

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION



Report

The First Arab Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction

Aqaba, Jordan

March 19-21, 2013



DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

THE FIRST ARAB CONFERENCE FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION: EXECUTIVE REPORT

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BACKGROUND

Disasters are not sudden events, they are the outcomes of natural hazards that affect highly vulnerable areas and populations with low capacities and resilience to disaster risk.

Disasters occur when natural hazards combine with high vulnerability and low resilience, and are exacerbated with lack of information and data on risks.

Moreover, lack of resources, weak or non-existent early warning systems and fragile infrastructure all contribute to the magnitude of disaster losses in lives, livelihoods, assets, economy, environment, etc. It might take years for a disaster affected community or country to recover socially and economically.

Different parts of the Arab region are regularly exposed to geological hazards such as earthquakes and landslides, in addition to weather related hazards such as floods, extreme temperature events, drought, sand storms, wildfires and cyclones.

The 2010 Environment Outlook Report for the Arab Region points out that most disaster losses in the Arab region were caused by drought, earthquakes, floods and storms. Recent figures from the Centre for Research Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED) estimate that from 1983 to 2012 some 164,164 persons were reportedly killed by natural disasters and almost 61 Million people were affected in the Arab Region. The reported economic damages due to disasters were estimated to be over 19 billion US\$.

Rapid urbanization, environmental degradation, water scarcity, changing demography and migration trends are further amplifying levels of vulnerability among the Arab population. Secondary risks associated with population displacement, disease outbreak, pandemic influenza, conflict and civil unrest pose multi-fold challenges to the region on a larger scale than ever before. All these factors challenge countries and limit their capacities to reduce and manage disaster risk.

The Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: *“Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters”* (HFA), is the policy framework and guide for all stakeholders on disaster risk reduction (DRR). It was developed primarily by national governments and international organizations and adopted in the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan in 2005. The HFA was endorsed in 2005 by the UN General Assembly as the global blue print for disaster risk reduction. With the HFA ending in 2015, the consultation process to prepare for a post - 2015 Framework on DRR (HFA2) has started. It is expected that this framework will provide an opportunity for all major groups to voice their needs and priorities for the future. Early consultations on the HFA 2, indicate that it may place increased emphasis on the engagement of local and city governments as a key factor in advancing the DRR agenda.

PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

The First Arab Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction was organized with a two-fold objective: first to consolidate and outline an Arab position on HFA2, and second to adopt a set of targets for DRR in Arab Cities through a public declaration. The conference also launched the first Arab regional platform for disaster risk reduction to become a regional coordination mechanism that will regularly review progress on DRR in the region.

The holding of the conference was preceded by the adoption of the Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ASDRR) – 2020, by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), of the League of Arab States. The Strategy was later adopted by the Arab Heads of States at their Baghdad Summit in March 2012. The League of Arab States also called for the establishment of an Arab regional platform for disaster risk reduction to accelerate the implementation of the HFA at the regional, national and local level.

In this context, the Conference brought together more than 250 key DRR representatives from the Arab region. Additionally, it provided a forum for Arab politicians, local authorities, policy makers, city managers, planners, academia and development experts to discuss issues and challenges facing the region with regard to DRR. Several UN agencies, IFRC and national Red Crescent societies as well as private sector and civil society organizations have also participated actively in the conference. The conference provided participants with the opportunity to share regional and local experiences and lessons learned on DRR. Participants also held consultations to prepare an Arab position for the post-2015 framework on DRR (HFA2).

The Conference was co-organized by the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) and the League of Arab States (LAS). Funding was provided through SDC, UNDP, UNISDR and the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction (GFDRR).

The Conference provided a forum to:

- Present and discuss existing policies and institutional mechanisms for disaster risk management;
- Present and discuss regional progress towards risk reduction and the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA);
- Discuss and agree on an Arab regional position towards a post-2015 DRR Global Framework (HFA 2);
- Discuss the nature and concerns of urban risks in the Arab region and facilitate exchange of good practices in urban risk management;
- Adopt the Aqaba Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Arab Cities.

