to climate change.
- *Annual Report 2006* – Annual Report, presenting the main activities of DKKV in 2006
- *National Platforms for Disaster Reduction* – study with financial support of GTZ, commissioned by ADPC on the potential for the establishment of National Platforms in three countries in South and Southeast Asia
- *Cross Boundary Early Warning in Europe* – publication on a workshop jointly organized with the Federal Ministry of Research and the UNU-EHS on the need for cross boundary cooperation and systems of Early Warning in Europe. The findings of the workshop were presented at the main conference of the Federal Ministry of Research,



'From L2L' in Leipzig, under the German EU-Presidency.

- *Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction in European Humanitarian Assistance* – within the framework of the German EU-Presidency, the Federal Foreign Office commissioned this study from DKKV to analyze the extent to which disaster risk reduction is part of the humanitarian assistance provided by EU member states. The outcomes of the study were presented to the European Humanitarian Donors at an informal Humanitarian Aid Committee meeting in Berlin.
- *Severe Storms over Europe* – publication of the outcomes of the second workshop on potential effects of strong wind storms on infrastructure and society in Europe.

#### *Development of Flyers for awareness-raising*

Raising general public awareness of disaster risk reduction is another important function of the DKKV. A working group of DKKV members composed of the German Weather Service, the Fire Brigades, the German Red Cross, the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK) and universities in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Urban Affairs (BMVBS) developed flyers with recommendations for the public on how to behave in case of extreme events. So far a flyer on wind storms and a flyer on heat waves have been printed and can be downloaded from the DKKV website. Links to the flyers have been placed in a number of local and urban community websites and flyers were distributed as inserts in magazines for teachers. In cooperation with the German Insurance Association a third flyer on flood protection is in development.

#### *Education/Courses for school children*

Following the Elbe Flood in 2002, DKKV developed a training course 'Living with Floods' for school children. In 2005 a training course 'Living at the edge of a volcano' was developed. Both courses are in German. They can be downloaded from the DKKV website. They were also produced on CD-Rom and can be ordered from DKKV. The training courses and DKKV website are cross-linked with the web pages of a number of teacher training institutes in Germany.

#### *Development of public databases*

DKKV has set up and maintains a number of databases. Considered one of its core services, these on-line portals provide information on:

- International disaster risk reduction projects
- References to disaster risk reduction in documents of the European Union

- Information on post graduate training courses in disaster management in German.

#### *Facilitating information sharing among science and practitioners*

DKKV has initiated a process to improve communication between scientific and practitioner communities on research findings and practical needs in the field of disaster risk reduction. Inadequate communication on the part of researchers is one of the reasons why, as is often observed, scientific findings fail to be effectively implemented. At the same time, practical necessities and needs are not always well known to scientists. Decision-makers, and relevant national and international bodies, also need to become more aware of the importance of disaster risk reduction, so that available findings can be implemented. To this end, the DKKV is forming interdisciplinary, multisectoral expert groups – drawn from members of DKKV, including its advisory board – which will focus on specific thematic topics.

#### *International programme for risk and vulnerability assessment*

Risk and vulnerability assessments are urgently required as a basis for deriving and planning preparedness measures. Existing detailed knowledge about natural hazards needs to be integrated with risk and vulnerability assessments, in order to form the basis of effective disaster reduction and disaster management. In the coming years, the DKKV plans to emphasize these needs, in its work to enhance integration of disaster reduction in the areas of policy, science and society.

#### *The Initiative*

A main event in which the DKKV has been involved, has been the organization of the Third international Early Warning Conference (EWC III) in March 2006 (<http://www.ewc3.org/>) – a contribution to HFA Priority for Action 2: Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.

Following the Indian Ocean Tsunami in December 2004 the German Government offered at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in Kobe, Japan, to host the Third International Conference on Early Warning (EWC III). This initiative taken by the German Government was a continuation of Germany's longstanding commitment to early warning as one of the most effective components of disaster risk reduction. Germany had hosted the EWC I in 1998 and the EWC II in 2003. EWC III was co-organized by the Federal Foreign Office, the DKKV and the UN/ISDR secretariat. The programme was designed in two parallel

streams. A Projects Forum discussed different hazards and early warning solutions through concrete project proposals, and a Scientific Forum focused on early warning from a scientific perspective.

The DKKV members contributed with their expertise to design the programme, e.g. for the scientific part of the conference. Additionally DKKV members provided funds to cover travel costs for participants from developing countries as a conference co-sponsor.

#### *Impact and results*

The conference once again highlighted Early Warning as an important element in the broader framework of disaster risk reduction, placing it in the frontline of interest to civil society, private sector and political decision makers. In the preparation of the conference more than 100 Early Warning projects were collected, partly presented at the conference and compiled in a publication. Some projects already received funding based on the interest generated at the EWC III.

More than 1,400 participants attended the meeting. Media reported the initiative across Germany and internationally. The meeting was thus a major contribution to heightening international interest in disaster risk reduction and Early Warning.

#### *Good Practice*

The conference is a good practice in two ways.

First of all it was a timely and appropriate reaction of a UN member state to the need for action on major hazards on an international level. It coincided with the call of the UN Secretary General for a Global Early Warning System for all hazards. The preparation of the meeting also contributed to the global survey of early warning systems coordinated by the UN/ISDR secretariat.

Additionally, the conference was a joint effort of a national government, a United Nations secretariat and a non-governmental organization, as a part of a United Nations Strategy.

## Lessons Learned



Early Warning Conference III  
27-29 March 2006, Bonn Germany

The cooperation of the United Nations, a national government and a non-governmental organization provided added value by interlinking the national and international levels, and bringing together experts from different structures and organizations.

### Potential for Replication

The Early Warning Conferences I–III were milestones for the integration and mainstreaming of Early Warning into the disaster risk reduction agenda. From the scientifically based start at EWC I, EWC II made the link to politics under its heading *Early Warning as a Matter of Policy*, and was the starting point for the establishment of the Platform for the Promotion of Early Warning of UN/ISDR secretariat. EWC III went one step further. With the title *From Concept to Action* the important step towards implementation was made.

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# Iran



## Development of National Platform work plans

*Iranian National Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction (IR/DRNP)*



National Platform meeting

### Context

The Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the top ten most disaster-prone countries in the developing world. In the past, frequent earthquakes, floods, droughts, landslides, desertification, deforestation, storms, avalanches, and other events have led to severe disasters. This is why Iran has welcomed international efforts to promote disaster risk reduction.

A key event that spurred Iran's commitment was the earthquake of Manjil in June 1990, which killed 14,000 people in the north-western part of Iran. This marked a turning point in national disaster management policy and regulations.

During the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) in the 1990s, Iran carried out a number of important initiatives. These included the enactment of new legislation and of a by-law linked to disaster risk management, the development of safety measures for public service organizations, the formulation of technical codes and standards related to construction work (in particular building codes and risk zone mapping) and the exploration of natural resources. Related guidelines for municipalities to enforce those standards were also adopted. Additionally, the Government enacted a Comprehensive Crisis

Management Plan and trained key staff on disaster risk management. The Comprehensive Disaster Management Plan of Iran was finally ratified in April 2003.

On the institutional side, the responsibility for disaster management was formally assigned to the Ministry of Interior by virtue of the Budget Act adopted in 1991. The Ministry was mandated to deal with natural hazard-related disasters which up to that time were discharged by a special disaster task force within the Office of the President. To discharge the assigned disaster management functions, the Ministry formed the Bureau for Research and Coordination of Safety and Reconstruction Affairs (BRCSR). The BRCSR mandate was quite broad and included research into safety measures, formulation of preparedness and mitigation plans, disaster information collection, analysis and dissemination, provision of coordination services for relief, reconstruction and rehabilitation activities, monitoring activities including coordination of budget forecasting, and disbursement and provision of logistical and procurement support services for the provinces. The BRCSR was also mandated to liaise and cooperate with international and national centres of expertise.

However, the main instrument leading disaster risk management efforts in Iran at this time was the National Committee for Natural Disaster Reduction (NCNDR). It was set up as one of the first worldwide, in line with recommendations by the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). The committee included the Ministers of Energy, Agriculture, Health, Commerce, Construction, Roads, and Transportation and Housing and Urban Development and included also the Red Crescent Society of Iran. The National Committee was supported by nine specialized sub-committees (SSC) presided over by Deputy Ministers, 27 Provincial Committees presided over by General Governors and also a Coordination committee presided over by the Minister of Interior himself.

The nine specialized sub-Committees were concerned with:

1. Earthquakes and landslides
2. Vegetation infestation, vegetation diseases and cold
3. Rangeland revival and coping with drought

4. Flood prevention, sea level rise and river overflow
5. Air pollution reduction
6. Storm and hurricane hazards
7. Rescue and relief
8. Loss compensation
9. Health and medical care

Proposals received from all the SSCs were studied and analyzed by the coordination committee to be presented with its final evaluation to the NCNDR for decision making. Designed as a policy making body for disaster risk management, the Committee provided information exchange and technical recommendations to the government, and had the necessary authority to support and follow up related activities.

Additionally, the Ministry convened a National Disaster Task Force (NDTF). As the name suggests, the NDTF was set up as an inter-organizational coordination body for disaster risk management. While in normal times, it mainly coordinated disaster risk management research, in a disaster situation it turned into a major coordinator of relief operations carried out by technical ministries and relief organizations under the leadership of the Deputy Minister for coordination of development affairs. Headquartered at the Ministry of Interior, the NDTF relied for its activities on the BRCSR whose director also served as NDTF manager. A total of 4,550 staff, mostly dealing with administrative and logistic support services, perform their duties at national, provincial, and local levels.

Following the devastating Bam earthquake in December 2003, in which some 30, 000 people were killed, a High Bureau of Disaster management was also established in the President's Office.

Immediately after the second World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) in Kobe, Iran was in February 2005 one of the first countries to replace their IDNDR committee with a National Platform for Disaster Reduction. The Iranian National Platform for Disaster Reduction (IR/DRNP) was set up to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA) at national, provincial and local levels and provide strategic direction to the national partners and stakeholders in disaster risk reduction. The Ministry of Interior, the Deputy Interior Minister for Coordination of Development Affairs and the NDTF were the driving forces behind this move.

## National Platform Structure and Activities

### *Focal Point Institution*

To follow and monitor priorities and goals of the HFA at country level, Iran set up a National Executive Secretariat for the HFA. This Secretariat was initially hosted by the Natural Disaster Research Institute of Iran (NDRI) and is now part of the Building and Housing Research Center. The HFA secretariat supports Iran's National Platform. The Executive Secretariat for the HFA discharges its duties under the supervision of these authorities and serves as the Secretary for the National Platform on a day-to-day basis. In the past, the HFA Secretariat has accessed funding extended to the Earthquake working group, which is affiliated with the NDMO, to carry out its administrative support to the National Platform.

Iran's National Platform IR/DRNP was created on the basis of the act that set up the IDNDR National Committee. The IR/DRNP reports officially to the Ministry of Interior. The IR/DRNP is coordinated by the Deputy Interior Minister for Coordination of Development Affairs. This person is showing strong commitment by active participation in National Platform meetings. The Deputy Minister is also Deputy Head of the National Disaster Task Force, which, since March 2008, has been undergoing a transformation into the new National Disaster Management Organization. This Organization paves the way for implementing national disaster risk reduction activities in even more coordinated manner and involves most key players in national disaster risk reduction under the overall supervision of the Ministry of Interior and its provincial representatives. It has a high level council chaired by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is mainly involved in disaster response and recovery. The Organization will continue to be headed by a Deputy Interior Minister. The National Platform will serve as the think-tank of this new organization.

### *Membership*

The IR/DRNP has almost 30 key members, comprising line ministries, implementing organizations, academic institutions, NGOs and the private sector:

- Ministries: Communication and Information Technology; Culture and Islamic Guidance; Defence; Education; Energy; Finance and Economic Affairs; Foreign Affairs; Health (Treatment and Medical Education sector); Housing and Urban Development; Interior (National Disaster Task Force); Agriculture; Management and Planning Organization; Roads and Transportation; Science, Research and Technology

- Technical Services: Heads of three main working groups of the National Disaster Task Force, Environmental Organization, Meteorological Organization, Natural Disaster Research Institute of Iran, Prevention and Disaster Management Center of the Presidential Office, Housing Foundation
- Other administrative services: Customs Office
- Media: Iranian Broadcasting Organization
- Local Authorities: Organization of Municipalities
- Others: Basij militia forces,<sup>3</sup> Disciplinary Forces,<sup>4</sup> Revolutionary Guard force
- NGOs: Iranian Red Crescent Society, which is mainly involved in disaster response and the NGO Resource Center Hamyarane Gada, which engages in community based disaster management activities

The National Platform meets at two levels: High-level meetings are convened every three months by the Ministry of Interior, and Expert level meetings are convened by the secretariat according to needs. Each institution actively participates in the National Platform meetings at higher and expert levels, and provides information on disaster risk reduction or disaster risk management activities they have carried out.

### *Operational practices*

The IR/DRNP is a multisectoral National Platform, with designated responsibilities at the national and local level to facilitate co-ordination between different stakeholders.

The National Platform aims to implement at national level the five HFA priorities, to build resilience to disasters for the sake of sustainable development. It tries to achieve the following key objectives to:

- Enhance collaboration and co-ordination among disaster risk reduction stakeholders
- Create an enabling environment for developing a culture of disaster prevention
- Integrate disaster risk reduction into development plans

To do so, the IR/DRNP in 2006 developed a ten-year plan for implementation of the HFA. This overall framework was complemented in late 2007 with a more

<sup>3</sup> In municipalities and in particular the Tehran Municipality, the mobilization organization commonly known as Basij serves as an auxiliary force. They are also important partner in disaster management. Thanks to their wide-spread presence, they can contribute as soon as hazards strike. The Basij was founded as a people's army during the years of war with Iraq in the 1980s. After the war, attempts were made for the Basij to carry out civil defence and protection, among other functions.

<sup>4</sup> These include the police, gendarmerie and the revolutionary corps, which were united in the form of the Disciplinary Forces in 1992 and put under the command of the Ministry of Interior.

detailed National biennial working plan 2008/2009 (see good practice example below).

To implement member organizations' activities, the National Platform relies on annual funding from the National Disaster Task Force and future National Disaster Management Organization. Iran's budget, approved by Parliament, has a dedicated budget line for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management. The NDMO receives these allocations and dispatches funds according to needs. In the past, the National Platform has not been involved in direct resource mobilization, however its new annual work plans foresee engagement in this field.

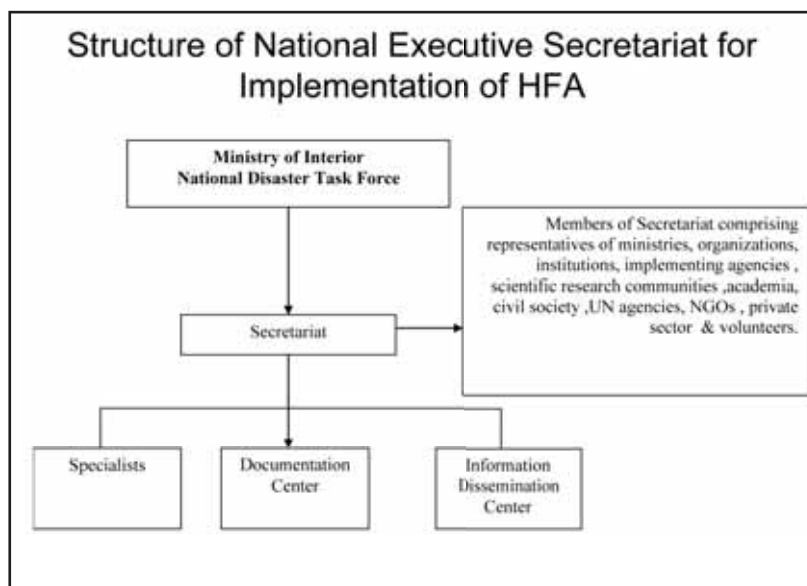
The National Platform plans to formalize its set up and functions by developing terms of reference and laying out its organizational structure during 2008. The establishment of sub-national platforms is also under discussion.

#### *Activities and results*

Since its inception in 2005, National Platform member organizations have been involved in carrying out the following activities, some of which are a continuation of those started during the IDNDR. The IR/NDRP as consultative forum has provided valuable support to individual members, the Iranian Government and the administration at large before implementing these activities. For some activities, e.g. the annual earthquake drills and advocacy events related to the International Disaster Reduction Day in October each year, the National Platforms contributes as a whole.

