Background to the collection of briefing notes

This collection aims to help civil society organisations and communities to better monitor, influence and secure commitment to the Hyogo Framework at the local level by:

- documenting and analysing the different approaches and tools to community-led policy monitoring that will be needed to implement the Hyogo Framework for Action
- making specific recommendations for achieving effective and successful policy monitoring and mainstreaming DRR at a local level, based on lessons learned from existing policy-monitoring initiatives and case studies.

Given the vast number of influential political, legal and economic actors and elites operating at a local level, these notes will focus solely on the monitoring of elected government institutions. However some of the tools and processes examined could be transferable for advocacy with other actors.
These briefing notes are complemented by and may be read in conjunction with Christian Aid's recently published toolkit, *Monitoring Government Policies*,[2] which provides extensive information about how to monitor and influence government policies.

Overview of the briefing notes

Note 2: Community-led policy-monitoring: key lessons and principles
This defines the key principles and lessons of community-led policy monitoring. The accompanying Note 2A outlines the particular strengths and remaining challenges for Christian Aid partners.

Note 3: Monitoring policies to reduce the risk of disasters
This highlights the link between poverty and the vulnerability to disasters, and gives an overview of what community-led policy-monitoring for disaster risk reduction can and hopes to achieve.

Note 4: Community-led policy-monitoring and disaster risk reduction: a tool for implementing the Hyogo Framework for action
This introduces the Hyogo Framework for Action and provides an overview of the main steps in monitoring progress against commitments made.

Notes 5-9: HFA priorities
Notes 5-9 introduce the five HFA priority areas and lay out the main gaps in current progress, suggest potential solutions, describe steps for action and possible indicators of success.

Note 10: Summary and outlook
The final note provides a summary of final recommendations for Christian Aid and for local organisations, and provides examples of possible activities to get started.

ENDNOTES

1 The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) was agreed by 168 national governments in 2005. This made DRR a priority and integrated it into national and international development planning. For more information on the HFA, please see Notes 4-9 and www.unisdr.org
2 CAFOD, Christian Aid and Trocaire, *Monitoring Government Policies. A Toolkit for Civil Society Organisations in Africa* 2006. Although the toolkit has been developed specifically for civil society organisations in Africa, many of its guidelines and tools are applicable to local advocacy work across the globe. See: www.internationalbudget.org/MonitorGovPol.pdf

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Community-led policy monitoring for DRR

Implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action at a local level

Ten practice notes for community-led policy monitoring for disaster risk reduction

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Note 1
Scaling up community-based disaster risk reduction – the key role of local government

'Disaster risk reduction is not a luxury. It's an essential insurance policy for a more disaster-prone world, and one of the smartest, most cost-effective investments we can make in our common future. The benefits of this investment will be calculated not only in dollars saved, but most importantly, in saved lives.'

UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Relief and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland, 30 Oct 2006

Disasters resulting from natural hazards, such as droughts, floods, earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes and cyclones, are widespread in many developing countries where Christian Aid partners work. They have been identified as a major threat to sustainable development and poverty reduction – a threat that is growing as disasters become more frequent and intense, and because of the effects of climate change, chronic poverty and increasing population pressure. However, there are many ways to help poor families protect their lives and ways of living in the face of such risk. This is what disaster risk reduction (DRR) is all about.

Christian Aid and its partners have worked for many years on projects rooted in communities, reducing their vulnerability to future disasters. With the key principle of community participation and ownership, these are referred to as community-based projects.

'The core attributes of a community-based approach to disaster mitigation and preparedness is that the principal authority over the programme must rest with the community… local knowledge and wisdom can best identify the needs of a community and the causes of their vulnerability… and the most suitable plan of action…The most effective disaster mitigation strategies will be those that build on community knowledge.'