PROCEEDINGS

The Conference was held under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Sumaya Bint el Hassan, the President of the Royal Scientific Society. The Conference was opened by HRH Princess Sumaya Bint el Hassan, Dr. Kamel Mahadin, Chief Commissioner of Aqaba Special Economic Zone; Ms Margareta Wahlström, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction; Ambassador Michael Winzap, the Ambassador of Switzerland to Jordan; Mr. Jordan Ryan, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery; Ambassador Shahira Wahbi, Representative of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; and Mr. Nayef Shalhoub, the Representative of the Chairman of the Executive Bureau for the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment.

In Her speech during the opening ceremony HRH Princess Sumaya stated that *"We meet at a crucial time for Disaster Risk Reduction in the Arab World. For, in a relatively short period, a number of crucial factors have magnified the exposure and vulnerability of cities in the Arab region to disaster and its aftermath. The explosive increase in urban populations in recent decades, coupled with poor planning in land use, has expanded the potential of hazard to cause havoc in our cities. A shocking absence of enforced building construction standards, a sharp rise in urban poverty, and the growing and unchecked impact of climate change are among other factors that must make us even more determined to act decisively."*

Margareta Wahlström, the United Nations SRSR for Disaster Risk Reduction and Chief of the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) expressed UNISDR encouragement to *"to see the Arab States coming together to discuss disaster risk reduction and create a regional platform. The timing could not be better as we are looking forward to the Arab region making a significant contribution towards revising and renewing the existing framework for disaster risk reduction, the Hyogo Framework for Action."*

Arab countries have made significant progress on the development front over the past decades, as asserted by Jordan Ryan, UNDP Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery in the opening session. However, he highlighted that *"such gains are put in jeopardy because of weak systems for disaster preparedness, which make the population vulnerable to a multitude of environmental disasters, especially in urban areas"*.

The Swiss Government represented by the Ambassador of Switzerland and the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) emphasized the importance of the Arab states coming together to share experiences and promote regional coordination for reducing the impact of natural disasters. Beat von Däniken, SDC Regional Director of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq stated that the conference also shows a strong sign to the world that *"Arab states are getting better organized and contribute to a worldwide discussed consensus about disaster risk reduction"*.

The conference focused on (a) assessing regional progress in DRR and identifying key issues, concerns and challenges faced in the implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action by Arab states; (b) obtaining views and recommendations from the Arab region on the 2015 global disaster risk reduction framework (HFA2), (c) identifying main concerns in urban risk management in the region and sharing good practices in this regard, (d) outlining commitments to DRR in Arab cities and identifying related targets to be accomplished by 2017. Discussions were structured around the following sessions outlined below. Details of each session are included in the annexed Agenda of the Conference.

- Plenary Session 1: Regional Progress in Disaster Risk Reduction and the Implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)
- Plenary Session 2: Developing a Global Disaster Risk Reduction Framework in 2015
"HFA2": *Emerging Issue, Institutional Mechanism and Governance*
- Plenary Session 3: Developing a Global Disaster Risk Reduction Framework in 2015
"HFA2": *Climate Change and Local Resilience*
- Plenary Session 4: Developing a Global Disaster Risk Reduction Framework in 2015
"HFA2": *Disaster Risk Reduction and Development Planning*
- Plenary Session 5: Challenges and Opportunities for DRR in the Region: (Reporting back from Working Groups)
- Plenary Session 6: Urban Risk Reduction in the Arab Region
- Plenary Session 7: Institutional and Legislative Systems for Urban Risk Management in the Region
- Plenary Session 8: World Disaster Reduction Campaign "Making Cities Resilient"
- Plenary Session 9: Good Practices in Urban Risk Reduction
- Plenary Session 10: The Aqaba Declaration on DRR in Cities: (Reporting back from Working Groups)