#### *Support to establish a comprehensive set of institutions and committees for disaster risk reduction*

- Creation of National and Provincial Crisis Management Centers in 2005
- Strengthening of 23 Preparedness Working Groups in 2005: In follow up to the WCDR, Iran strengthened the activities and enhanced the role of 23 working groups established in 2003 within the framework of the National Relief and Rescue Comprehensive Plan. These groups intervene at local, provincial and national level. There are also three categories of specialized working groups on operation, prevention and training which support the preparedness working groups. The aim of these task forces is to manage and follow preparedness



activities such as data collection, research, planning, establishing management structure, training, securing resources, drills and practice.

- Definition of a National Strategy for Disaster Reduction, approved by the supreme leader in 2006
- Creation of the High-Level Council on Disaster Management in 2006

#### *Creating a National Working Committee in 2005*

Iran created a national working committee in 2005, after the WCDR. The members of this committee consisted of the Ministry of Interior, the Iranian Red Crescent national society, NGOs, the municipality of Tehran, the President's Office, the Social Committee of the Parliament, the NDRI, the National Iranian Broadcasting Organization, the Disciplinary Forces, the Ministry of Energy, Basij Organization, Housing Foundation, Meteorological Organization, IIEES, TDMMO, Environmental Organization, Ministry of Housing and others. This committee prepared the National Policy on Natural Disaster Prevention and Risk Reduction. Most members of the committee are currently part of the National Platform.

#### *Development of hazard plans and strategies*

- Preparation of a comprehensive Earthquake Resistance Plan in 2005
- Development of a National Strategy for Integrated Flood Management with World Bank support in 2006 and designation of a specialized working group to develop Flood Disaster Management regulations
- Collaboration with FAO and UNDP in designing a Drought Disaster Assessment System in 2006
- Development of a Safety Room plan in the event of a natural hazard (2006)

Priorities identified were integrated into development plans and led to the revision of regulations and by-laws.

#### *Integration of disaster risk management in schools*

National Platform member organizations have been instrumental in developing and including a disaster risk reduction syllabus focusing specifically on earthquake risks in educational books for high school and university students in 2005. 145,000 copies of Earthquake Guidelines for schools have been distributed. They also organize earthquake drills and games in schools at all levels in November each year.

In line with the HFA's Priority for Action 5, which refers to strengthening preparedness for effective response at all levels, comprehensive plans for relief and rescue operations including the identification and equipment of crisis rooms and crisis management plans for emergency facilities have been set up or are being implemented in all provinces.

#### *Monitoring of construction activities and retrofitting of houses for low income families*

The Housing Foundation and other National Platform member organizations have been carrying out vulnerability assessments. To do so, supervisory engineers engaged in seismic micro-zoning, prepared technical profiles of existing building structures and monitored on-going construction activities based on the country's revised building codes. This is carried out in Tehran and other provinces. Fourteen important buildings, including the Imam Reza holy shrine, the development and renovation organization, the central Communication office building as well as entire suburbs of Tehran are being assessed.

Based on a government decision in 2005, the Housing Foundation started to retrofit houses for low income families. If the objective of retrofitting and rehabilitating 300,000 housing units per year can be met and sustained, some 3 million houses will be made safer by 2015. Meanwhile, the Housing Foundation also established the first applied training centre for retrofitting under the NDRI in December 2006. In cooperation with the French NGO Craters EAG, French construction workers and technicians provided training on safe housing. NSET Nepal has also been involved in providing training to local engineers and masons for safe construction.

Houses are nowadays constructed following the new building codes and have already proven their resistance against earthquakes in the Dorud and Borjerd area.

#### *Investments in upgrading the health system in preparation for future hazards*

A comprehensive National Health and Medical Layer Response Strategy and a health sector country profile were developed in 2006. The strategy is being reviewed by several university institutes. In line with the Strategy and together with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and World Health Organisation (WHO), activities were also carried out to upgrade health facilities and to prepare for future disasters. In addition, provincial working groups on health and medical treatment were strengthened or re-activated and the country was equipped with eight medical and health relief centres of excellence. Seasonal national workshops on health and medical emergency management have been held.

#### *Implementation of other disaster risk reduction projects related to flood control and earthquakes*

- Setting up of earthquake and flood early warning systems in six provinces since 2005 alongside risk reduction training activities in schools, through television and by publishing related books and manuals.
- Creation of a national portal on disaster events to bridge the information gap and to support the ministries at various levels of disaster risk management. Disaster Inventories databases have been established which support the key ministries (Ministry of Interior, MPO and President's office) in mapping the vulnerability of the regions.
- Implementation of two pilot projects in Gorgan and Keramn province on urban earthquake risk reduction through hazard and risk mapping (with UNDP)
- Implementation of 23 Flood Control Plans along major rivers in 2005 and 2006 covering some 2,250 km of rivers.
- Development of a Comprehensive Seismic Plan
- Development of guidelines and terms of reference for flood hazard maps
- Development of guidelines for landslide hazard mapping
- Geological hazard mapping in the medium scale 1:25000 for flood, earthquake, landslide and liquefaction

#### *Advocacy and awareness-raising for Disaster Risk Reduction*

Iran organizes a National week for Disaster Risk Reduction in the second week of October each year, around the International Day for Disaster Reduction.

During this week, the National Platform organizes events that involve the whole of Iranian society. The National Platform has in the past specifically made use of champions to get the disaster risk reduction message across. During these events, earthquake survivors have been honoured, such as in the aftermath of the 2003 Bam earthquake.

#### *Disaster risk reduction related conferences*

- Two conferences entitled 'Integrated disaster risk management' were held in 2006 and 2007, by Hamyaran, the Iranian NGO Resource Center (For more details, please access <http://www.INDM.org>).
- Organization of a workshop with the participation of 25 relevant NGOs on the role of civil society in disaster risk reduction.

#### *Preparing training and publishing informative posters and brochures on:*

- Observation of river and river bed limits
- Technical and standard exploitation of sand and gravel
- Preparedness against floods
- Launching of specialized websites on flood and drought
- Preparing specialized training CDs on flood management and rivers in order to enhance awareness among the experts concerned
- For the future, the National Platform is considering developing specific information kits and providing other services to the media to involve them further in disaster risk reduction.

#### *Mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction in different sectors*

The Management and Planning Organization of Iran is responsible for defining policies, guidelines and vision plans, which have a 20 year perspective. However, the integration of disaster risk reduction into these plans is spearheaded by each sector specified in the plans. A plethora of technical ministries and organizations contribute to disaster risk management. The role of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and its affiliated Housing Foundation is very important as these are the two major organizations for the approval and implementation of special plans, housing projects, and building codes including earthquake mandatory

codes. The Ministry of Energy, responsible for the management of rivers and dams is also directly involved in studying and applying mitigation measures against the rise of the Caspian Sea. The Ministry of Construction is mandated to supervise watersheds, forests and rangelands. The Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Roads & Transportation, and the Ministry of Agriculture also play substantive roles during emergencies. All these Ministries are members of the IR/DRNP and the emerging National Disaster Management Organization (NDMO).

Overall, any sectoral activities related to disaster risk management are subject to the Planning and Budget organization's review as supreme approving body for all public sectors' development plans, programmes and projects. The National Platform is also gradually enhancing its role in supporting the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction in the aforesaid national plans and programmes through further review and contribution to sectoral plans.

At the regional level, Iran has set up a regional specialized collaborative center on seismic risk reduction (ASRC) ([www.asrrc.org](http://www.asrrc.org)).

#### *Creation of university and training courses for disaster risk reduction*

The National Platform has organized training courses on river engineering and management, flood loss prevention, exploitation of river materials, hydraulic designing of bridges, and flood management, including non-structural methods. They have also provided reference documents, including a guidebook on levee design. This has promoted knowledge sharing and skills development on disaster risk management.

Many of Iran's best universities such as Tehran University and Shahid Beheshti University have provided graduate programs in disaster management and post disaster reconstruction. Local technical bodies like the Iran Construction Engineering Disciplinary Organization and rural technical associations perform necessary technical controls and monitor the quality of construction by local technical bodies in Iran.



# The Good Practice

## Development of the National Platform's work plans

### *The Initiative*

In late 2007, with support from the UN/ISDR secretariat office in Tehran, the Iranian National Platform developed a Biennial national working plan to implement the HFA's five Priorities for action. Additionally, members debated and drafted a biennial national working plan on hospital safety in line with the 2008/2009 World Disaster Reduction campaign on Hospitals Safe from Disasters: Reduce Risk, Protect Health Facilities, Save Lives. The National Platform, the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Health are the focal points for implementation of the plans. The plans were adopted in February 2008.

Overall, the work plan covers some 54 projects, 15 to address Priority Action 1, Six concerning Priority Action 2, ten for Priority Action 3, 15 on Priority Action 4 and 8 for Priority Action 5. The overall estimated budget necessary to implement these actions is US\$ 4.6 million. Among the many activities foreseen in the work plan is the retrofitting and rehabilitation of three million residential units, supported by government subsidies, construction materials and technical assistance to low income families, and grants and soft loans to real estate owners. 300,000 houses are planned to be completed annually by the end of the second development plan.

The biennial work plan on safety of hospitals and health facilities plans activities in the following fields:

### *1. Advocacy and Communication:*

- Develop specific awareness raising and information kits in Farsi on hospital safety for media
- Develop and disseminate specific materials for different audiences of the campaign to increase their awareness on hospital safety
- Publish a regular electronic newsletter on hospital safety

### *2. Enhancing technical, research and human resources and capacity*

- Develop Iran's national strategy on making existing hospitals and health facilities safe
- Develop and define the necessary criteria for safe hospitals
- Introduce some model safe hospitals throughout the country building on existing projects such as joint UNDP-Iran projects

Excerpt of activities ensure that foreseen under Priority for Action 1 to "ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation":

No.	Project	Time frame (Year- Month)	Estimated budget (USD)
1	Developing a module for evaluating existing national capacity at different levels on disaster risk reduction	12	50.000
2	Developing a national strategy on disaster risk reduction	14	96.000
3	Developing a master plan for the NP on the situation of disaster risk reduction in the country	12	50.000
4	Defining an urban development system considering seismic risks	18	150.000
5	Developing criteria for re-construction of the earthquake affected areas in line with social-economic and cultural characteristics	18	180.000
6	Supporting the Iran-UNDP project on developing national capacity on disaster risk management	24	300.000
7	Developing a national data bank for disaster management including a bank of experts, academic specialist related to DRR, managers and etc (building on the existing initiatives)	12	110.000
8	Developing/defining standards for the disaster risk management system	12	60.000
9	Developing/ defining standards for disaster management system ( with emphasis on post-disaster phase )	12	40.000
10	Developing methods for evaluation of capacity of the national agencies, ministries and institution	12	38.000
11	Developing a matrix for follow-up and monitoring of the work plan during the two years	24	28.000
12	Publishing a newsletter for NP on a seasonal basis (12000 volumes)	24	30.000
13	Preparing an annual report on Occurred Natural Disaster	12	30.000
14	Promoting the Secretariat for the HFA and the NP in Iran	2008-2009	200.000
15	Establishing a working group to prepare necessary materials for reporting to ISDR and the global risk assessment, 2009	2008-2009	30.000

- Develop a hospital safety index and checklist to be used by engineers, supervisors and other groups related to hospitals

### 3. Training

- Develop and apply training manuals on hospital safety for different groups, managers, policy makers and engineers, and develop modules or courses that include hospital safety, into universities, professional curriculum and schools

### 4. Promotion of national cooperation and implementation of the HFA

- Establish a Hospital Safety National and Provincial Committee within the Ministry of Health, responsible for coordination of activities at national level
- Develop and run a national hospital safety network

### 5. National Conferences

- Hold a National and an Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) regional conference on hospital safety

Key to implementing these work plans is a strong coordination mechanism and managerial process. The National Platform therefore plays a central role, through bringing the concerned partners together to ensure the highest possible commitment to the work plans, and their effective implementation.

#### *Impact and results:*

For the first time a detailed national work plan on disaster risk reduction has been developed in the country, which is a major achievement. The plan lays out action points that complement the ten year plan adopted in 2005, and which already provide broader recommendations. The development of the plan was a result of intense consultations by all National Platform stakeholders.

The plan already provides a common framework for action by multiple stakeholders to reduce risks in Iran. An example is the upgrading and retrofitting of structures in dilapidated urban areas. The plan is helping to prepare the ground for architectural planning based on indigenous architecture. Micro-zoning and carrying out the related studies for identifying and assessing various risks at the provinces.

#### *Good Practice*

This is the first time since 2005, that the country is developing a national work plan to implement the HFA at national and local levels through consultation with all relevant stakeholders. The plan was developed through close consultation with the UN/ISDR secretariat office in Tehran as the UN inter-agency secretariat responsible for disaster risk reduction. The work plan is going to be implemented by the NDTF as the responsible national body on disaster risk reduction. The initiative shows that a National Platform can serve as a think-tank for the NDTF and other implementing ministries and agencies at national and local level. The National Platform and other institutions thus played a complementary role.

Given the success of this initiative, the National Platform also developed another plan on hospital safety in Iran. This is a good practice, as this plan again was drafted in close consultation with the UN/ISDR secretariat, WHO and UNDP and shows an interesting partnership between national and international bodies on thematic areas. It is the first national plan developed by National Platforms for the World Campaign.

## Lessons Learned

While it is premature to draw thorough lessons from the implementation of the new work plans, it can be assumed that if properly implemented, the plans will greatly help to enhance the efficiency of the National Platform members' activities, avoid duplication and sharpen focus on the most urgent priorities. To achieve this however, it is necessary to mobilize additional funds to carry out the planned activities. The National Platform is exploring opportunities to mobilize financial resources from different stakeholders to fund the implementation of the 54 projects identified for HFA implementation, and the 32 projects focusing specifically on hospital safety.

In a broader sense and learning from its own experience, members of the National Platform have drawn a number of conclusions and recommend the following to be considered by other countries when establishing National Platforms:

1. A decision on the establishment of a National Platform should come from a higher administrative level in order to ensure stronger participation of all actors in particular key authorities.
2. Establishment of National Platforms should be based on available experiences, expertise, resources and priorities at national level, to avoid duplications.
3. National Platforms should follow a multi-hazard, multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral and people-centered approach and strongly represent the national decision making bodies.
4. National Platforms should contribute to codification of research and training as well as operational procedures within national disaster risk reduction systems.
5. In order to encourage the members of National Platforms to work on disaster risk reduction and to be more familiar with the disaster risk reduction concept and activities, the UN/ISDR secretariat and other international experts should attend National Platforms meeting on an occasional basis.

Overall, the National Platform has considerably improved national coordination and promotion of disaster risk reduction in Iran. The disaster risk reduction concept is now better understood by Iranian authorities. The level of different stakeholders' involvement in disaster risk reduction has increased, and there is popular support for the National Platform's activities. That said, further steps are needed to rally more sections of Iranian society and its administration to achieve a paradigm shift at a national and local level, from response to risk reduction. Continuous mobilization of resources for disaster risk reduction is also particularly challenging.

### Potential for Replication

There is good potential for replicating the Iranian experience of setting up a National Platform and developing a work plan collaboratively with National Platform members. The involvement of international partners to accompany the process is recommended.

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# Madagascar



## Efficient preparedness for response through coordination, decentralization and effective communication

*Comité de réflexion des intervenants en catastrophe (CRIC)*

National Platform meeting



### Context

Madagascar's main natural hazard risk is its annual cyclone season, which lasts six months. Realizing that the frequency and magnitude of hazardous events and ensuing disasters was an obstacle to sustainable development, the Malagasy Government in the mid 90s began to set up a disaster risk management system. In 1999 it established a Comité de réflexion des intervenants en catastrophe (CRIC - Disaster Stakeholders' Think Tank). The CRIC served to discuss disaster related matters. This brainstorming led in 2002 to the development, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), of a National Strategy for Disaster and Risk Management. At the same time the Strategy was incorporated into the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). The Government started drafting a Disaster Risk Management Bill and a National Plan for Disaster Risk Management, which has been integrated into 22 Regional Plans and a number of community disaster risk management plans. These instruments introduced a whole set of disaster risk reduction measures. To further strengthen coordination and support, on 17 July 2003 the Malagasy authorities designated the CRIC to be the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Officially called Plate-forme nationale des intervenants en gestion des risques et des catastrophes (PNGRC - National Platform of Disaster Risk and Disaster Management Stakeholders). In practice, the old term Comité de réflexion des intervenants en catastrophe (CRIC) remains the one used.