Facing the Storm – how local communities can cope with disaster: Lessons from Orissa and Gujarat, Christian Aid, 2003

Community-centred disaster risk reduction

The benefits of inclusive community-centred disaster risk-reduction projects are acknowledged in the development and humanitarian field. Communities themselves understand their local context, their people, and are usually the first to respond when disaster strikes. Christian Aid and its partner organisations have supported many successful community-based DRR initiatives over the years, and these have benefited the communities concerned enormously, especially in the face of complacency by governments. However, during the past few years we have also noted the limitations and challenges of this approach when trying to meet the global development challenge presented by disasters, and in particular, climate change.

Limitation We have become aware of the limitation of what can be achieved when operating on a very locally focused scale.

Challenge Despite many positive outcomes from community-centred DRR we are less sure about how to scale up and replicate these successful risk reduction activities to find lasting solutions to help more people and communities at risk.

Scaling up DRR The term 'scaling up' is taken here to mean increasing the extent, coverage and long-term effectiveness of DRR activities. The overarching challenge posed by disaster risk to developing countries means that results have to be achieved at provincial and national level, rather than simply aiming for isolated project objectives.

Key role of governance The root causes of people's vulnerability to disasters can often be found in political, social and economic structures and trends. For example, weak planning and building codes, inadequate policy for civil protection and responding to disaster; inadequate international policy for carbon-emissions reduction and climate-change adaptation; lack of national welfare systems or safety nets; indebtedness to international financial institutions (IFIs) and aid dependency of nations.

Therefore, ensuring people's lives and livelihoods are resilient to disaster over the long term involves more than community-based work. It requires the right supportive political and legislative environment for good initiatives to thrive, be sustained and be multiplied. It involves a multi-sector and multi-level approach, such as that laid out in the UN Hyogo Framework for Action,[1] and the cooperation of national and international actors.

In short, the sustainable scale up of community-centred DRR work depends on governments taking a key coordination and facilitation role, as only they are likely to have the resources and capacity to undertake large-scale multi-disciplinary initiatives, and create the policy and legislative framework within which national risk reduction can be accomplished.

Improving community-based work to support scale up The goals of DRR work should aim to achieve municipal and national results, rather than simple and singular project objectives. They should:

1. raise the profile of DRR as a policy and advocacy concern, with the aim of creating a favourable environment for sustainable DRR
2. aim to increase the scale of resources and the range of actors working together for the common goal of risk reduction
3. aim to restructure processes, reform institutions and legislation in order to promote joined-up and sustainable solutions to disasters.

Scaling up community-based DRR requires:

1. developing stronger links between community- and government-led DRR initiatives
2. bridging the gaps between micro-, meso- and macro-level DRR activities, in terms of transfer of information, assigning responsibility, funding and allocating resources
3. promoting greater interaction and participation between community members and governing authorities to ensure effective policies that:
   - fit local realities and support positive change that will impact at local level
   - are linked to the bigger picture
   - are resourced appropriately
   - are implemented effectively
4. participatory governance and lobbying to ensure the needs of citizens are acknowledged and addressed.

Scaling up DRR work in Honduras

In Honduras, Christian Aid supports a partner network, the Association of NGOs (ASONOG), which in turn supports 22 local organisations (11 partners and 11 local committees) with practical DRR projects:

- at local and municipal level ASONOG works with communities and government DRR bodies (including disaster management committees, development
- supporting communities with livelihoods, mitigation and adaptation activities
- participating in regional round tables to influence DRR, development planning and policy monitoring
- at national level ASONOG is participating in national round tables and advocacy and lobbying the disaster management committees and the private sector on DRR issues for better DRR policies and procedures
- at international level ASONOG is participating in the Regional Advocacy Group on DRR (GRIGR), and take part in advocacy work with the Centre for the Prevention of Natural Disasters in Central America (CEPREDENAC).

Community-led policy monitoring (CPM) One way of encouraging government to acknowledge the needs of its citizens and to monitor how it will address these – mapping resources and expenditure – is through community-led policy monitoring (CPM). In CPM, communities are at the centre of the action – identifying needs and action plans and challenging government to provide the right enabling environment and resource for citizens to reduce their risk to disaster.