POST 2015 DISASTER RISK REDUCTION FRAMEWORK (HFA2)

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), the global blueprint for building more resilient communities and nations, is approaching the end of its ten-year timeframe (2005-2015). International trend statistics reveal that despite significant efforts to reduce disaster risk more needs to be done to reduce present and future losses due to the adverse effect of natural hazards. While progress is being made in reducing accumulated risk of disasters at national and local level through the HFA implementation, all too often new developments continue to create vulnerability and greater risk from natural hazards. Net total disaster risk is therefore continuing to increase in both developed and developing countries. Continuing population

growth, rapid urbanization and climate change will make risk reduction even more challenging in the future.

To reverse the current risk trend and reenergize commitment and effort to build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters, the Member States of the United Nations requested UNISDR to facilitate development of a Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction through United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/199. The Arab Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction provided the forum for the first regional consultation on the post-2015 Framework for DRR (HFA2). The consultations engaged national and local governments representing Arab States at the Conference as well as regional and international organizations, civil society and private sector representatives.

Regional review of progress in disaster risk reduction and the implementation of HFA was presented and discussed by participants to set the stage for the HFA2 discussions that followed. Three main panels were organized focusing on substantial aspects for resilience building as identified in the 2010 Hyogo Framework for Action Mid-term Review and key findings of the 2009 and 2011 Global Assessment Reports on DRR. These panels discussed (a) Process, Emerging Issues and Governance, (b) Climate and Local Resilience, and (c) Disaster Risk Reduction and Development Planning. The Panel discussions were followed by structured working groups' debates around the following key issues:

- (1) Institutional Mechanisms, Governance and Accountability;
- (2) Climate Resilience;
- (3) DRR at Local Level;
- (4) Economics of DRR and Investment;
- (5) Integrating DRR into Development Planning.

Participants discussed various issues related to the implementation of priorities outlined in the HFA and acknowledged progress made on DRR in the region as well as gaps to be addressed. These issues and concerns are summarized below in the section on "Risk Drivers". Adopting a forward looking approach, Arab countries reiterated their commitment to implement HFA and to support the development of HFA2 by 2015. Participants underlined that the HFA2 should be a continuation of HFA (2005-2015) and that it should build on current achievements. They looked forward to ensuring that HFA2 move beyond recommendations to actual implementation of comprehensive DRR efforts. Delegations requested that special attention on DRR challenges to be given to the Palestinian State taking into consideration that in addition to the risks of natural disasters, Palestine has to deal with major political challenges on a daily basis.

The Conference endorsed the following as recommendations for consideration in the development of HFA2. A more detailed set of recommendations from the conference is provided in the concluding section of this report.

- Assessing progress and gaps in the implementation of current HFA and build upon it/strengthen for HFA2.
- Accelerating progress on DRR and bringing all Arab countries up to speed to address “currently differentiated levels” of achievements.
- Improved governance and accountability mechanisms of DRR, to include strong engagement of all key ministries including finance, planning and other key sectors, prioritizing DRR at highest level of government, embedding transparent monitoring and reporting. This should be supported by a strong national coordination mechanism that includes all stakeholders).
- Establishing national risk financing strategies with (a) DRR allocated budget nationally and locally,(b) promote financing mechanisms and consider innovative approaches such as Islamic Cooperative Insurance, tax restructure, private sector incentives, etc..
- Promoting decentralization and strengthening local capacities.
- Promoting engagement of civil society, youth and the private sector as key stakeholders.(Youth population in Arab states is an opportunity to promote creative solutions and build strong awareness).
- Ensure stronger linkages to sustainable development in national development planning and budgeting.
- Advocate for DRR to be strongly reflected in post-2015 international development agenda “MDGs/SDGs”.
- Promote Climate Resilience with focus on drought and water challenges.
- Strengthening Infrastructure (to mitigate flash floods and seismic risk).
- Strengthen urban risk management and promote resilient cities (Ensure that this effort is cross cutting, supported by legislation and regulatory mechanisms, e.g. building codes, land-use planning).
- Strengthening engagement of academia and science in support of DRR actions (applied research).
- Need a STRONG HFA2 backed by a strong political commitment and agreement.
- While, recognizing that current HFA offers a comprehensive platform for action, the Arab region reiterates that HFA2 should be strengthened to improve governance and accountability, and that it be supported by needed resources and capacities, knowledge and awareness.