## National Platform Structure and Activities

### *Focal Point Institution*

The National Platform is chaired and coordinated by the country's National Focal Point for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), the Executive Secretary of the Bureau national de gestion des risques et des catastrophes (BNGRC – National Office for Disaster and Risk Management). The BNGRC operates under the Malagasy Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform. On disaster risk reduction issues, the Ministry is accountable to the National Council for Disaster Risk Management (CNGRC – Conseil national de gestion des risques et des catastrophes) chaired by the Prime Minister and composed of Cabinet ministers concerned. The BNGRC hosts the CRIC meetings and provides administrative support. The National Platform is an entity that enjoys official recognition, although it does not have a legal status. For its operations it relies on resources mobilized by each member organization through flash appeals for emergency response and other sources for longer-term development projects.

### *Membership*

The National Platform composition reflects its multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder nature, gathering representatives with technical knowledge and/or decision-making power, from:

- Government Ministries in charge of Agriculture, Communications, Education and Scientific Research, Defence, Finance, Energy, Foreign Affairs, Health, Interior, Justice, Mining, Regional Planning, Public Works and Telecommunications
- Technical institutions such as the Direction of Meteorology, the Geophysical Institute & Observatory or the Civil Protection Corps
- UN agencies including FAO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-OCHA, WFP and WHO
- International NGOs, including CARE International and Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
- National NGOs and associations including the National Red Cross Society
- Media from state-owned radio and TV stations
- International development agencies and partners, including the USAID, the World Bank and related project personnel
- Private sector companies

The diverse composition of the National Platform and their members' keen interest in making a difference through collaboration and strategic decision-making based on sound evidence has led to fruitful exchange,

networking and agreements 'on the spot' including on cost sharing. Bureaucratic hurdles and office politics have been circumvented. Information is easily shared, complementarity and synergies are boosted. It has also been very helpful to have international partners included as members of the Platform, signaling and facilitating potential international support. Another added value has been the presence of the media, which not only can learn more about the topic but also provides the critical advantage of reporting immediately on disaster risk related matters.

### *Operational practices*

The National Platform members first and foremost brainstorm on disaster risk management issues, including – when necessary – disaster response and recovery.

There is no fixed schedule of meetings. Instead the national coordinator can convene meetings whenever the need arises. Habitually the CRIC becomes more active in the lead-up, during, and in the aftermath of the cyclone season (November to May), when all forces are geared up to face the country's most threatening hazard. Meetings are also convened around joint initiatives like the preparation of the National Contingency Plan (see below) or the preparation of the Annual Work Plan. The 2007 plan was developed in line with the country's National Plan and National Strategy for Disaster Risk Management and the related Bill. It includes key activities of the HFA.

As the National Platform does not have a legal status, it has no formal decision-making power. However, in practice its members decide consensually on a number of disaster risk reduction activities that are implemented by some or all, under the overall coordination of the BNGRC. Roles and responsibilities are generally distributed and agreed among the CRIC members based on each member's resources, technical competences and geographical coverage, following cluster lines. Decisions taken also include report validation as well as funding and resource mobilization by donor organizations represented in the National Platform. For example, specialized institutions or organizations like the General Directorate of Meteorology and the Geophysical Institute & Observatory (IOGA) are conducting technical analyses, while the BNGRC is focusing, among other things, on coordination of interventions and early warning systems.

### *Activities and results*

Since its inception, the CRIC has - among other services - significantly contributed to the:

*1) Delivery of technical advice on policy and legislative aspects of disaster risk management*

This includes the CRIC members' contribution – preceded by high-level advocacy - to develop Madagascar's National Strategy for Disaster and Disaster Risk Management (2002), to integrate disaster risk management into the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2002), to develop the Disaster Risk Management Bill (2003), to adopt the HFA as guiding framework of action immediately after the January 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction, and to develop Madagascar's Contingency Plan (2007).

*2) Engagement for school and hospital safety*

National Platforms members contributed to the adoption of a decree that makes anti-cyclonic standards compulsory for new school and hospital buildings. They supported the mainstreaming of disaster risk management in school curricula - initially in disaster-prone areas - and in 2006 developed and disseminated a teachers' guide and a school children's manual on disaster risk reduction.

*3) Advocacy and awareness raising for disaster risk management*

Aware that no action will be successful on a longer-term basis without genuine buy-in and commitment by all spheres of society, the National Platform invested heavily in awareness raising and advocacy. Its members managed to obtain wider media coverage of disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management issues by state-owned radio and TV stations and some private-owned print media since 2005. Official representatives and the population at large participated in ISDR World Disaster Reduction Campaigns, yearly International Disaster Reduction Days, and, in May 2007 a National Solidarity Campaign for Cyclone Victims to raise funds and other donations from the

Malagasy population. Moreover, National Platform advocacy led to a stronger disaster risk reduction component in the newly developed 2007-2012 Madagascar Action Plan (MAP) that replaces the PRSP. Disaster risk reduction will henceforth be mainstreamed throughout the country's national policy framework for sustainable development planning rather than poverty reduction alone.

*4) Involvement of local communities in disaster risk management and support of the Early Warning System*

In support of the BNGRC, National Platform members helped to engage with local authorities and other stakeholders to draw up evacuation plans and risk maps for the country's 22 regions in 2005 and 2006. This was instrumental in attracting significant participation by local authorities, the military and the population, including religious leaders and the media, to carry out preparedness drills. Starting from 2005, these drills contributed to substantial awareness-raising among ordinary citizens of the importance of disaster risk reduction for securing their livelihoods. The primary targets of these drills were the seven million coastal residents who are most vulnerable to the country's hazards. National Platform members also provided support for further strengthening the National Early Warning System through better information systems and the provision of Single Side Band (SSB) radio receivers/transmitters, tide gauges and seismographic stations.

These results would not have been possible without the strong support of many individuals in Line Ministries and Government departments, local authorities, technical services and UN agencies, and the financial support of the Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform, UNDP, the World Bank and several OECD countries' development agencies active in Madagascar.

# The Good Practice

## Efficient preparedness for response through coordination, decentralization and effective communication

### *The Initiative: Preparation of Madagascar's Contingency Plan*

Madagascar's high exposure to cyclones is impossible to avoid, meaning that putting in place a cutting-edge early warning and preparedness system is crucial for saving coastal populations from havoc. The combination of all disaster risk management initiatives that have been substantially supported by the National Platform has already helped to reduce disaster-induced losses in human lives and property in recent years. In 2007 an unprecedented number of six cyclones – one every fortnight – left 151 people dead and some 160,000 others in need of humanitarian assistance. As the vulnerability of the affected communities increased after each event, the six cyclones could have killed at the very least 600 people, were it not for the disaster risk reduction measures taken since 2002. Nevertheless, the increased frequency and severity of the cyclones raised further concerns among the CRIC members, who decided to reinforce their cooperation to further strengthen the country's cyclone resilience.

They focused on a Contingency Plan as an instrument to further reduce losses of lives and livelihoods. In October 2007, the BNGRC, supported by UN-OCHA/ Bureau of the Resident Coordinator and UNICEF, convened a meeting of CRIC members and other partners for a three-day workshop. 100 participants gathered to kick start the development of the Contingency Plan. After this initial meeting to share basic concepts and information, the Contingency Plan was developed at a sectoral level over a period of several months, then was consolidated and approved in plenary in late 2007. Focusing on cyclone risks on the East Coast of Madagascar – as the most likely disaster scenario – the Contingency Plan aims to better prepare for and manage disaster situations, and to ensure steps for early recovery. The plan provides an overview and evaluation of the risk environment, refers to previous emergencies, known vulnerabilities and response capacities. It also provides several cyclone disaster scenarios on the East Coast before highlighting operational elements and responsibilities for a coordinated response.

Following intensive stocktaking at different meetings, the consolidated Contingency Plan now summarizes sectoral contingency plans and compiles an extensive

list of useful references. These include contact details – including for emergency communication – of disaster risk management contributors and other critical stakeholders, and a reminder of institutional mandates. It also provides maps and graphs reflecting the administrative units, disaster risk management organizational set-up and population density. Furthermore, it assesses infrastructure like transport facilities, health centres and warehouse capacities. Finally, the plan situates pre-positioned food and non-food items and includes standard United Nations and national documents to guide situational loss assessments, and other useful tools for mobilizing emergency resources.

Overall, the Contingency Plan tackles four main challenges identified by National Platform members in their review of disaster management over previous years. These are to: 1) reinforce coordination, communication and information-sharing, 2) develop common methodologies for evaluating losses and assessing interventions, 3) optimize resource mobilization and to 4) reinforce logistical capacities.

Ahead of the cyclone season and in partnership with the central authorities and other CRIC partners, food, tents and building materials were pre-positioned in the most vulnerable regions as a precautionary measure to avoid shortages and ensure assistance in advance of relief operations.

Importantly, the Contingency Plan has been endorsed by both the Government and the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee, meaning that everyone is on the same page with regard to response activities.

### *Impact and results*

The usefulness of the Contingency Plan in strengthening the country's preparedness system was put to the test in January 2008 when the first cyclones of the season, accompanied by strong winds and heavy precipitation, reached the West and East coast of Madagascar and also affected its capital Antananarivo. Cyclone Ivan, a category four windstorm with wind speeds up to 230 km/h accompanied by heavy rainfall, reached Madagascar on 17 February 2008 and severely challenged preparation and disaster response measures.

Serendipitously, Cyclone Ivan landed exactly where CRIC members carried out a simulation exercise in November 2007 to test the Contingency Plan.<sup>6</sup>

As planned, two days ahead of the cyclones' impact on Madagascar, the BNGRC relayed information on expected trajectories, wind fall and rain predictions, received from Météo Malagasy to its members, local administrators and the media. This was complemented by specialized agency (APIPA) alerts warning against inundations in the Antananarivo basin. As required by the urgency of the situation, these weather alerts were issued several times a day, and then widely disseminated through radio, TV, and local authorities. In Antananarivo people were evacuated less than two hours after the issuance of warning messages. People living close to rivers were particularly advised to leave their homes and to reach safer places. People did evacuate but some resisted as they were afraid to leave their property.

After a number of days the BNGRC had to raise the loss assessment figures. However the more accurate warning and disaster management system allowed many lives to be saved. Contrary to previous years, the BNGRC/ CRIC was able to more rapidly present reliable figures of losses and needs, and on 29 February 2008 launched an appeal for external support. The information received from the affected communities' – including graphs and photos of destroyed houses and infrastructure - allowed better direct assistance to cyclone victims. What in the past was heavily led by international partners became much more a national affair. The BNGRC also took a lead role in preparing the Government's appeal for external assistance thanks to information from the National Platform's sector groups. The CRIC also helped the United Nations system in compiling data to launch its own mechanisms for fund raising, including the Flash Appeal on 4 March 2008.<sup>7</sup>

In retrospect, it has certainly to be noted that the impact of the three cyclones was again dismal. 93 people have been reported dead, while some 191,182 became homeless at peak time and 332,391 people were affected by the wind storms and related flooding in the East, Centre and South of the country. Also, several thousands of acres of farmland were flooded and rice, vanilla and coffee crops have been destroyed, leaving populations dependent on external food aid. However despite these

harsh figures, given the sheer magnitude in particular of Cyclone Ivan, it must be acknowledged that the CRIC members' preparedness and response system has shown its effectiveness as it dramatically reduced the number of casualties that comparable cyclones have otherwise caused in Madagascar.

#### *Good Practice*

A number of strategic initiatives carried out by the National Platform members helped to achieve the significant reduction of potential disaster losses:

##### *1) Setting up of decentralized disaster risk management mechanisms*

A key element for building resilience has been the CRIC members' efforts to prepare communities to face risks. In collaboration with the BNGRC, UNDP, UNICEF and other national organizations, the National Platform has since early 2007 trained local decision-makers on Disaster Risk Management. These local decision-makers managed in turn to set up disaster risk management committees at sub-national level. Eight regional, 187 community and some 1,273 local/ Fokontany Comités de GRC were set up or strengthened in most hazard-prone provinces throughout 2007. The committees identified urgent priority actions and related activities in regional contingency plans. Local partners quickly learned how to carry out accurate situational assessments of disaster impact (Multi-hazard early surveys/ Enquête initiale multi-aléas/ EIMAs) and how to communicate information to the BNGRC. Separately, they learnt how to implement a number of risk mitigation activities. In October 2007, local disaster risk management committees organized drills to test if people understood and could respond effectively to cyclone warnings.

##### *2) Harnessing the full potential of National Platform members through sector groups*

The milestone of compiling one reference document to prepare for the cyclone season would not have been possible without the organization and preparatory work of National Platform sector groups. These sector groups developed the sectoral contingency plans, which fed into the overall document. Moreover, this comprehensive

<sup>6</sup> The cyclone was preceded one called "Fame" and another one called "Jokwe", which equally caused havoc and in the case of Fame led to the loss of one person's life.

<sup>7</sup> The Flash appeal requests some 36.476.586 US\$ to cover the country's needs, of which roughly 50% have been received. The BNGRC has received the equivalent of 402,018 US\$ through direct contribution (status of 13 April 2008).



engagement of diverse sectors has provided a fertile ground for further integrating disaster risk reduction into development activities as required by the HFA.

In 2007, under the leadership of the BNGRC and in close cooperation with the OCHA and the UN Resident Coordinator's office, the existing sector groups were reorganized following the UN-cluster approach, establishing dual leadership consisting of one line Ministry as President and a UN agency as sector lead. UN-OCHA provides secretarial support if required. These task teams now focus on seven thematic areas: 1. Health; 2. Water, hygiene and sanitation; 3. Agriculture; 4. Nutrition and food security; 5. Education; 6. Logistics and 7. Shelter and non-food issues. The former sector groups focusing on Early recovery and Information-Education-Communication were rearranged in networks due to their cross-cutting nature.

The sector group members drafted their own terms of reference and defined their standard operating procedures, according to some common deadlines and general cluster approach guidelines. Once functional, they considered risks and vulnerabilities, but also capacities in their respective area. Holding frequent meetings throughout 2007, they finalized action plans for preparedness and response. These plans identify urgent priority activities to prepare and manage a disaster situation, to ensure a rapid distribution of food and non-food items, the reestablishment of health, hygiene and sanitation, or of formal education and agricultural activities to avoid sliding into food insecurity.

Example of tasks as defined in the nutritional sector group's terms of reference are:

- Exchange information on the nutritional situation, interventions and new technical developments in the field of nutrition, consolidate and disseminate this information to partners;
- Coordinate interventions in order to increase coverage, avoid overlap and map interventions as monitoring tool;
- Ensure multi-sectoral coordination and inclusion of partners of other sectors in the information exchange and strategic and programmatic discussions;
- Facilitate the publication of a monthly newsletter with an update of the nutritional situation drawn from diverse sources (...);
- Facilitate the development and regular updating

of protocols and national executing guides to ensure respect of international norms (...);

- Facilitate the development of national capacities to ensure quality (...);
- Further ensure quality of actions (...) through a monitoring and quality control system

In the agricultural sector for example, this included the assessment of available stocks and needs for seeds and working tools, or the review of agricultural calendars providing data on most adapted seed varieties, data disaggregated by agro-ecological region and season. Linking preparedness with their habitual development work, the sector group contributed to mitigate risks. Its members also reviewed diagnostic tools and templates to obtain and process additional information through market and socio-economic surveys. They identified local intervention capacities, disaster risk management focal points, and equipment in each district. The sector groups communicated the results of their meetings to the BNGRC and to the CRIC's plenary assembly for approval. Subsequently, the plans became integral part of the Contingency Plan.

Building on the combined knowledge and experiences of its members and following a highly participatory process, the National Contingency Plan thus truly served as a reference document to prepare for this year's response to cyclone impact.

### 3) *Investment in communications*

Above-mentioned efforts greatly relied on communication between the BNGRC, CRIC members and other partners. The BNGRC greatly invested in its communication mechanisms, recognizing the importance of organizing a system which can gather reliable and timely information on hazards and risks, losses and disaster impact, in one place.

At national level, the BNGRC recruited a renowned journalist as Communications Officer, who largely facilitated internal and external exchange on activities related to the BNGRC's mission prior, during and after a crisis through email exchange/ updates.

