ENDNOTES

1 UN ISDR, *Words Into Action*, 2007. See www.unisdr.org
2 Global Witness has pioneered and gained unique experience on independent forest monitoring in Cambodia and Cameroon. Independent Forest Monitoring focuses on cooperation with governments, civil society and the private sector in timber-producing countries by providing objective information on forest concession allocations and infractions, capacity building in forest monitoring techniques and case-tracking for legal processes, so that the populations of the countries concerned equitably benefit from the sustainable use of their natural resource base. *A Guide to Independent Forest Monitoring* is available at www.globalwitness.org/media_library_detail.php/140/en/a_guide_to_independent_forest_monitoring
3 From SEEDS website, see: /www.seedsindia.org/SESIS/index.htm
4 UN ISDR, 2007: *Words into Action*. See www.unisdr.org

christian aid

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 8
HFA Priority 4: Reduce the underlying risk factors

The issues highlighted under each of the five aims are not intended to be a comprehensive list, but to provide a starting point for considering what needs to be done to effectively implement the HFA within a specific local or national context.

There are a number of different approaches and tools available to monitor, advocate and ensure commitment to implementing five key areas of the Hyogo Framework for Action. These notes suggest the following steps and the highlighted sections contain reference to the relevant sections of the Christian Aid's policy monitoring toolkit.

Implementing HFA Priority 4 requires encouraging the sustainable use and management of ecosystems; integrating disaster risk reduction strategies and climate-change adaptation; promoting food security for resilience; integrating disaster risk reduction planning into the heath sector and promoting safe hospitals; protecting critical public facilities; implementing recovery schemes and social safety nets; promoting income-diversification options; promoting financial risk sharing mechanisms; establishing public-private partnerships; mainstreaming disaster risk considerations into land-use planning and building codes; and incorporating disaster risk assessment in rural development plans.[1]

Where are the gaps?
Underlying risk factors that increase people's vulnerability to hazards are manifold and closely linked to poverty and the dynamics of inequality. Though the following are specific examples that look at concrete risk factors, this does not mean that underlying causes that need to be addressed by long-term development should be ignored:

- Land is being used in an unsustainable way – increasing the vulnerability to disasters. For example logging; removal of mangroves; building on floodplains; poor communities being forced into unsafe housing at risk from floods; overcrowding and use of particular fuels leading to risks of fires.
- Government and NGO sectoral strategies and programmes rarely take DRR considerations into account, often resulting in unsustainable and unviable initiatives, or investments that actually increase peoples' vulnerabilities.
- Safe and disaster-resistant houses and public buildings are not being built, because of a lack of building standards. Limited funds, corruption and lack of monitoring mean that where building codes exist they are ignored.

What are the potential solutions?
National governments have been advised by UN/ISDR to undertake a number of tasks that focus on the strengthening of assets, access to services, and creating an enabling environment:

- Incorporate disaster risk reduction in environmental and natural-resources management and programmes.

- Establish mechanisms for increasing the resilience of the poor and most vulnerable communities.
- Establish measures to incorporate disaster risk reduction in land-use practices and human settlements.
- Strengthen mechanisms for securing building safety.
- Creating opportunities for private sector involvement in disaster risk reduction.
- Develop a disaster-recovery plan.
- Development and implementation of building codes – financial and technical resources to be made available to advise communities and support them in this.
- Monitoring of building codes – reducing impunity for builders or government agencies that breach codes.
- Communities have improved organisation around common resource management, and develop sustainable land-use zoning practices and policies, through proper consultation and equitable use of resources.

What can we do?

- Monitor existing government performance by providing community-level data and information. Similarly, feed information from local and national governments to communities to establish two-way communication channels.

Policy Monitoring Toolkit
See Chapter 6, Tool 21: Planning a survey

- Base community action plans on information about available schemes, eligibility and responsible agencies.
- Help people gain access to the information they seek or need, not what is easily available.
- Establish information channels that are sustainable and don't depend on long-term aid.
- Launch local campaigns focussing on local government departments and contractors.

Policy Monitoring Toolkit
See Chapter 4, Tool 10: Policy perspectives

FORGE in the Philippines

Christian Aid partner FORGE's Urban Poor Development Programme operates in the Municipality of Cebu City on the island of Cebu, in the Visayas (the central group of islands in the Philippines). Its aim is to support urban poor communities affected by 'demolition' (forced eviction) from their homes because of urban development programmes. Communities are being helped to buy land or secure relocation sites, access basic services and tackle other development problems through self-help/community organisation. More than 1,000 families now have security of tenure as a result of FORGE's activities.

This year FORGE is starting work on a manual-giving, easy, step-by-step guide to obtaining secure housing through various routes, such as community mortgage schemes and lobbying local government for funds for basic services. It has also been working on what it calls 'judicial advocacy', encouraging the courts to work more closely with the city government before they hand down demolition orders, to ensure that the rights and interests of urban poor communities are taken into greater consideration.

- Collate evidence to illustrate the impact that land-use patterns have had on previous disasters.
- Monitor existing land-use patterns and violations.[2] Use legal proceedings to challenge governments, landlords or companies for misuse.
- Monitor health and education policies and services about their impact on people's vulnerability/resilience.

Policy Monitoring Toolkit
See Chapter 6: Gathering evidence on policy information

School Earthquake Safety Initiative, SEEDS, India

'Schools are an integral part of our social construct. They not only serve as educational institutes but also shape social conduct and beliefs. In a rapidly changing society schools have a particular role to play in preserving what we hold important as a society and preparing individuals to contribute to development process.'
Anshu Sharma, director of SEEDS

Among all civic amenities, schools in particular are vulnerable to disasters, and developmental initiative involves schools playing a role in disaster preparedness and response. The present situation is not only contrary but also apathetic to developmental initiatives. The School Safety Initiative, pioneered by SEEDS, aims to promote a culture of disaster safety in schools. This initiative is part of a larger agenda of creating a disaster-resilient community, envisioned by SEEDS. A pilot programme is being initiated in Shimla district, with the aim of building greater sensitivity towards earthquake risks in the region. School Earthquake Safety Initiative, Shimla (SESIS) will emphasise the need for preparedness against earthquakes. This programme aims to instil a culture of earthquake safety through schools. Schools in the pilot programme will also serve as models of disaster preparedness for the larger community.

The programme will address earthquake risks and determine ways to reduce it by:

- ensuring safer school buildings
- building capacity towards earthquake preparedness
- creating a school disaster-management plan.[3]

How do we know what is happening?[3]

- Do natural resource managers/environmental departments and disaster management staff communicate and cooperate, at national and/or local level?
- Do national poverty-reduction strategies, development plans and programmes incorporate disaster risk reduction considerations?
- Is risk reduction the main guiding principle in land-use planning; for example on settlement in high-risk areas, or for the protection of critical facilities?
- Do local health facilities and schools conform to hazard-resistant standards?
- Is disaster risk reduction incorporated in recovery planning, both at local and national levels?