The main issues and recommendations of this consultation are available on the Conference website http://www.preventionweb.net/files/31093_arabconferenceclosingession.pdf and will be presented to the 4th session of the Global Platform on DRR to be held in Geneva in May 2013. Additionally, the recommendations are incorporated into the Conclusions section of this report.

AQABA DECLARATION ON DRR IN ARAB CITIES

A key achievement of the conference was the adoption of the “Aqaba Declaration on DRR in Arab Cities”. The Declaration sets goals, targets and indicators for reducing disaster risks in Arab Cities by 2017. It demonstrates the commitment of the participating city authorities to improve their capacities for disaster risk management as well as provides the basis for advocacy to local and national governments in the Arab region to enhance and accelerate their actions on disaster risk management.

Prior to the conference, a copy of the draft of the Arab declaration on disaster risk reduction in cities was provided to all registered participants who provided their views. Feedback was incorporated into the final draft version that was shared during the conference and discussed extensively through breakout sessions for participants' endorsement and ownership. The declaration was presented in the closing session and adopted by all delegates present.

The full revised and adopted version of the Aqaba Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Arab Cities is available here:

English: http://www.preventionweb.net/files/31093_aqabadeclarationenglishfinaldraft.pdf

Arabic: http://www.preventionweb.net/files/31093_aqabadeclarationarabicfinaldraft.pdf

French: http://www.preventionweb.net/files/31093_aqabadeclarationfrenchfinaldraft.pdf

RISK DRIVERS IN THE ARAB STATES

The Conference presented and discussed globally evolving issues of concern with regard to disaster risk reduction in order to understand their implications on the Arab region as well as how best to address them regionally and nationally in the context of Arab regions' priorities and challenges. (Please see Agenda in Annex for details)

The following is a summary of the risk drivers that were identified by panelists and participants during the course of the 3-day conference. These risk drivers are grouped under the following four key areas: (1) Governance of DRR; (2) Climate Change and DRR; (3) Urbanization and unchecked urban expansion; (4) DRR Finances:

GOVERNANCE OF DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

- In many Arab countries institutional gaps and challenges exist leading to impediments in DRR planning and implementation. These challenges include:
 - o Lack of technical skills; expertise; and human, financial, logistical capacity to plan and implement DRR.
 - o Weak institutional framework for emergency response and preparedness for response (emergency drills, lifesaving equipment, etc).
 - o Weak institutional structures for enforcing policies, laws and regulations.
 - o Highly-centralized government modalities that undermine local authority efficiency, obstruct local participation in decision making processes, and weaken relationships between citizens and local government.
 - o Lack of data on vulnerabilities, few comprehensive maps, and inconsistent information across agencies and sectors.
 - o Absence of a proper and comprehensive framework for monitoring and evaluation.
 - o Weak coordination regional/national, national/national, national/local.
- The lack of a policy framework for DRR in the Arab countries, coupled with lack of enforcement of risk management regulations in most of the countries does significantly raise the risks of disasters.

- Weak and limited number of comprehensive mitigation and response programs.
- Weak accountability and transparency at all levels. (Some delegates highlighted the challenge that accountability needs to be directly tied to resources available for DRR. If resources are minimal and infrastructure is not available, the damage of disaster can be huge and the people in charge cannot be accountable if they were not empowered by their governments due to weak political will and lack of financial resources).