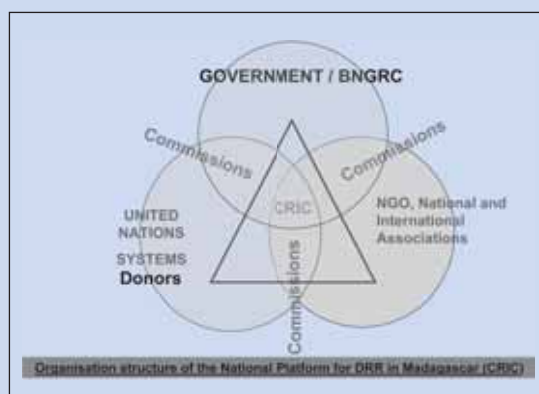
At sub-national level, BNGRC and CRIC members set up an extensive network of decentralized disaster risk management communications focal points, who were trained to collect standardized information. Once combined with the Platform members own multi-sectoral impact and response reviews, it permitted the BNGRC to prepare detailed and more

frequent situation reports and keep the media, wider public and international community informed of the cyclones' impact, and therefore to help them better plan response activities. Information concerned casualties, losses of infrastructure – including

unusable roads – but also projections on the destruction of crops and the impact on food security, including market analyses on the price of rice. This allows for the rigorous calculation of the sums needed to help affected populations.

## Lessons Learned

While there is always room for improvement, the achievements of the Malagasy disaster preparedness system show how coordinated efforts, effective communication, genuine multi-stakeholder participation, and a capacity development approach by actors at all levels, can make a difference. The Malagasy experience shows that existing guidelines (in this case for preparedness and contingency planning) make a difference, when applied effectively. Critical to these achievements was the commitment of the BNGRC and the CRIC members in following through, to work in teams and to harmonize and align their approach with common tools and procedures – with all that this demands in terms of making compromises. While cooperation is challenging and time-consuming, the National Platform members have shown how they can advance jointly to protect people's lives and livelihoods in Madagascar.



Despite evident improvements, the fact remains that still too many people have lost their lives or have been affected by recent disasters. It is thus important to continue with detailed impact assessments and to identify options to reduce more risks through further mitigation, e.g. through better land-use planning and its enforcement, or through risk transfer. The National Platform sector groups should therefore continue to meet, update existing plans and embrace further the full set of activities outlined in the HFA.

It is now important to enlarge the Contingency Plan beyond mainly cyclones to include other hazards, in particular wildfire and droughts. This would turn the plan into a reference document that is relevant throughout the year and not only for the cyclone season.

### Potential for Replication

Madagascar's National Platform has shown how to make use of existing guidance documents related to Contingency Planning and National Platforms. This should encourage other countries to follow its example. What has been achieved in Madagascar on the basis of existing guidance is replicable elsewhere, provided that there is strong commitment and sufficient capacity, either local or with external support.

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# Nigeria



## Progress in mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in national development instruments and practices

*The National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction*



Launch of the National Platform in October 2005

### Context

To cope with disasters, Nigeria first established a national emergency relief agency in 1990. However, before 1999, and in a context of military leadership, there was no coordinated mechanism to manage disasters except periodic doling out of relief materials after hazards struck. That year, with the advent of a democratic multi-party system, the adoption of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) Act No. 12 started a process of fundamental change, focusing activities on disaster management and all its ramifications. The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) was established by Act 50 in 2001 to coordinate stakeholders and related activities. This Act also stipulated that the 36 autonomous states should set up similar regional focal point institutions.

Unsatisfied with the repetitive nature of man-made and so-called natural disasters, NEMA has since its inception tried to reduce the potential humanitarian consequences of these events by focusing on their root causes. It has contributed to promote a growing recognition from the public, civil society and the private sector that the only way to address the escalating human and economic costs of disasters is not through reactive emergency assistance but a preventive, comprehensive and long-term approach. Initially there were of course many obstacles to the paradigm shift towards disaster

risk reduction: Local communities, which are at the forefront of disasters, were excluded from decision-making and from the disaster management cycle. The idea of disaster management was commonly seen by the people as a government affair, despite the fact that the local communities are the first to respond to most emergencies before government agencies intervene.

The huge financial cost of disasters for government, private sector and individuals was a determining factor in the gradual conceptual shift from 'response only' to a thinking that also included disaster risk reduction. It was recognised that what had implications at the individual level - e.g. appearances of avian flu resulting in loss of revenue from poultry, or destruction of houses due to flooding or gully erosion – affected poverty reduction on a national level and could potentially wipe out development gains. Additionally stakeholders came to recognize that disasters were a serious problem for communities already struggling with the challenges of widespread poverty, and complex communal tensions.

Based on the fundamental belief that most of the devastating disasters in Nigeria could have been prevented or at least better managed if relevant government departments worked in synergy with non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) and other concerned groups, NEMA used its strategic position to link up with diverse stakeholders and professional disciplines. NEMA also adopted the disaster risk reduction

concept as the guiding principle to coordinate the drafting of an on-going overarching National Policy for Disaster Management.

Immediately after the January 2005 World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, NEMA's Governing Council established an Interim Committee for coordination. In March 2005 this Committee and NEMA organised a roundtable discussion in the federal capital, Abuja, under the theme 'Towards an Effective National Stakeholders' Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Nigeria'. This meeting involved relevant Government departments, building professionals, NGOs, academia, and the National Planning Commission. Interim Committee members were the Nigerian Red Cross representing civil society, the media outlets Voice of Nigeria and the Nigeria Television Agency, the executive arm of government represented by NEMA, the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution and the legislative arm represented by the Federal House of Representatives' Committee on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness.<sup>8</sup>

In October 2005, the former President Olusegun Obasanjo, represented by the Nigerian Minister of Environment Professor Iyocha Ayu, formally launched the National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Nigeria. Although the National Platform has not been established by a decree, it is recognised by the Nigerian government, mentioned in the National Disaster Action Plan and serves to guide disaster risk reduction policy at national level.

## National Platform Structure and Activities

### *Focal Point Institution*

The National Emergency Management Agency chairs and coordinates the multi-stakeholder National Platform for disaster risk reduction. NEMA is the national focal point institution for the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), and the head of NEMA is the national HFA focal point. NEMA has the mandate to mobilize and coordinate all relevant government agencies and non-governmental stakeholders in disaster risk management in Nigeria. The fact that NEMA serves under direct supervision of the Presidency has been useful in this process.

*Membership:* The following institutions, which deal with disaster risk reduction, are members of the NP:

- Federal Ministries: Environment, Housing and Urban Development, Water Resources
- Technical services and departments: Federal

Road Safety Commission, National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), Nigeria Educational Research Development Council, relevant States Government Institutions for Environment and Urban Development including the Nigerian Urban Development Bank, National Security and Civil Defence Corps

- Parliament: A representative of the Federal House of Representatives' Committee on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness
- Professional bodies in the Human settlement sector, the Nigeria Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (for top planners and decision makers) and ASCON (for intermediate in-service training)

<sup>8</sup> The House Committee on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness was set up on 30 March 2004 in the Federal House of Representatives (in the National Assembly) to offer legislative support and oversight function to the pre-emption, prevention and management of disasters in Nigeria.

- Universities and Research Institutes: A representative of Nigeria's Universities, the Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution
- Media outlets
- The Nigerian Red Cross national society

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UN-Habitat were part of the National Platform foundation. Through its contribution to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), NEMA has also cooperated with UN-Habitat and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

#### *Operational practices*

NEMA coordinates the activities of the National Platform which initially met quarterly, but nowadays meets mainly on an activity basis such as on Mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS II). There are plans to revive periodic meetings or have an annual conference to review achievements, explore new ground and give conceptual direction and support to members.

As a coordinating agency for disaster management and as the focal point for HFA implementation in Nigeria, NEMA drives the process based on consultation and perceived gaps in the disaster risk reduction sector. The National Platform has produced a National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction for Nigeria (2006-2015) which serves to inform and guide disaster risk reduction implementation, and also to give direction to the on-going paradigm shift in NEMA's activities. The on-going national consultation process to draft a National Policy has resulted in a basket of expectations of ways to implement disaster risk reduction in Nigeria up to 2015. The various needs expressed have been prioritized into pilot programmes matching the HFA's five Priorities for Action. The pilot programmes are being implemented between 2006 and 2008.

#### *Activities and results*

Nigeria's disaster risk reduction initiatives focus on implementing the HFA. Beyond the National Platform support for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in national development instruments and practices (see good practice example below), the country's National Platform has carried out or contributed significantly to the following major initiatives:

#### *Public awareness-raising of disaster risk reduction through events and publications*

This is a key activity of National Platform members,

involving development partners, NEMA zonal coordinators and State officials throughout the year and for special occasions like the International Day for Disaster Reduction. The National Platform has completed the production of twelve resource materials in English for public information, and capacity building for different population groups in Nigeria. The National Platform also produced a 'Paradigm shift to DRR' brochure and charts to guide strategies and actions.

Additionally through radio phone-in programmes and quizzes in local Pidgin English broadcasted at zonal and national levels, the National Platform members try to gather information on good practices, and evaluate and enhance public awareness on disaster risk reduction.

#### *High-level advocacy & awareness raising among decision-makers*

Through advocacy and awareness raising among stakeholders across the country, the National Platform led by NEMA has contributed immensely in refocusing disaster risk management philosophy in Nigeria. The National Platform also made a difference in high-level advocacy, obtaining former President Olusegun Obasanjo's support and his role as a national disaster risk reduction champion.

The National Platform was also involved in the holding of a National Summit on Disaster Management, organized by the Federal House of Representatives. The National Summit, held at the Presidential Villa in Abuja in January 2006, was attended by cabinet ministers, State Governors, Members of Parliament and heads of relevant government and civil society institutions. Immediately after the National Summit, the National Platform convened, with the support of NEMA, an experts' meeting in three different zonal areas. The meeting worked more on sensitizing people to the issues, and to elicit more inputs into the draft National Action Plan for disaster risk reduction.

#### *Promoting disaster risk reduction at continental/ regional and sub-regional levels*

In June 2005, the Africa Office of the UN/ISDR secretariat and members of the above-mentioned Interim Committee paid an advocacy visit to the then President Olusegun Obasanjo, calling on him to promote disaster risk reduction in Africa among other African Heads of State; which he did in July 2005 in his speech at an African Union Assembly of Heads of State and Government held in Libya.

At sub-regional level, at the 2004 Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Heads of State

meeting in Accra, Nigeria proposed the need for a full disaster management mechanism. NEMA prepared the preliminary document towards the establishment of coordinated regional disaster risk management, which was adopted for the sub-region. This idea was pursued at subsequent ECOWAS and African Ministerial Council meetings. In 2006, with assistance from Nigeria and the UN/ISDR Africa Office, the policy was drafted and subsequently approved in 2007.

#### *Development of and contribution to disaster risk reduction policy documents and action plans*

The Nigerian National Platform for disaster risk reduction with NEMA as the focal agency has been instrumental in reviewing or developing the following conceptual policy documents:

The National Policy for Disaster Management, which is being finalised in a genuine national consultative process with public hearings. The document will complete the requirements of the existing NEMA Act. Not only as a result of lengthy participatory processes, but also reflecting the time needed to obtain buy-in and commitment for disaster risk reduction, the policy development started in 2006. That year, the National Platform submitted a Disaster Risk Reduction position paper to the NEMA Governing Council to coordinate the drafting of an overarching National Policy for Disaster Management for Nigeria; recognizing the paradigm shift into disaster risk reduction and the development-poverty reduction implications of disaster management. The paper was adopted to be the guiding principle by the House of Representatives' Committee on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness.

The National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (2006-2015) was finalized following year-long consultations with diverse stakeholders across the country's six geopolitical zones. It is a very detailed document and largely matches disaster risk reduction activities mentioned in the HFA. The Plan rests on a set of disaster risk reduction guiding principles, which have crystallized into the main goals and objectives of this Plan of Action and may also apply in other country contexts (see box). NEMA needs further support for the Action Plan's full implementation, which requires a comprehensive set of community-based partnerships and strong political will at different levels of government.

The recently drafted UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) integrates disaster risk reduction. The National Platform contributed to organize and participate in stakeholder consultations. The document is now being finalised by the UN system in Nigeria.

The following Guiding principles underpin the National Action Plan for DRR in Nigeria (2006-2015):

- Disaster risk reduction is most effective when integrated into the development planning process with focus on poverty reduction, disaster prevention, preparedness and risk mitigation in order to reduce vulnerability at all levels.
- Capacity building of communities and community-based disaster reduction organizations greatly help to reduce the vulnerability of frontline communities.
- States and Local governments, based on their local peculiarities, are important partners in the formulation/implementation of mid-long-term disaster risk reduction goals and plans
- Disaster risk reduction is an integral part of sustainable development and one of the essential prerequisites for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the ongoing Federal Government reforms in Nigeria. There is need to explore partnership with the National Planning Commission to mainstream disaster risk reduction in [Nigeria's development instruments] to raise awareness nationwide.
- The accomplishment of the goals of disaster risk reduction requires political commitment as well as strong institutional and policy frameworks.
- Risk reduction measures are most successful when the most likely people to be exposed to the hazards participate in the planning, decision-making and implementation of disaster risk reduction activities
- It is important to promote education and increase awareness to improve peoples' understanding of disaster issues, especially among school children and women; and also to mobilize relevant indigenous/traditional early warning and mitigation initiatives.
- The establishment of information networks which store and share research results promote international/local best practices

#### *Higher-education programmes on disaster risk reduction, and training among alumni*

In collaboration with NEMA and the National Platform, four universities in Ahmadu Bello, Calabar, FutMinna, Ibadan and Lagos are presently working out ways to start specific Disaster Risk Reduction

Studies in postgraduate Diploma and M.Sc. courses. These will complement existing courses at tertiary level relevant for disaster reduction, e.g. on environment or physical planning. Courses are expected to start once the curriculum has been finalised for the 2008/2009 academic year. For the second quarter of 2008, there are plans to mainstream disaster risk reduction into programmes of the National War College for top military officials.

It is further expected that disaster risk reduction will be mainstreamed into National Youth Service Corps activities, a mandatory one year national service for graduates of tertiary institutions. Mobilization and sensitization programmes have started in 2008.

For the above activities and to complement other specific course material, there are plans to reproduce about ten UN/ISDR resource books to improve the availability of disaster risk reduction material in the country.

Base-line studies on disaster risk reduction in pilot states In six Nigerian states, three disaster risk reduction consultants have been carrying out participatory rapid appraisals to identify hazards and the physical, social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities to disasters. Once finalised in August 2008, these reviews will inform on the status and gaps in risk reduction, but also provide options for the ultimate setting up of disaster risk reduction institutions and programmes at community level. It is planned that this will help to update risk profiles and implement disaster risk reduction programmes at community level on awareness-raising, capacity building, detailed risk assessment and mitigation programmes like community flood prevention, erosion prevention, etc. This activity also complements an indicative National Vulnerability Study carried out in 2002.

#### *Rehabilitation of vulnerable communities*

The risks facing two communities with critical coastal and gully erosion are being analysed in a feasibility study, which will subsequently lead to a priority disaster risk reduction and development plan for joint implementation by the federal, state and local governments.

#### *Disaster risk reduction best practice awards*

Nigeria has developed a national award framework to highlight and learn from best practices in disaster risk reduction, emphasizing community-level and traditional vulnerability reduction activities. The Nigerian Best Practices Award for Disaster Risk Reduction (NBPADRR) concept has been planned thoroughly, but has yet to be funded. Once functional, it will identify, document and exchange successful, innovative and replicable initiatives in disaster risk reduction, poverty eradication and sustainable development across the country.

The NBPADRR is premised on the assumption that human beings that are exposed to vulnerable situations are not likely to passively wait for disasters to befall them; they would normally engage and use indigenous knowledge and locally available materials and technology to improve their coping capacities and thereby build resilience to hazards. Similarly, it is also assumed that relevant public and private organisations, including NGOs would pursue activities to support the initiatives of the citizenry to help reduce vulnerabilities. The NBPADRR therefore targets tangible survival initiatives, especially in poor communities. All submissions must demonstrate tangible impacts in reducing the vulnerability of people to disasters, and must bring appreciable improvements in quality of lives. The NBPADRR would identify initiatives in such areas as housing, urban development and governance, the environment, economic development, social inclusion, crime prevention, poverty reduction, women, youth, infrastructure and social services which have tangible contributions to make within the five Priorities for Action set by the HFA. The NBPADRR also helps demonstrate that local communities have the ability to contribute to DRR.

To implement a wider range of activities mentioned in its Programme Plan of Action, NEMA has been asking for the establishment of a National Emergency Trust Fund for Disaster Risk Management by the Federal Government.

# The Good Practice

## Progress in Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction in National Development Instruments and Practices

### *The Initiative: Mainstreaming of Disaster Risk Reduction*

The HFA emphasizes the importance of mainstreaming by defining it as one of its three strategic goals: “The integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and planning”.

The National Platform has taken up the HFA’s strategic objective and has heavily invested to achieve it in Nigeria. Through intense advocacy and lobbying at all levels, it succeeded in convincing the country’s key development planners and decision-makers to move from their traditional emergency relief response to embrace the obvious linkage between development, poverty and disaster and give disaster risk reduction the priority it deserves in the national development equation to protect development gains. Disaster risk reduction has become a key element of Nigeria’s development plans and progress has been achieved in mainstreaming in different sectors.

Helping to bring disaster risk management closer to the people and mainstream disaster risk reduction into the country’s National Policy on Disaster Management and the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS II) and sectors is a good practice of the National Platform led by NEMA. Previously, disaster management was essentially focused on relief intervention, which was not sustainable and did not make use of local communities’ indigenous knowledge and capacity for disaster mitigation and early warning. Disaster management was not given appropriate place at the planning stages of most development activities. Following efforts to integrate disaster risk management into school curricula, in-service training and university programmes, the mainstreaming has effectively started and the NEEDS II planning document serves as reference to drive the process. Presently, some 30 million people are the target audience for these initiatives. The disaster risk reduction initiative will ultimately become a critical pillar of the country’s National Development Agenda with its adoption into the NEEDS II document.

The National Platform and NEMA continue to play a lead role in facilitating the effective mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into National Development Strategies. They regularly convene meetings to promote this, including a major conference gathering some 125 participants, including Heads of Disaster Management Organizations in Nigeria in August 2007.

### *Impact and results:*

1) *Adoption of disaster risk reduction in the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy*  
Capitalising on on-going processes to develop national development instruments and strategies, its members’ advocacy helped to achieve the integration of disaster risk reduction in all aspects of the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS II). This is an exciting achievement for it will and has already dovetailed into other development activities.

The NEEDS II initially prepared by the previous government has been adopted by the new President, Musa Yaradua. Disaster risk issues have their own chapter in the national development plan.

2) *Adoption of disaster risk reduction at decentralised level in development plans and institutional set up*  
In parallel to achievements at national level, NEMA and the National Platform are also gaining ground at state and local levels. Disaster risk reduction is being mainstreamed in 36 State Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (SEEDS) and 774 Local Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (LEEDS). Reaffirmed by the new Nigerian Government, the adoption of this policy document at national level will inform and provide direction for states and local entities.

NEMA’s decentralisation efforts have been key to these achievements. NEMA spearheaded operations in the six regions of the country, and each state now has its own fledgling State Emergency Management agency.

3) *Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in the Education sector*

With support by UNICEF and in line with the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) agenda, disaster risk reduction is being mainstreamed into Federal Ministry of Education activities. Disaster risk reduction is also being integrated in primary and secondary schools’ education curricula. Risk reduction is not a separate subject, but is promoted as a cross-cutting issue. Furthermore, at higher level, it is promoted through key in-service training for intermediate and top level planning officials to build a critical mass of



development decision makers that are disaster risk reduction aware.

A key aspect of the National Platform's work has also been to organise workshops to raise community awareness and preparedness regarding possible hazards associated with oil and gas pipeline spills and explosions.

#### 4) *Mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into the urban and regional development planning process*

The National Platform is instrumental in supporting activities to rehabilitate vulnerable communities with the Federal Ministry of Environment, Housing, Urban and Regional Development and NEMA. They work with their state counterparts to address perennial flooding, erosion, housing and poverty related problems. Disaster risk reduction elements have been integrated into specific human settlement projects, following capacity building. These programmes will be expanded to include further training programmes for town planners at the state and local level to discourage for example the approval of property development in flood plains.

#### *Good Practice*

##### *Winning Parliamentarians' support:*

A critical element contributing to the National Platform and NEMA's achievements in general, and on mainstreaming in particular, has been the

effective advocacy to set up the Federal House of Representatives' Committee on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness, and subsequent strong collaboration with this new entity. Aware that institutional strengthening through legislative support is needed to effectively operate the NEMA Act 12 of 1999 (amended by Act 50), the Committee was established in March 2004. This followed various advocacy meetings within the Presidency and mobilization and support of disaster-ravaged constituencies. Since then, the Committee has offered legislative support and oversight to the pre-emption, prevention and management of disasters in Nigeria. The establishment of the Committee has placed a higher national priority on disaster management and risk reduction. Indeed, the Committee, with primary oversight over NEMA, works to see that NEMA is empowered effectively through stable and adequate funding in the Appropriation Bill and through National Assembly Appropriation Acts.

##### *Collaboration with the UN/ISDR secretariat for high-level advocacy*

The HFA focal point institution NEMA has established a very close relationship with the UN/ISDR secretariat's Africa Office and has used this relationship for high-level advocacy. The collaboration between NEMA and UN/ISDR Africa was mutually reinforcing and helped to obtain strong commitment by the then President Olusegun Obasanjo to promote and spearhead disaster risk reduction, both internally and on a continental level.

## Lessons Learned

As the above-mentioned examples show, the National Platform in Nigeria has made great advances in integrating disaster risk reduction in national development instruments and some practices. The National Platform has learned from the process how important it is to continue mobilizing and building capacities among decision-makers, but also among implementers at all levels, and among all sectors and spheres of society. NEMA and the National Platform members have made good progress, but it is by no means possible to leave things as they are, now that disaster risk reduction is integrated into development instruments. Further awareness-raising and capacity development is needed.

In this respect, NEMA expects that the infusion of disaster risk reduction into school curriculum, the begin of university programmes to train future development planners and policy makers, combined with mass in-service training on disaster risk reduction mainstreaming into development activities for intermediate and top public servants, will lay the foundation for a longer-term commitment of Nigerian authorities and law-makers. To support this, there are plans to help prepare guidelines for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction into development planning and practice, and also to engage more with the need to mainstream gender and child issues into disaster risk reduction.

A challenge faced by the National Platform in its disaster risk reduction promotion work is initial institutional resistance to change, which is fast giving way now. Other challenges are a lack of enough political support for change, and a high level of poverty that makes many communities prefer short-term relief to prevention.

A key aspect for the effective integration of disaster risk reduction in development practice remains the need to ensure that local level officials and stakeholders buy into the concept and mainstream it in their day-to-day work. In a country with some 140 million people and a very high number of local level officials, this remains a challenge to the limited capacities of NEMA and the National Platform members. Natural fluctuation of staff provides a further challenge. Many elected officials are yet to appreciate disaster risk reduction and further efforts to provide them evidence and reach commitment of these lower tiers of government have to be deployed.

In view of the above, the increase of political and institutional commitment for disaster risk reduction has been identified as the first objective of NEMA's detailed action plan. Training of trainers on disaster risk reduction is foreseen for selected State officials of the State environment protection agency, State Ministries of Finance and Economic Development, Representatives of Local government and Local government Service Commissions, Physical/Town Planning Departments, Zonal All Local Government of Nigeria (ALGON) representatives, State Red Cross Directors, State Civil Defence Corps, Zonal Commandants of the Federal Road and Safety Commission (FRSC), Local Government Directors of Personnel, State Chief Inspectors of the National Youth Service Corps, and journalists. Zonal training workshops on disaster risk reduction advocacy and public awareness are planned in six States.

NEMA and the National Platform members' efforts to promote disaster risk reduction internally remain a very important activity to ensure that key messages are well understood. This will enable Zonal and Headquarter Officials of NEMA and State Emergency Management Agencies (SEMA) to act as agents for disaster risk reduction. For this, NEMA and the National Platforms intervene in meetings focusing on humanitarian relief and emergency management, ensuring that disaster risk reduction activities are gradually adopted.

Beyond challenges to sustain and expand into new services to secure commitment to disaster risk reduction, National Platform members are also faced with the sometimes daunting task of integrating disaster risk reduction in their own Ministry's or service's activities. To put words into action remains at times difficult and very much dependant on the commitment of high-level individuals. This requires perseverance, strategic behaviour and flexibility.

The National Platform and HFA focal point institution in Nigeria are well aware of what could be done to move forward. The following are just a few further action points from NEMA's multi-annual work programme, which will contribute to further progress on mainstreaming disaster risk reduction in the country:

#### *Advocacy and awareness raising*

- Help secure fixed percentage of annual budgetary allocations for disaster risk reduction at all levels
- Help develop and disseminate advocacy material among policy and decision-makers at all levels, including politicians
- Outreach and sensitization workshops for traditional leaders and local authorities
- Help promote public awareness on insurance schemes as tools of mitigation/relief
- Help improve risk identification and assessment through 'Best Practice Awards' to states, local governments and communities

#### *Capacity building*

- Help provide capacity building in disaster risk reduction for the media
- Help train women and youth groups to participate in disaster risk reduction promotion and activities
- Help develop curriculum for in-service training on disaster risk reduction for high-level personnel in national public service institutions

### *Institutional Strengthening*

- Help review terms and policies of disaster risk reduction institutions
- Help develop state and local government platforms for disaster risk reduction
- Help create platforms for regular interactions and information sharing

Overall, the perception by the HFA focal point institution is that the National Platform deserves more attention and time dedicated to its activities, more resources for disaster risk management (including from development partners, especially the UN family), a proper monitoring system (which is difficult to establish to financial constraints), longer-term stability for people in their job, and technical and financial support to implement the various programmes in the Action Plan. Furthermore, it is necessary to increase the momentum on advocacy to the 36 States and 774 Local Government institutions that erroneously see disaster risk management as a federal function.

### Potential for Replication

The National Platform in Nigeria and its focal point institution have acquired a lot of experience in promoting and implementing disaster risk reduction related activities. They have learned to focus on strategic action points, to sustain the good initiatives taken in an ever changing political and socio-economic environment. Their good practice of promoting the integration of disaster risk reduction in national development instruments, including its ramifications at sub-national level, can serve as example for successful mainstreaming at global level, given that Nigeria's plans are easily available. Other countries can learn from the Nigerian experience by reviewing existing Nigerian development plans with regard to their disaster risk reduction components.

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# Sri Lanka



## Development and implementation of a National Strategic Action Plan: The “Road Map for Disaster Risk Management: Towards a Safer Sri Lanka”

*National Disaster Management Coordination Committee (NDMCC)*



National Platform meeting

### Context

Over the last few decades, disaster losses in Sri Lanka have increased substantially. Already prone to hazards such as floods, landslides, droughts, cyclones and coastal erosion, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami exposed most strongly the country’s vulnerability to natural phenomena. The resulting extensive devastation showed how low frequency events can have a high impact and reverse years of development gains in different sectors.

The tsunami brought about a collective recognition on the part of the Sri Lankan government, civil society organizations and international agencies, of the need for comprehensive and coordinated disaster risk management rather than just disaster relief or better disaster response. Over the last three years, the Sri Lankan Government has taken significant steps towards establishing legislative and institutional arrangements for disaster risk reduction.

As a first step, the Parliament’s Select Committee on Natural Disasters, a bi-partisan committee, was constituted to deliberate on issues relating to the status of disaster management

in Sri Lanka. The Committee's recommendations towards achieving a safer Sri Lanka have subsequently guided related legislative and policy efforts. A major achievement was the adoption in May 2005 of the Disaster Management Act No. 13, which provided the legal basis for systematic disaster management in the country, including disaster risk reduction.

As foreseen in this document, the National Council for Disaster Management (NCDM) was established as the highest forum to oversee the formulation of related policies and programmes. Itself chaired by the country's President, the NCDM guides the work of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights (MDMHR) and of the Council's implementation agency, the Disaster Management Centre (DMC). Both the MDMHR and the DMC were set up in 2005 following the provisions of Act No 13. According to the Disaster Management Act the DMC is responsible for issuing instructions and guidelines for programme development relating to disaster management. Separately, it is responsible for coordinating with governmental and non-governmental organizations to implement these measures.

An Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Disaster Risk Management was also set up in 2006, composed of the Disaster Management Centre and UN agencies as well as a National Advisory Committee on Disaster Management chaired by the Minister for Disaster Management and Human Rights. There is also a Coordinating Committee of Secretaries of relevant ministries, chaired by the Secretary of the Disaster Management and Human Rights.

As an initial step towards mobilizing the efforts of all agencies involved in disaster management, the DMC coordinated the development of the 10 year joint work programme, the Road Map for Disaster Risk Management: Towards a safer Sri Lanka in 2005 (see good practice below).

Despite this achievement and the above-mentioned institutional arrangements, the setting up of a well coordinated, coherent and sustainable Disaster Risk Management system in Sri Lanka has remained

challenging. As a result of recent disasters, international NGOs, community-based organizations, bilateral development organizations and UN agencies increased their engagement in different aspects of disaster management to complement efforts by governmental bodies. While the Government highly welcomed this engagement, it also brought about certain challenges such as a lack of overall knowledge of who is doing what, unsatisfactory cooperation, and sometimes unhealthy competition and duplication of activities covering mostly accessible areas. These outcomes could be explained to some extent by the need to act quickly in emergency relief and early recovery, and by the fact that the national disaster management system was only just getting off the ground, but it was nonetheless a sub-optimal use of resources.

Consequently, the Sri Lankan authorities decided to focus more strongly on better coordination of stakeholders, in order to improve efficiency and results. Once the immediate post-tsunami needs were addressed, the DMC engaged in intensive consultations to raise support for the establishment of a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction. These meetings also served to consult on the possible composition of such a platform. At these meetings, participants were gradually familiarized with the Hyogo Framework for Action and the concept of National Platforms. These consultations culminated in a national level meeting convened in November 2007 by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, to which all concerned Government Departments, UN agencies, donors, international and national NGOs, academic institutions, the private sector and the media were invited to discuss the establishment of a national coordination mechanism and to decide on its roles and responsibilities. At this meeting, which was held under the Chairmanship of the Secretary of the MDMHR, participants decided to form the National Disaster Management Coordination Committee (NDMCC) as Sri Lanka's National Platform for Disaster Risk Management. The set-up of the NDMCC as a National Platform became official through its declaration to the UN/ISDR secretariat in January 2008.

## National Platform Structure and Activities

### *Focal Point Institution*

The National Disaster Management Coordination Committee is chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights. For operational purposes, including administrative and logistical support, the NDMCC relies on the National Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) Focal Point institution, the Disaster Management Center, which serves as its secretariat.

### *Membership*

Sri Lanka's National Platform gathers 35 members representing all key sectors of society. These are:

- Government Ministries: Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights as Chairman of the Committee; Representatives of the Ministries of Education, Environment, Defense, Disaster Relief & Resettlement, Health, Public Administration, Home Affairs and Agriculture
- Government Agencies and Technical Services: Disaster Management Committee (DMC), Department of National Planning, Coastal Conservation Department (CCD), Department for Irrigation, Department of Meteorology, National Building Research Organization
- Academic Institutions: Eastern University, University of Moratuwa, University of Peradeniya
- Professional Organizations & Research Institutes: Chamber of Commerce, ICTAD, IESL, NSF, SLAAS, Sri Lanka Construction Contractors Association
- Media: College of Journalism, Sri Lanka Rupavahini Corporation, Sri Lanka Broadcasting Cooperation,
- National NGOs: Sri Lanka Red Cross Society, Sarvodaya, Sewa Lanka, Green Movement
- UN agencies and Donors: Asian Development Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), United Nations Development Programme, UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA, World Bank
- International NGOs: Action Aid, IFRC, Oxfam, Practical Action, Save the Children, IOM
- Other private organizations: Dialog

### *Operational practices*

The National Platform NDMCC aims to facilitate information exchange (including good practices and lessons learned), influence national policy in a more effective manner and to contribute to more coordinated disaster risk management among all actors, avoiding duplication and competition for a successful

implementation of the Road Map. To do so, the Sri Lankan authorities have promoted a highly participatory process reflecting the true spirit of cooperation and consultation with all partners on an equal footing.

In January 2008 the NDMCC convened its second meeting to discuss terms of reference. National Platform members adopted them and clarified roles and responsibilities. The DMC presented its annual work plan for 2008 as an initial step for developing a national work programme for disaster management in Sri Lanka, which further transcribes the Road Map's longer-term strategy. The meeting also decided to meet at least once a month to share information on activities by its member agencies. Members were requested to submit their work programme for 2008 before the next committee meeting.