CLIMATE CHANGE AND DRR

- Many participants recognized that disaster risk is increasingly driven by climate change due to increased frequency and severity of hydro-meteorological incidents. The Arab region also faces negative impacts from climate change manifested in droughts, desertification, flash flooding, and storms leading also to food insecurity. Arab cities and villages are expected to be increasingly exposed to coastal erosion, sea level rise, storms and flash flooding among other climate related risks.
- Climate change will affect most of the 340 million people in the Arab region, but it is particularly challenging for the 100 million poor and vulnerable, noting that the region has access to only 1% of the global fresh water resources.
- Major challenges facing the Arab region include water scarcity and rapid urbanization, and population growth which are exacerbated by risks associated with Climate Change (CC). These challenges coupled with weak political commitment and inadequate capacity to implement DRR, pose a serious challenge to the region.
- The Arab Region is experiencing an increasing number of natural disasters likely due to climate change. This trend is expected to increase in the future. CC is expected to exacerbate droughts in North Africa further straining limited water resources, increasing food insecurity and the vulnerability of communities which increases the complexity of urban risks. Another growing concern is the increased potential danger of conflicts over water and other resources in the future.

URBANIZATION AND UNCHECKED URBAN EXPANSION

- The Arab region is one of the most urbanized regions in the world and the trend is increasing. The situation is compounded by a number of factors including:
 - o Some Arab countries have mega urban centers that are burdened with extreme poverty, informal settlements and slums that lack sanitation services, and unplanned expansion.
 - o Many settlements are in high risk zones and are vulnerable to losses from flooding, earthquakes, and landslides.
 - o There are challenges in urban planning, housing and infrastructure in cities that result in shortages of affordable housing and poor quality of building construction.
 - o There is a lack of needed building codes and/or their enforcement to ensure disaster resilient construction.

- An increasingly younger population with high unemployment rates among the youth.

DRR FINANCES

- A main challenge in this area is the lack of dedicated and available funds for DRR. Governments in the region are suffering from tight budget constraints and the financial situation of low income countries is especially tight. Many countries are suffering mounting debt concerns and public investment in DRR is limited.
- There is limited engagement of civil society groups, local communities and the private sector in the development of DRR strategies and plans from the early stages, which consequently limits the resources base for DRR.
- There are evident disparities across the Arab region. While the oil rich countries have the financial resources to invest in DRR initiatives, the developing and financially challenged countries are very vulnerable to disasters due to poorly built housing and underinvestment in DRR infrastructures.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DRR IN THE ARAB REGION AND FOR CONSIDERATION IN HFA2 – POST 2015

The First Arab Conference for DRR acknowledged that disasters inflict dire human and economic losses that slow down development and its' effects on countries and communities is harsh and sometime difficult to recover from. Consequently, it is critical that governments, communities, businesses and people across the Arab region, start to view DRR initiatives as an investment and not as a cost. Once this shift happens, implementing effective DRR programs, and increasing community resilience, will be much easier and more effective.

Nonetheless, the Arab region has in the past few years achieved major strides in DRR as was demonstrated through the various case studies presented by the participants of different Arab countries. Valuable contributions to understanding, mitigating and managing risk were highlighted by the scientific and academic institutions in the region. The role of civil society and civic engagement has been highlighted as an asset to build upon considering the young population of the region. Many success stories were shared and participants look ahead to more active DRR initiatives in the region.

The Conference facilitated the development of an Arab position for the 4th Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction to inform the consultation process on HFA2 (Annex 2). In addition, participants adopted the “Aqaba Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Arab Cities” by consensus and called for the 21st of March (the closing day of the conference) to be declared as the Arab Day for Disaster Risk Reduction. It was also agreed to hold the 2nd Arab Conference for DRR in 2014. Proceedings of the 2014 Arab conference will contribute to the development of HFA2 and provide concrete input to the 2015 World DRR Conference to be held in Japan.