Roles and responsibilities of the National Disaster Management Coordination Committee (NDMCC) as per its terms of references:

- Serve as a national mechanism by which the country can address inter-related social, economical and environmental problems;
- Support the identification of critical needs in the area of [disaster risk reduction (DRR)], on a priority basis, allocate resources, present a time table for actions and monitoring and review the implementation of DRR activities in line with Hyogo Framework for Action for Disaster Risk Reduction (HFA) and the Road Map for Disaster Risk Management: Towards a Safer Sri Lanka;
- Facilitate better resource utilization, effective and integrated DRR efforts amongst national, regional and international stakeholders while providing a framework for systematic thought processes and commitment to priority actions across sectors and the territory;
- Serve as catalyst for national consultations and consensus building, as well as for DRR priority identification and helping in policy formulation, implementation and monitoring DRR activities. The emphasis should be on implementing and managing of DRR activities rather than producing a "Plan" as an end product; and
- Provide guidance on identifying vulnerable populations, targeting resources from donors, development banks, and UN agencies and support establishment of provisional and district level platforms to identify and mainstream Disaster Risk Reduction in development.

To respond to its responsibilities, the NDMCC primary activities have also been expressed in its terms of references and cover a whole set.

National Platform's Primary Activities (as per its terms of reference):

- Establish baseline information for DRR, including disaster and risk profiles, national policies, strategies, capacities, resources and programmes;
- Identify targets, gaps, concerns and challenges and setting forth accepted priority areas in DRR;
- Advocate the urgent need for developing or adopting policies and legislations for DRR;
- Benchmark progress made in promoting DRR and its mainstreaming into development policies, planning and programmes;
- Develop a result-oriented work plan for National DM Coordination Committee to coordinate DRR activities in line with the HFA and the Road Map for Disaster Risk Management: Towards a Safer Sri Lanka;
- Coordinate joint efforts among members of the National DM Coordination Committee to reduce the vulnerability of people at relatively high risk and covering both pre- and post disaster activities;
- Monitor, record and report DRR actions at national and community levels in line with HFA and the Road Map for Disaster Risk Management: Towards a Safer Sri Lanka;
- Document lessons learned and good practices, and share the findings at national, regional and international levels;
- Work towards better integration of DRR into national planning, policies and programmes in development and humanitarian assistance;
- Initiate the Community Based/Led Disaster Management (CBDM) approach nation-wide to strengthen communities' decision making processes;
- Support the DDMCU/ District Secretariat to establish District level DM Coordination Committees;
- Pursue empirical researches/ studies on current DRM/ DRR practices, identify gaps, identify new interventions for successful implementation of DRR through CBDM; and
- Facilitate the sharing of data, contacts and networking at different levels.

By highlighting the added value of working together, sharing resources and facilitating implementation in a coherent and complementary way, the HFA focal point institution as National Platform secretariat has successfully encouraged ownership, buy-in and proactive support from the National Platform members. Members consider the National Platform's added value lies in its leadership in coordinating activities, and the cohesion it provides by bringing partners together under the same umbrella. A key aspect in this endeavour has been the open sharing of information on each member's mandate and concerns. The NDMCC's role in resource mobilization has been identified as another incentive to join the forum.

The National Platform epitomizes a wide multi-stakeholder partnership that engages a variety of sectors. There are no immediate plans for expanding the partnerships further, however, future links with the climate change community have been discussed. The national meteorological service is already engaged in considering climate change risks and adaptation. However, most climate change adaptation efforts are so far followed by a related Technical Group as part of the Ministry of Environment and are not part of the National Platform.

To organize its work, the NDMCC has in the past set up Technical Committees on specific themes. Set up on an ad-hoc basis, based on NDMCC terms of reference and for a limited period of time, the Committee's report to the DMC, which also facilitates their work and absorbs meeting costs.

The NDMCC is not following a work plan of its own, but rather supports the development and implementation of stakeholders' work plans, based on the HFA and Roadmap, seeking to avoid duplication of activities. Members have also agreed to focus on both disaster risk reduction and emergency management and response activities.

#### *Activities and results*

While still a nascent entity, the NDMCC members have already established the NDMCC as a regular forum with key stakeholders in only five months. With help from the DMC, they collected stakeholder work plans, avoided duplication and intend to fill gaps following a mapping exercise. They increased coordination and facilitated resource mobilization. While the NDMCC as National Platform is a fairly new partnership forum, its member organizations have been steering the shift towards Disaster Risk Reduction over the last few years. The following provides an overview of some key

activities, which have been or continue to be carried out by National Platform members:

#### *Commemoration of National Safety Day on 26 December and awareness-raising*

In remembrance of the devastating 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, in 2006 Sri Lanka declared 24 December National Safety Day. In presence of several high-level representatives, the HFA focal point institution and the National Platform members hold commemorations to honour all disaster victims. Events organized remind the Sri Lankan people of natural hazard risks. In 2007, the Armed Forces, school children and stakeholder organizations took part in a rally. A thousand white balloons carrying the Safety Day Logo were released by members of Grama Niladhari Division disaster committees. At the meeting that followed, awards were also given to the winners of a school Essay and Arts competition. Merit awards were also awarded to journalists for excellence in disaster reporting. Plaques as tokens of appreciation were awarded for District Secretaries, Provincial Council members, Divisional Secretaries and Grama Niladhari for their services rendered during past disaster events.

#### *Capacity development for disaster risk management*

Sri Lanka's National Platform members have a wide network of contacts, which facilitate the organization of training workshops to build Disaster Risk Management capacity. Training topics cover disaster risk management terminology, hazard types, causes and effects and management of risks and disasters, and other aspects related more to programme management, like problem analysis and planning, discussion of roles and potential contribution of different entities, the media, National Risk Assessment, community based risk reduction, international assistance, and SWOT analyses. Additionally the Disaster Management Centre as HFA Focal Point institution has a valuable website featuring an introduction to key terminologies, concepts of Disaster Risk Management, and related legal and institutional frameworks in Sri Lanka in English, Sinhala and Tamil.

#### *Facilitation of information exchange*

The Disaster Management Centre has been serving as a key connector of stakeholders on Disaster Risk Management and the National Platform members. Through its regularly updated website it provides warning messages and situation reports, a list of district disaster management contacts and UN Volunteer disaster management advisers deployed throughout the country. It also gives information on national and district level events. Overall, it tries to engage the different

stakeholders to directly implement or coordinate activities related to:

- Hazard mapping and risk assessment
- Information and data collection
- Forecasting, early warning and dissemination
- Long term disaster risk reduction and disaster risk reduction integration in development
- Preparedness, response, relief, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction at national level and all sub-levels
- Training, education & public awareness
- Emergency operations in case of a disaster
- Coordination of post-disaster activities

#### *Engaging volunteers for disaster risk management*

The DMC has launched a call for community volunteers to help prepare for hazardous events, mitigate risks and manage disasters. The initiative is setting up an online database of resources and volunteers. They would be contacted by respective Disaster Management Authorities of various state governments or NGOs to engage in disaster risk reduction, or in times of disasters. The database would be accessible to all, however if the volunteer has chosen not to be accessible to all, his/ her information would not be revealed.

At present, the DMC is developing Disaster Management Plans, which foresee the involvement of volunteers. To implement the plans, it has formed five sub-committees on Early Warning Systems, first aid, rescue and other activities. The DMC has already started to train civil drivers of each committee with regard to specific leadership on search/rescue or drills, and on mitigation activities. This pilot initiative is currently rolled out in most disaster prone areas, but will gradually be replicated nation-wide. Truly serving a volunteer spirit, participants do not receive anything in return, but gain in terms of knowledge and skills development to save lives.



# The Good Practice

## Implementation of a National Strategic Action Plan: The “Road Map for Disaster Risk Management: Towards a Safer Sri Lanka”

### *The Initiative*

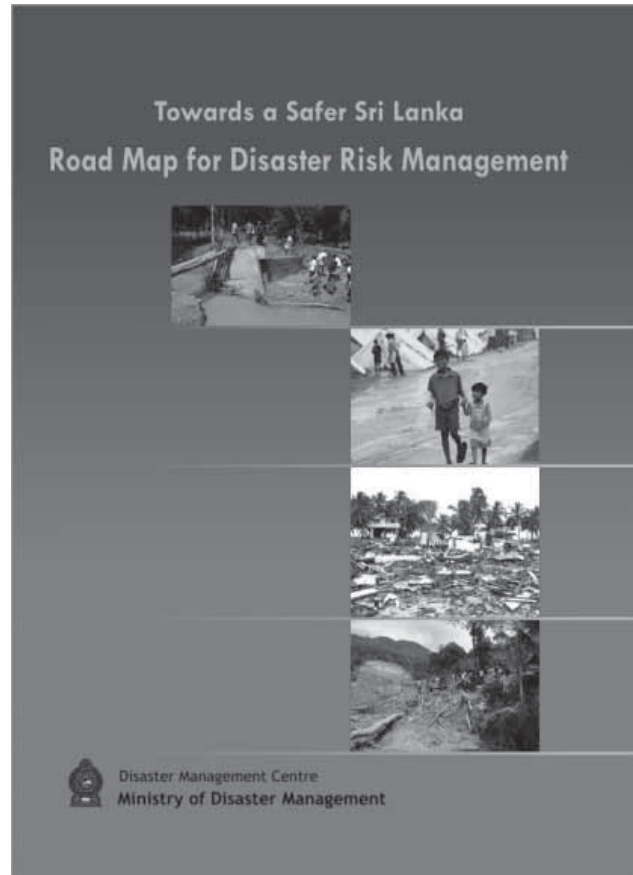
In Sri Lanka, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami resulted in the tragic loss of more than 39,000 lives, and left a very large proportion of the population directly affected. The Tsunami also caused heavy losses to agriculture and infrastructure. This devastating impact harshly exposed the nation’s and communities’ vulnerability to large-scale hazards, and led to a strong commitment by the Government, civil society and several international partners to make Sri Lanka safer.

After the enactment of the Sri Lanka Disaster Management Act, the need to complement ongoing policy efforts with risk identification and reduction strategies became clear. National and local level institutions had to be strengthened while paying due attention to private sector and Community-based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM). In acknowledging these needs, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights proposed to develop a National Strategic Action Plan, called the Road Map for Disaster Risk Management: Towards a Safer Sri Lanka.

The Road Map was prepared with UNDP support and benefited from technical inputs from the Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC). Governmental organizations, NGOs, UN agencies, donor communities, academia and research institutions and CBOs were actively involved in the process of developing the Road Map. They participated in initial workshops to identify thematic areas and in the project formulation. The document was finally adopted in December 2005. Since the process to develop the document was started immediately after the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, it captures the main elements of the Hyogo Framework for Action and is fully focused on disaster risk management.

Serving as a disaster risk management plan for the next ten years, the Road Map comprises 109 specific project proposals covering seven thematic areas consistent with on-going and past efforts in the disaster risk management field and development planning in Sri Lanka. The thematic areas proposed by the disaster risk management framework for Sri Lanka cover:

1. Policy, Institutional Mandates and Institutional Development: Including the preparation of a



- national disaster management plan, a national policy for disaster management, a national emergency response plan, reviewing, formalizing mandates and identifying capacity development needs of agencies to perform their disaster management functions as well as steps to implement policies already in place.
2. Hazard, Vulnerability and Risk Assessment: Comprising activities ranging from flood simulation modelling in key river basins to the development of a vulnerability atlas for Sri Lanka. This will enable development planning which is sensitive to multiple hazards and different kinds of vulnerabilities.
3. Multi-hazard Early Warning System: Incorporating elements to generate advance warnings for floods, cyclones, abnormal rainfall, droughts, landslides and tsunamis, thus enabling decision-makers to take necessary measures well before the occurrence of a disaster.
4. Preparedness and Response Plans: To minimize the adverse impacts of a hazard through effective precautionary actions and timely, adequate responses. Prioritized activities include development of a

national emergency preparedness and response plan, and establishment of emergency operation centers at national, provincial, district and local authority levels.

5. Mitigation and Integration of disaster risk reduction into Development Planning: Encompassing activities relating to reducing impacts of droughts, preventing floods and landslides, and providing protection against storm surges, sea and coastal flooding by incorporating disaster risk considerations in development plans, thus ensuring sustainable development.
6. Community-based Disaster Risk Management: Involving activities that recognize the fact that communities, even when affected, are still the first line of defence against disasters if they are well prepared. Interventions proposed include mobilization of community teams, creation of a local network of trained volunteers and establishment of resource centers and small grants to fund priority projects by community teams.
7. Public Awareness, Education and Training: Focusing on empowering the public with ways and means to reduce disaster losses, and includes a national awareness campaign, designating a 'National Disaster Safety Day', promoting disaster awareness among professionals through integration into university curricula and training, and among children through school curriculum and school awareness programmes.

The estimated cost of the identified projects is approximately US\$609 million.

#### *Impact and results*

While it is too early to do a thorough assessment of the impact of the Road Map in various sectors – which can be expected from its mid-term review - several aspects highlight the current successes of this initiative:

UNDP, UN/ISDR, UNOCHA, SIDA, JICA, the Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the French and Italian Governments and others have provided financial support either directly to the Government of Sri Lanka or through UNDP to implement the Road Map. This support helped to advance, in particular, work on early warning systems, flood mitigation and institutional strengthening.

The following are a few examples of projects mentioned in the Road Map and which have started to be implemented:

#### *Comprehensive study on disaster management in Sri Lanka*

With JICA-support, the national authorities in Sri Lanka have carried out a study to mitigate the damage caused by natural hazards by strengthening the capacity of related organizations and communities. The following activities are being carried out under this project, which will be completed in March 2009:

- Formulate integrated flood management plans for selected river basins in the south-western region of Sri Lanka
- Support establishing early warning and evacuation systems (this activity has been completed)
- Support community based disaster management activities
- Strengthen capacity of organizations concerned

#### *Historical disaster loss assessment*

Another successful initiative is the DMC's compilation of an online database of disasters that have affected Sri Lanka since 1974. Intended to forecast cyclical occurrences and develop prevention strategies as well as improve disaster relief and response, it is expected that this database – called Historical Disaster Information System and based on the Desinventar software - will help policymakers make more efficient investments in disaster reduction. Relief providers will be able to identify vulnerable areas to target their programmes. It will track the social and economic impact of disasters over three decades. The Desinventar database will also provide details underlining the link between poverty and disasters. So far, it has been assessed that while the 2004 Tsunami has been the single most devastating event, the seven disasters that have affected the country most are epidemics, animal attacks, floods, fire, droughts, landslides and cyclones.

#### *Early Warning System*

Another example of a positive contribution to reduce risks in Sri Lanka has been a nation-wide early warning systems project supported by the National Buildings Research Organization (NBRO) and UNDP with ISDR funding on landslide prediction, modelling and awareness creation. In January 2007, newly trained NBRO staff embarked on inspection visits in steep foothill areas in Nuwara Eliya District. They noticed early tension cracks in house floors and walls, and cracks on the ground, as well as newly formed springs and the slanting of a number of trees. These resulted from intense rain fall. Realizing the gravity of the situation, they alerted the population and helped to evacuate 56

families on 10 January. One day later, on 11 January, mounds of earth began moving and houses came crumbling down like matchboxes. Timely evacuation meant that there were no casualties. The technical knowledge of the NBRO has thus reduced the impact of the landslide and also reduced the vulnerability of people who will be resettled.

#### *Early warning pilot project*

Another example of activities is the JICA-funded Pilot Project for Early Warning. The pilot project focused on the establishment of a Hydrological Information System (HIS), an Intra-Governmental Network System (IGN), and Emergency Operation/Evacuation Drills, and was launched in July 2007. Under this project eight hydrological observation stations run by Sri Lanka's Department of Irrigation in the Kelani River basin were upgraded and connected to the DOI headquarters with a telemeter system for real-time monitoring. The IGN also connected disaster management organizations with a dedicated line for information sharing and smooth communication. To make the HIS and IGN effective, the Study Team also implemented two-step drills on information transfer and evacuation. The success of the capacity building component was evidenced, when some 90% of necessary evacuations were carried out successfully. The information transfer also worked with high reliability.