During the course of the three-day conference, several solutions, messages and recommendations were proposed by participants for consideration in HFA2 as well as for undertaking broader DRR actions regionally, nationally and locally. The general recommendations are outlined below and are informed by the risk drivers identified above:

- It is critical that governments, communities, businesses and people across the Arab region, start to view DRR initiatives as an investment and not as a cost, which will increase community resilience.
- DRR is a core development issue and enabler of development and should be viewed as such and implemented at the regional, national, and local level.
- There is a need to assess risks and develop appropriate programs to reduce these risks. Important areas of focus, include urban planning, development of suitable construction methodology, building on knowledge and applied research and strengthening regional cooperation and partnerships to strengthen resilience of cities and countries.
- It is necessary to equip governments with the information and knowledge base to identify and assess major risks and design a proper policy framework and DRR plans. These efforts should include: risk assessment, hazard mapping, disaster loss and vulnerability assessment, land use mapping and planning. Furthermore, risk information needs to be shared with the public via appropriate dissemination and education to increase effectiveness of government policies.
- Develop comprehensive urban development plans as part of a regional or national plan that incorporates climate change adaptation, proper urban planning and enforcement of construction codes.
- Disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and sustainable development goals at a global level have to be integrated into a comprehensive framework that is flexible, forward looking and able to address emerging risks. This integrated framework will close the gap between the various initiatives and streamline efforts.
- It is important to build on the traditional knowledge and skills that was developed to maintain and conserve historic environments and landscapes, as this can reduce disaster risk factors and strengthen the resilience of urban and rural communities. To this end, it is critical to mainstream and integrate heritage concerns into national and local disaster risk reduction policies and plans.

GOVERNANCE OF DRR:

- A critical component for success is setting up the needed institutional framework by identifying or establishing an institution, agency or committee mandated with the responsibility to oversee DRR, and providing it with the needed resources and authority to carry out its responsibilities.
- Build the internal capacities of all the national and local institutions tasked with planning, managing or implementing DRR. Training and capacity building must be at all levels and in all institutions involved.
- DRR related training and capacity building should cover all managerial and technical skills.
- Construction of an information and knowledge base for DRR is important.
- Coordination between the various response teams is important, thus relevant protocols need to be established at all levels.
- Laws and instructions are needed to ensure mandatory risk assessments that feed into DRR strategies. Needed policies are a mix of risk prevention and risk mitigation. They should include policies for land use planning, critical infrastructure protection, response plans, risk transfer, as well as risk retaining (buying insurance, issuing bonds, establishing reserve and contingency credit contracts).
- Planning and responding to DRR should be a comprehensive approach that includes all the necessary stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector, civil society groups as well as local communities. Different recommendations centered around this:
 - o Identify all stakeholders and relevant institutions (governmental, civil society, and local groups) to determine and evaluate disaster risk.
 - o Collaboratively develop and initiate early response systems.
 - o Agree on the roles and responsibilities, and develop coordination plans.
 - o Empower institutions to carry out their role supported by an appropriate policy framework and financial resources.
 - o Decentralization and transfer of responsibilities to local authorities and with local budgets to support implementation.
- Develop DRR response plans that are clear, realistic, and implementable and that set accountability measures at all levels for all involved institutions.
- Inform and equip the public with the needed knowledge to respond proactively.
- The private sector, especially the insurance and construction sectors, need to be integrated into the process and mobilized for cooperation because they have risk management knowledge and capabilities.
- Establish a platform to engage the young generation and take advantage of the the “Arab Spring” to promote the DRR process by leveraging youth, their energy, creativity, ideas, and support. Ultimately, this may create job opportunities for youth.
- Women are agents of change and should be viewed as such. There is a need to move beyond the perception of placing women in the “vulnerable” category and start actively involving them in the DRR process.
- Strengthen the engagement of academia and science in support of DRR actions particularly through applied research.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND DRR:

- Climate change does not take place in isolation; it is linked to the political and economic context of the region and its countries. Therefore, it is important to plan for adverse effects of climate change with a multi-sectoral developmental approach.
- Integrate climate risk management into strategies for sustainable development.
- Institute long term strategies to address food security and nutrition in the context of climate change risks and the limited water resources in the region.
- Important to continuously assess and make available access to climate data and information at regional, national and city level, where possible.
- Build climate resilience through disaster risk management plans that prioritize most the vulnerable populations and sectors.
- Adopt social protection and safety nets as a risk management mechanism for the most vulnerable people and to strengthen the resilience of livelihoods.
- Engage local governments, Mayors and municipal councils in building resilience to climate change at local level through improved city infrastructure and community awareness.

URBANIZATION AND UNCHECKED URBAN EXPANSION

- Ensuring that cities, and housing infrastructure are more resilient is a vital government measure to mitigate economic and human loss. This is particularly important for critical infrastructure such as dams, water plants, power plants, and critical buildings including hospitals and schools.
- A useful preventive tool would be to develop and enforce appropriate construction codes plus limiting housing and office locations in hazard prone areas. Such regulations are less costly measures that can be adopted.
- Ensuring that buildings constructed are designed and built in a manner that withstands the main disasters that the city is exposed to. This includes:
 - o Developing appropriate building construction codes particularly for cities susceptible to earthquakes and floods;
 - o Training and building the capacity of engineers in the required fields;
 - o Educating the public and building a culture of prevention;
 - o Enforcing codes and regulations by regular checking and auditing.

DRR FINANCES

- DRR is much more cost effective than financing recovery, response and reconstruction after disaster. Governments need to view it as an investment rather than a cost.
- To mitigate the harsh effects of disasters, comprehensive risk financing strategies need to be developed and governments need to invest more in basic social services.
- It is important to undertake risk assessment and to link it to historical losses to facilitate development of appropriate reduction, mitigation and response actions. Develop Risk Financing Strategies informed by these assessments.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1:CONFERENCE AGENDA

Day 1 : Tuesday 19 March 2013- Al Murjan Hall <i>Registration starts at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday morning (with tea & coffee provided)</i>	
10:30 – 11:30	Official Opening of the Conference Video Message from the United Nations Secretary-General <i>Opening remarks by:</i> H.E. Dr. Kamel Mahadin, Chief Commissioner of Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority H.E. Margareta Wahlström, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction H.E. Michael Winzap, Ambassador of Switzerland in Jordan H.E. Jordan Ryan, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP H.E. Ambassador Shahira Wahbi, Representative of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States H.E. Dr Naif Shalhoub, Representative of the Chairman of the Executive Bureau for the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment HRH Princess Sumaya bint El Hassan, President of the Royal Scientific Society
11:30 – 12:00	<i>All Participants meet for a group PHOTO by Main Entrance of the Conference Hall</i> <i>Followed by Coffee / Tea</i>
11:45 – 12:15	Press Conference (Closed)
12:15 – 13:30	Regional Progress in Disaster Risk reduction and the Implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) <i>Chair: Ms Shahira Wahbi, Chief of Sustainable Development and International Cooperation, the Economic Sector League of Arab States</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Arab Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2020, Shahira Wahbi, League of Arab States – Introducing the draft Framework Plan of Action on the Implementation of the Arab