The Road Map's implementation is closely linked to the National Platform of Sri Lanka. In fact, the Road Map already mentions the need for a national coordinating mechanism, and all activities fall under the Strategic National Adaptation Plan's (SNAP) implementation (and thus HFA implementation) in Sri Lanka. As the NDMCC's role as National Platform is to support government and non-government sectors to successfully

implement the Road Map, it provides both facilitation and monitors the implementation of this action plan through its monthly meetings and regular consultations. The NDMCC does not get involved directly in the implementation carried out by some of its members.

#### *Good Practice*

The approach to seek maximum participation of diverse stakeholders to develop the Road Map and later implement it was a truly success story, leading to buy-in by the population and experts alike. The whole process based on consultations has been carried out at all levels. It proactively sought and achieved inclusion of all key stakeholders at national and local levels. High level consultation also facilitated the full buy-in of partners, and led to its popularity and sustainability. Subsequent regular consultations, including the monthly meetings of the NDMCC with participation of the Secretary of the Ministry of Disaster Management and Human Rights, led to increased commitment and the definition of a common vision and plan with terms of reference developed.

It was a major challenge to coordinate the consultative process with the participation of multiple stakeholder agencies and departments within the purview of line ministries in Sri Lanka as stipulated in the Disaster Management Act. However the deliberate move to engage this demanding coordination effort provided the Ministry and the DMC with the opportunity to build up the framework and the mechanism. Aspects like the pre-disaster focus, mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction into the development process, concentration on institutional mechanisms, and coordination among partners, are all key components of the Sri Lankan system and correspond to what is stipulated in the HFA.

## Lessons Learned

The involvement of multiple stakeholders at all levels and support from both national and international actors has been highly instrumental to obtaining ownership and buy-in for Sri Lanka's strategic national action plan. The Sri Lanka experience has shown that the blend of local knowledge and international expertise, when well coordinated, can rapidly achieve progress in moving from a disaster response-oriented national system to a modern risk reduction approach with strong national ownership.

The Sri Lankan example also shows that developing a strategic national action plan alone is not sufficient to achieve an efficient implementation of key disaster risk reduction activities. In fact, the multitude of actors involved in disaster risk reduction confirmed the necessity already expressed in the HFA for a strong national coordinating mechanism in form of a National Platform to fine-tune coordination and facilitate the implementation of activities by a variety of actors.

The strong commitment and support by the Resident Coordinator and United Nations Country Team have been additional aspects that positively influenced progress. In fact, not only through technical, but also human and material resources, the United Nations Country Team contributed to better planning and coordination. Building on established cooperation over disaster management issues, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for example increased its presence and financial support to help in better planning and coordination of disaster risk management. It assigned several national and international staff including a Disaster Reduction Adviser and national advisers, who were attached to the Disaster Management Centre.

Despite successes, it remains nonetheless challenging to keep the momentum with all stakeholders and ensure longer-term sustainability. To sustain the NDMCC as a proactive forum, strengthen its members' capacity, and provide technical support for the implementation of the Road Map, is a long-term task and cannot be taken for granted.

Challenges also include increasing resource mobilization for Road Map priority projects for which no other contribution has been received so far.

### Potential for Replication

In the special context of Sri Lanka, a country also faced with internal strife, progress on disaster risk management has been an impressive achievement. Sri Lanka has been sharing its experiences at various global and regional meetings and thus provided advice and inspiration to other countries. However, it seems premature to currently provide longer-term support to other countries. The DMC and NDMCC's work is still very much a work in progress, and needs further consolidation and support to sustainably change the risk landscape. Once this process is consolidated, there will be huge potential for not only outsiders to learn from the Sri Lankan approach, but also possibly for increasingly using Sri Lankan stakeholders as resource people to help support developments in other countries.

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# Switzerland

## Multi-stakeholder coordination

### *Swiss National Platform for Natural Hazards (PLANAT)*



PLANAT members analysing climate change consequences, Canton Berne, 2006

### Context

Two thirds of Switzerland's territory is covered by alpine mountain ranges, and the country has a long tradition of coping with natural hazards. The first federal laws on forestry and water management were enacted in 1876/1877. Over the decades, the Swiss attached increased attention to natural hazards and continued to develop policies and regulations for this sector.

However, since the mid-1980s, several severe flood and windstorm disasters in Switzerland revealed the need to cooperate and plan better to address threats, look for synergies, bridge gaps, and plan strategically for disaster risk reduction. In the past, while preventive measures had been part of Switzerland's disaster management system, the focus was primarily on defence against hazards – e.g. through large infrastructural interventions like barriers - rather than on investments in building a culture of prevention and enhancing awareness of how to avoid exposure to natural hazards. Setting priorities for risk reduction measures was difficult due to a lack of policies, tools and risk awareness.

In the 1990s, Switzerland heeded the call of the international community for further investments in disaster risk reduction. Not a formal UN member State at the time, the country nonetheless sent an observer to meetings convened at the beginning of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR). In particular, Switzerland attended meetings of the Scientific and Technical Committee established during the Decade. The country's role in the IDNDR became more prominent following the 1994 UN World Conference on Natural Disaster Reduction in Yokohama, which spearheaded a better integration of natural and social sciences for risk reduction. A Swiss national was nominated member of the Scientific and Technical Committee and over the last four years has held the vice presidency of this entity. Later, at the end of the decade in 1999 Switzerland also hosted the IDNDR closing conference in Geneva.

As recommended by the UN, Switzerland also set up a National Committee for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. This was a first step to more coordination and interaction between different Swiss players in disaster risk management, and to a stronger focus on disaster risk reduction. This National Committee gathered experts from diverse institutions (Confederation/ national level, cantons/ regions, universities, etc.), and was led by a Member of Parliament.

Some members of the National Committee met in 1995 to discuss the idea of a common platform to enlarge the Committee's multi-stakeholder basis and further enhance participation and exchange. They included High-level officials of Federal and Cantonal agencies related to disaster risk reduction, experts on natural hazards, and insurers. This stakeholder group tried to assess if the current system of coordination and decision-making was efficient, and provided options on how to advance to make life

safer for communities in Switzerland. They mapped governmental and civil society organizations and existing networks for their potential relevance to risk reduction issues, and assessed whether a new form of dialogue through a National Platform could be anchored therein.

In a process that took some time, more government officials and professionals joined the stakeholder group, motivated to take action within their own area and to promote the idea of a common platform for a more systematic and coordinated form of exchange and coordination. This openness to include other actors and to give them the same powers to contribute and shape the future Platform greatly helped to reduce opposition to the idea of a uniform entity for disaster risk reduction, maintaining high levels of motivation for this project.

Members of this stakeholder group identified common goals in disaster risk reduction and potential synergies, engaged in raising awareness of the Federal Government, and promoted the idea of a National Platform. In the course of the process, the group identified the need for leadership to keep the initiative going, build commitment and ownership, and prove the added value of a reinforced coordination mechanism. They unanimously welcomed and confirmed the offer of a high-level official Heinz Wandeler, Federal Forestry Director, of the Federal Office for Environment (FOEN) to take the lead in building the future National Platform.

In 1997, the Swiss Committee for the IDNDR was transformed in an extra-parliamentary commission and officially declared by the Swiss Federal Council as the Swiss National Platform for Natural Hazards (PLANAT). Switzerland thus took a lead role in moving the IDNDR temporary committee into a longer-term forum for exchange and coordination on natural hazard risk.

## National Platform Structure and Activities

### *Focal Point Institution*

The Federal Government approved the constitution of the Swiss National Platform for Natural Hazards (PLANAT) as an extra-parliamentary commission. No additional legal base was required for establishing the platform, as existing regulations for Federal commissions could be applied. PLANAT thus serves the Federal Council and Parliament as a consulting

body and reports annually on its activities. Formally attached to the Federal Department for Environment, Transportation, Energy and Communication (DETEC), PLANAT is presently hosted at the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN). This is a pragmatic decision as PLANAT's current President Andreas Goetz is also Deputy Director General of the FOEN. In future, the presidency and the permanent secretariat could be hosted by another Federal agency.

*Membership:* PLANAT is composed of 20 members, who are high-level representatives of:

- Federal Central Government
- Sub-national authorities (Cantons)
- Professional associations
- Private sector
- Insurance companies
- Universities

Members are appointed by the Swiss Federal Council for four years, with the last elections held in 2007. Members can serve up to a maximum period of 12 years, unless they belong to the Federal Administration.

The members also nominate a President among themselves to oversee and guide PLANAT's work. This selection is confirmed by the Federal Council. Members further elect a six person Steering Committee, which prepares the plenary sessions of PLANAT. For day-to-day administrative and public relations, PLANAT has a small secretariat with an executive secretary and a public relations manager working half-time and who are based in the capital Bern.

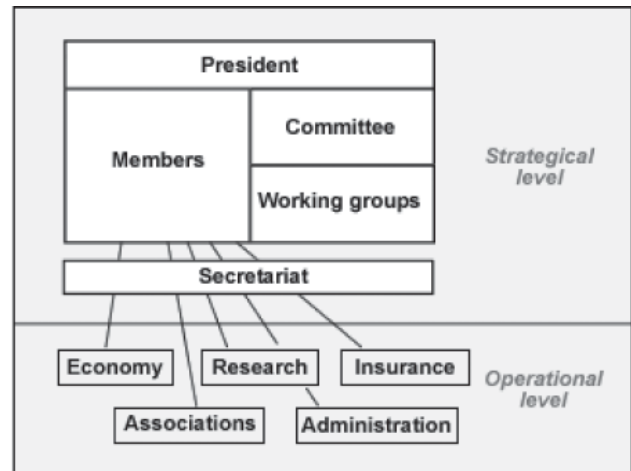
PLANAT members are not reimbursed for membership activities. They only receive modest attendance fees and travel expenses. This helps ensure that membership is based on commitment.

#### *Operational practices*

PLANAT's mission is three-fold: to advise the Federal Government on strategic matters related to disaster risk reduction, to coordinate work in this field, and to raise awareness and promote a long-term shift towards averting danger through investment in disaster risk management. The first aspect includes, for example, the development of a vision and strategy for Switzerland to cope with risks due to natural hazards. For the second coordination aspect, PLANAT connects partners and builds synergies to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of national systems and links up with international partners. As far as the awareness-raising aspect is concerned, measures are taken to move towards ecologically compatible, socially just and economically efficient risk management. PLANAT has no executive or legislative powers.

PLANAT's primary focus is on long-term prevention and mitigation of natural risks. PLANAT is not directly involved on an operational level, although some of its members are linked to intervention, response and risk transfer.

As a national forum for discussion and coordination between the different fields and stakeholders, PLANAT facilitates information and knowledge sharing as well as technology transfer for disaster risk reduction. PLANAT provides policy guidance, harmonizes strategies and coordinates activities to improve the implementation of disaster risk reduction activities. For this, the forum reveals gaps, identifies synergies and starts a risk dialogue with the general public. PLANAT reviews and comments on draft federal laws, regulations and guidelines.



PLANAT's President relies on the permanent secretariat and the six-member Steering Committee. The Steering Committee meets three times a year for half a day. Together with the President, it has responsibilities for strategic questions including the definition or review of vision and strategy documents.

The Steering Committee supervises, guides and relies on PLANAT's working groups and issues contracts commissioned to private consulting companies based on the evaluation of tenders. Additionally it prepares the agenda for PLANAT's plenary sessions.

PLANAT currently has two working groups. The working groups are established either for a limited time period to answer specific questions - such as the working group on safety which drafted the vision and strategy - or as a permanent group with a continuous mandate, such as the groups responsible for communication and information and for international cooperation. The groups consist of three to six PLANAT members and may be complemented by temporary, external members.

PLANAT plenary sessions are held three times a year to discuss progress on joint initiatives and general disaster risk reduction related developments, and to reach consensus on the way forward.

Beyond these formal gathering, PLANAT's secretariat plays a key role in facilitating informal exchange through information-sharing among the members through websites (see below).

To carry out its activities, PLANAT has a regular, annual line budget of the FOEN, presently equating to CHF400,000 (roughly US\$380,000). This allocation covers running costs for staff and administrative support, and allows extending seed funding for strategic projects and crosscutting activities.

### *Activities and results*

#### *1) Development of a national and cross-cutting strategy and action plan for disaster risk reduction*

This was a major achievement and provides the basis for PLANAT's current activities. In 2000, the Swiss Federal Council commissioned PLANAT to develop a comprehensive and interlinked strategy to improve the protection of people, their livelihoods and important material assets against natural hazards. The strategy was considered a first step in what ultimately would lead to the application of comparable security standards throughout Switzerland based on extensive risk management. In 2003, PLANAT completed this comprehensive and interlinked Swiss Strategy for the Protection against Natural Hazards.<sup>9</sup>

Further mandated to move towards implementation of the strategy, PLANAT analyzed the existing activities and resources being applied to reduce disaster risk, and evaluated their effectiveness. Based on this assessment, PLANAT was in May 2005 tasked to develop a three year action plan (2005-2008) and to initiate the activities related to risk policy, performance measurement and risk dialogue/awareness.

#### *2) Raising risk awareness and promoting research and dialogue on disaster risk reduction*

PLANAT works towards a long term shift in handling natural danger-paradigms. To promote and support the disaster risk reduction concept and related measures, PLANAT has worked concretely to strengthen communication and dialogue among stakeholders, scientists and the public at large:

#### *Websites*

The secretariat puts great effort into communication with professionals and the general public. It maintains a web portal – Natural Hazards in Switzerland (<http://naturgefahren.ch/>) - which aims to serve as a central place for literature, pictures and presentations, as well as lists of existing sites of the federal administration, cantonal authorities, research institutes and international organizations. Organizations and interested groups with an emphasis on the prevention of natural hazards are invited to present themselves on the website and bring in their own contributions. Managed free of charge by PLANAT, interested groups which may not have the capacity to set up and maintain a website on their own can thus contribute and become part of the larger network.

Part of this web portal, the PLANAT Website ([www.planat.ch](http://www.planat.ch)) has been created as an essential vehicle for communication and information among its members. Information is available in four languages. It is interactive, regularly updated and has open forum discussion. The website and regular communications among its members through email have been very helpful to avoid duplication and increase synergy.

#### *Exhibitions and stands*

Other projects aim to raise awareness by reaching the population directly through exhibitions, such as the exhibition 'Earthquakes', in Freiburg, which dealt with prevention and insurance.

#### *Research award*

To promote and support disaster risk reduction among young scientists, a Research Award has been launched, with CHF 5000 (roughly US\$4800) granted each year to a specific project related to natural hazards. This brings real support and boosts research while disseminating a culture of prevention among scientists and experts.

#### *3) Earthquake mitigation*

In 1999 PLANAT noted that Switzerland neglected earthquake mitigation measures. At the PLANAT's request, a Federal Earthquake Preparedness Office was established at the FOEN. Although earthquakes are rare phenomena in Switzerland, the country suffered great damage from an earthquake in 1356 in Basel. Due to the dense population and high property, the loss potential has increased over the centuries. Therefore, earthquakes remain a most dangerous natural hazard. Following a survey, it was

<sup>9</sup> Further information available at: <http://naturgefahren.ch/index.php?userhash=59503657&l=d&nav=154,40,40,40,40>



found that about 90 per cent of existing buildings were constructed without specific consideration of earthquake regulations. A large number of buildings showed a relatively high vulnerability regarding earthquakes. Swiss reinsurance companies expected for an event of magnitude 5.5-6, losses of around CHF 7 billion francs, and for an event with strength of 6-6.5 up to CHF 40 billion (roughly US\$ 38 billion).

As the office in charge of earthquake preparedness in the federal government, the FOEN launched a seven-step program of preparedness measures. Part of this is a contingency plan for earthquakes, which sets out the protection and care of the population after an earthquake. In terms of mitigation, efforts are made to harmonise approaches, undertake micro-zoning, revise building codes (SIA 160) and associated basic documents like the Swiss earthquake hazard map or soil maps. Building structures have been under review for the past three years. PLANAT and its members also tried to include a chapter in the Swiss constitution on natural hazards. While this approach did not succeed, building insurance companies now include provisions for earthquakes.<sup>10</sup>

#### 4) *Further development of the “risk policy for natural hazards”*

This task refers to the development of integrated risk management systems that recognize natural hazard risks, and which allow for risk evaluation and reduction using the best combination of technical, economic, social and ecological protection measures. The risk policy for natural hazards is being further developed through specific studies and work on practical guidelines on risk management methods, and a summary of best-practices in risk prevention. A first report related to avalanche risks is now completed.

PLANAT has helped launch the mainstreaming of an integrated strategy for disaster risk reduction, through adapting the institutional and legal framework of Switzerland. Efficiency in prevention and response can be improved by avoiding duplication. For that purpose, PLANAT aims to clearly define stakeholders' responsibilities for disaster risk reduction.

#### 5) *Performance measurement*

In total, PLANAT oversees the implementation of 15 distinct projects. It reported back to the Federal Council on progress in mid-2008. Its experiences and assessments will feed into a more detailed evidence-based long-term strategy and action plan, which will be aligned with the strategic goals of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015 (HFA).

#### 6) *Working Group International Exchange*

The mandate of the PLANAT Working Group International Exchange was adopted in 2004. In collaboration with the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the working group focuses on the international exchange of knowledge and experience. Its objectives are to advance integrated risk management in developing countries and to support the development of a network of European Platforms. Furthermore, the group collaborates with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) system members in implementing the HFA.

To reach these aims, working group members took part in international conferences such as the World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) and the International Disaster and Risk Conference (IDRC), and also assisted SDC in its support of disaster risk reduction initiatives in developing countries.

Switzerland has supported the UN/ISDR secretariat since the secretariat's inception, chairing the ISDR Support Group until 2007. Marco Ferrari, Deputy Head of Department for Humanitarian Aid, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and member of PLANAT, chaired the Drafting Committee of the HFA. Mr Ferrari was committed in setting up a new, more efficient architecture of the global ISDR system. In 2007, Geneva hosted the first ISDR Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction meeting.

<sup>10</sup> For additional information, please contact Mr. Blaise Duvernay at the BAFU (phone: +41 31 32 41734 or email: Blaise.Duvernay@bafu.admin.ch)

# The Good Practice

## Multi stakeholder coordination

*The initiative: Convening key stakeholders and providing a clear national vision for disaster risk reduction*

In setting up its National Platform and motivating action by a diverse set of national actors, PLANAT has gone through a thoughtful process of multi-stakeholder cooperation and coordination.

The initial core group of people who gathered to establish PLANAT, considered carefully the particular composition and cultural diversity of Swiss society. They ensured that PLANAT's future membership would represent gender perspectives, language minorities, and involve sub-national administration (Cantons) and civil society, including private companies. To increase the identification of the diverse set of stakeholders and provide a positive image, attention was paid to developing an appropriate name, acronym and logo. The launch of the National Platform was planned to obtain media coverage and gain visibility from the outset. This continued with the development and maintenance of a highly professional website on natural hazards.

From its inception, the small group of stakeholders that initially constituted the Swiss IDNDR committee and later PLANAT operates according to a valued participatory process. All aspects of PLANAT's mandate, future thematic focus, institutional anchoring and strategic approach have been discussed over a substantive time period to allow for contributions of all concerned. In a reflection of Swiss direct democracy, 20 representatives of governmental and non-governmental/civil society entities have continuously been given a voice and voting rights to decide in a very open dialogue on how to develop and use PLANAT to reduce risks in Switzerland. Members of the future National Platform temporarily relied on experts to clarify legal and administrative aspects of the Platform, to see the extent to which PLANAT could be set up in the existing legal framework for Parliamentary commissions and review appropriate organizational aspects to effectively run the Platform. The question of who should assume the function of President and secretariat was debated and the lead of a Governmental agency unanimously accepted.

PLANAT has been made known to governmental offices not represented in the National Platform,

to the Parliament, to the private sector and to the general public through reports, leaflets and the PLANAT web site. Contacts with the ISDR system have been established. Federal Government and key representatives of governmental agencies were very supportive of the Platform idea. The idea of a Platform was recognized as a win-win situation for all stakeholders involved, and was not perceived as a threat.

PLANAT convened working groups and after several workshops and meetings, a draft vision and subsequent strategy was prepared and submitted to a formal plenary discussion. Their chairman periodically informed the steering committee and the PLANAT plenary assembly.

### *Impacts and results*

A concrete result of PLANAT's multi-stakeholder work was the approval of its vision document in summer 2001 and subsequent production of a strategy by the same working group. The vision and strategy were approved by PLANAT at the plenary session in November 2002; the Federal Government confirmed the approval in August 2003.

The working group spearheading this work was constituted of 20 persons, representing PLANAT members and external experts from universities, public and private sectors, including an experienced journalist to adapt the language for consumption by politicians and the general public.

### *Good Practice*

The creation of the Swiss National Platform is the result of a bottom-up process, but has also benefited from strong leadership. By highly valuing participatory processes and contributions from diverse actors, and engaging in open and constructive dialogue in all meetings, PLANAT has managed to obtain strong buy-in, ownership and sustained commitment to the National Platform. A corporate team spirit and a firm common understanding have been achieved. The level of confidence in this National Platform is also expressed through Governmental offices that continue to support the Platform's strategic project activities with additional resources from their own budgets.

## Lessons Learned

The mandate and institutional setup of the platform are critical for its effectiveness and acceptance by the different stakeholders. Decision-making must be based on careful assessment of opportunities and context. Coordination mechanisms need to be participatory and take power dynamics into account. The following are some further lessons learned of PLANAT's experience:

### *1) Benefits of a favourable institutional framework and appropriate operational practices*

Creating the platform in an institutional framework, in which the legal framework already existed, has been enormously helpful in setting up PLANAT. The nomination of Platform members by the Federal Government provided PLANAT with appropriate institutional recognition on a national level.

The limitation of Platform membership to four years with the possibility of renomination for another four years has had a positive effect, as this avoids routine setting in, and ensures fresh thinking. Furthermore, limiting the number of PLANAT members to 20 keeps the National Platform manageable.

Running the Platform with a steering committee and a permanent secretariat has been very efficient as activities can be carried out and monitored quickly.

### *2) Building a participatory and evolving structure*

The process of establishing a functional National Platform takes time and the National Platform members need to be highly motivated. The 20 core group members who set up PLANAT were all highly committed to following through with their early work by remaining a part of the National Platform.

Another important aspect was the evolving structure of PLANAT. The maximum number of members was maintained from the beginning, but the option of including further stakeholders at a later stage was left open. In retrospect, earlier integration of representatives from weather services, media, critical infrastructures or industries as platform members might have been useful – especially when looking for public-private partnership models.

### *3) Advantages and challenges of focusing on prevention and mitigation only*

The restriction of the thematic focus to prevention and mitigation made it easier to gather the responsible governmental agencies in a Platform but slowed down the process of looking at the whole disaster risk cycle and of integrating response and recovery into the risk management process.

### *4) Creating an effective acronym and a logo helps to increase visibility of the Platform.*

### *5) Advantages of a well maintained website to gain visibility and enlarge the stakeholder base*

The PLANAT-managed internet platform for natural hazards is open for other institutions and associations that are unable to run a website on their own. This has been highly appreciated and has increased the influence of PLANAT in Switzerland.

## Potential for Replication

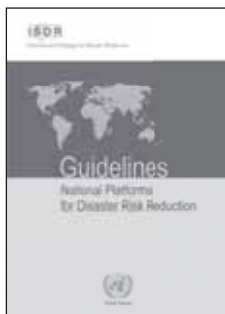
The Swiss experience shows that a dedicated team effort and the interaction of key players from line ministries, disaster management authorities, academia, civil society and other sectors involved with disaster reduction are much more important than financial resources, institutional means or even legal matters alone, for making headway on disaster reduction. This may be taken into account when replicating the Swiss experience.

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## Annex 1: UN/ISDR resources related to National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction



### Guidelines - National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction

This document provides guidance to establish or strengthen National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction (National Platforms for DRR). Based on previous guidelines, this revised version has benefited from the inputs of a group of Government officials from countries with National Platforms for DRR and from a few countries that are planning to establish National Platforms for DRR. This group includes China, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Peru, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. The Government officials entrusted the UN/ISDR secretariat to include their inputs, and to shorten the original document to turn it into an easy and useful reference.

In Arabic: [www.unisdr-wana.org/eng/national-platform/np-guidelines.html](http://www.unisdr-wana.org/eng/national-platform/np-guidelines.html)

In Chinese: [www.unisdr.org/eng/about\\_isdr/isdr-publications/03-guidelines-np-drr/chi-guidelines-np-drr.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/03-guidelines-np-drr/chi-guidelines-np-drr.pdf)

In English: [www.unisdr.org/eng/about\\_isdr/isdr-publications/03-guidelines-np-drr/eng-guidelines-np-drr.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/03-guidelines-np-drr/eng-guidelines-np-drr.pdf)

In French: [www.unisdr.org/eng/about\\_isdr/isdr-publications/03-guidelines-np-drr/fre-guidelines-np-drr.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/03-guidelines-np-drr/fre-guidelines-np-drr.pdf)

In Russian: [www.unisdr.org/eng/about\\_isdr/isdr-publications/03-guidelines-np-drr/rus-guidelines-np-drr.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/03-guidelines-np-drr/rus-guidelines-np-drr.pdf)

In Spanish: [www.unisdr.org/eng/about\\_isdr/isdr-publications/03-guidelines-np-drr/spa-guidelines-np-drr.pdf](http://www.unisdr.org/eng/about_isdr/isdr-publications/03-guidelines-np-drr/spa-guidelines-np-drr.pdf)



### Words into Action: A guide for implementing the Hyogo Framework

In January 2005, over 4000 representatives of governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academic institutes and the private sector gathered in Kobe, Japan, at the second World Conference on Disaster Reduction (WCDR) and concluded negotiations on the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters (HFA). This Framework for Action, adopted by 168 states, sets a clear expected outcome - the substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives as well as the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries - and lays out a detailed set of priorities to achieve this by 2015.

In English: [www.unisdr.org/words-into-action](http://www.unisdr.org/words-into-action)

For a comprehensive list of National Platforms and Hyogo Framework for Action Focal points, please access PreventionWeb, the on-line information portal for disaster risk reduction, at:

<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/national/>

For more information visit UN/ISDR secretariat addresses at headquarters and regions

[www.unisdr.org](http://www.unisdr.org)

[www.preventionweb.net](http://www.preventionweb.net)



United Nations  
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

## Annex 2 SUMMARY of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: *Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters*

Expected outcome, strategic goals and priorities for action 2005-2015

**Expected Outcome**  
The substantial reduction of disaster losses, in lives and in the social, economic and environmental assets of communities and countries.

### Strategic Goals

The integration of disaster risk reduction into sustainable development policies and planning.

The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities to build resilience to hazards.

The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes.

### Priorities for Action

**1. Ensure that disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.**

- DRR institutional mechanisms (national platforms); designated responsibilities;
- DRR part of development policies and planning, sector wise and multisector;
- Legislation to support DRR;
- Decentralisation of responsibilities and resources;
- Assessment of human resources and capacities;
- Foster political commitment;
- Community participation.

**2. Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning.**

- Risk assessments and maps, multi-risk: elaboration and dissemination;
- Indicators on DRR and vulnerability;
- Data and statistical loss information;
- Early warning: people centered; information systems; public policy;
- Scientific and technological development; data sharing, space-based earth observation, climate modelling and forecasting; early warning;
- Regional and emerging risks.

**3. Use knowledge, innovation and education to build a culture of safety and resilience at all levels.**

- Information sharing and cooperation; networks across disciplines and regions; dialogue;
- Use of standard DRR terminology;
- Inclusion of DRR into school curricula, formal and informal education;
- Training and learning on DRR: community level, local authorities, targeted sectors; equal access;
- Research capacity: multi-risk; socio-economic; application;
- Public awareness and media.

**4. Reduce the underlying risk factors.**

- Sustainable ecosystems and environmental management;
- DRR strategies integrated with climate change adaptation;
- Food security for resilience;
- DRR integrated into health sector and safe hospitals;
- Protection of critical public facilities;
- Recovery schemes and social safety-nets;
- Vulnerability reduction with diversified income options;
- Financial risk-sharing mechanisms;
- Public-private partnership;
- Land use planning and building codes;
- Rural development plans and DRR.

**5. Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels.**

- Disaster management capacities: policy, technical and institutional capacities;
- Dialogue, coordination and information exchange between disaster managers and development sectors;
- Regional approaches to disaster response, with risk reduction focus;
- Review and exercise preparedness and contingency plans;
- Emergency funds;
- Voluntarism and participation.

### Cross Cutting Issues

Multi-hazard approach

Gender perspective and cultural diversity

Community and volunteers participation

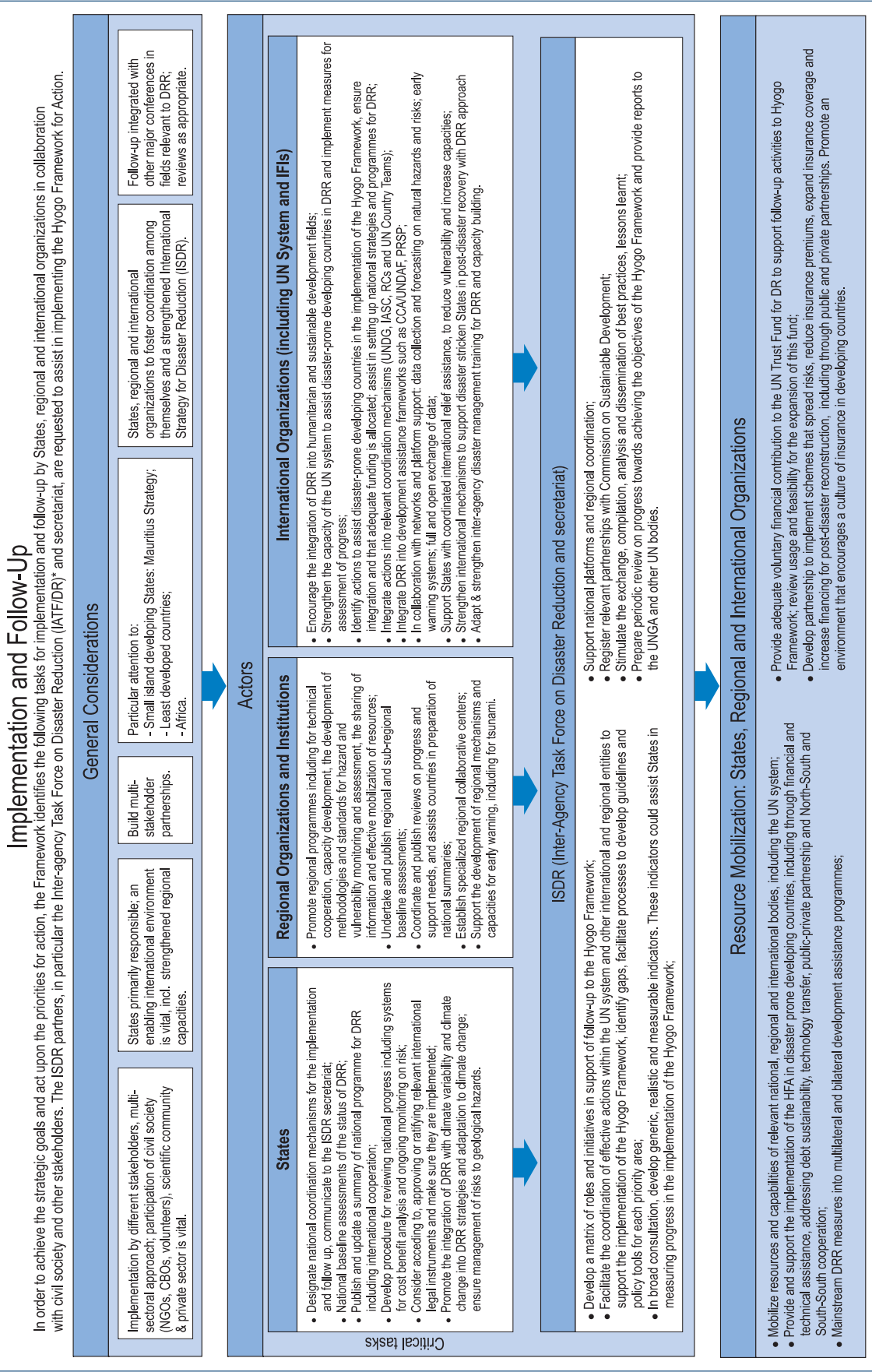
Capacity building & technology transfer

Contributing to the achievements of the internationally agreed development goals (including the MDGs).



United Nations  
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Continued  
SUMMARY of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015:  
Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters



Source: Outcome of the World Conference on Disaster Reduction, Kobe, Hyogo, Japan, 18-22 January 2005

\* The IATF/DR was replaced in 2007 by the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction



United Nations  
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