	<p>Strategy for DRR, Abdelqader AbuAwad, Disaster Risk Management Advisor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Regional progress in the implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action, Dr Fadi Hamdan, Disaster Risk Management Advisor – National Experience in HFA implementation, Ahmad Hussain, Head of the Executive Bureau, National Committee for Disasters, Bahrain. – Q & A
13:30 – 14:30	<i>Lunch Break - Palm Court Restaurant on the Ground Floor</i>
14:30 – 16:00	<p>Developing a Global Disaster Risk Reduction Framework in 2015 “HFA2”</p> <p><u>Emerging Issue, Institutional Mechanisms and Governance</u></p> <p><i>Chair: Margareta Wahlström, SRSG for Disaster Risk Reduction</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Developing a new global framework for disaster risk reduction by 2015, the process and mechanism to arrive at a HFA2 framework and key emerging issues from global and regional consultations, Margareta Wahlström, SRSG, UNISDR – Institutional mechanisms, governance, accountability, Fatma Al-Mallah, <i>member of the Global High Level Advisory Group on HFA2 and DRR Advisor</i> – Lebanon experience on HFA implementation and expectations from HFA2, Nathalie Zaarour, Project Manager, Disaster Risk Reduction Unit, Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Lebanon – Algeria national consultation on HFA2 and recommendations, Hichem Imouche, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Kheira Bradai, General Directorate for Civil Protection, Ministry of Interior, Algeria – Q & A
16:00 – 16:30	<i>Tea / Coffee Break</i>
16:30 – 18:00	<p>Developing a Global Disaster Risk Reduction Framework in 2015 “HFA2” <i>cont’d</i></p> <p><u>Climate Change and Local Resilience</u></p> <p><i>Chair: Carlo Scaramella, Deputy Regional Director for Middle East and Central Asia, World Food Programme (WFP)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Climate Risk in the Arab Region, Dr Wadid Erian, Head of Land Resource Studies Program and Head of Remote Sensing and GIS Unit, The Arab Center for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), League of Arab States – The Arab Plan of Action on Climate Change, Shahira Wahbi, League of Arab States – Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience for Food Security, Carlo Scaramella, WFP – Local communities resilience in a changing climate, Idoumou Ely Salem Tikii, Mayor of Fasala, Mauritania – Q & A

Day 2 : Wednesday 20 March 2013 – Al Murjan Hall	
08:30 – 09:00	<p>Side Event (Al Salam Room):</p> <p>Presentation of a Case Study on Urban Resilience in Palestine (WFP / FAO)</p> <p>Disaster Risk Management, Vulnerability and Scarcity Issues,</p> <p>Chair: Pablo Recalde, WFP Country Representative for Palestine</p>
9:00 – 10:30	<p>Developing a Global Disaster Risk Reduction Framework in 2015 “HFA2” <i>cont’d</i></p> <p><u>Disaster Risk Reduction and Development Planning</u></p> <p>Chair: Elizabeth Longworth, Director, UNISDR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Disaster Losses and Economic Consequences, Kazuko ISHIGAKI, Risk Knowledge Section, UNISDR – Disaster risk management in development planning and the post-2015 Development Agenda, Jo Schauer, Team Leader, DRR and Recovery, UNDP – Japan experience on disaster risk reduction as development investment, envisioning HFA2 and Post-2015 Development Agenda, Kimio Takeya, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) – Q & A
10:30 – 11:00	Tea / Coffee Break
11:00 – 12:15	<p>Discussion on challenges and opportunities for DRR in the region in light of progress made so far and expectations from post-HFA process</p> <p>Introduction of the Exercise in Main Plenary – Luna Abu-Swaireh, UNISDR</p> <p>Break up in 5 working groups for governments representatives as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Institutional Mechanisms, Governance and Accountability</i> 2. <i>Climate Resilience</i> 3. <i>DRR at Local Level</i> 4. <i>Economics of DRR and Investment</i> 5. <i>Integrating DRR into Development Planning</i>
11:30 – 12:15 <i>Parallel Session</i>	<p>Side Event (Al Murjan main plenary Hall)</p> <p>Briefing for the UN agencies and international partners on The United Nations Plan of Action for Disaster Risk Reduction, Elizabeth Longworth, UNISDR Director</p>
12:15 – 13:30	<p>Recommendations from Working Groups on Arab Position for HFA2</p> <p>Co-Chaired: Amjad Abbashar, Head of Arab States Office, UNISDR and Fatma Al Mallah, HFA2 Advisor</p> <p>Reporting back to plenary by working groups and framing key recommendations for HFA2 and disaster risk reduction post 2015</p>

13:30– 14:30	<i>Lunch Break - Palm Court Restaurant on the Ground Floor</i>
14:30 – 16:00	<p>Urban Risk Reduction in the Arab Region</p> <p>Introduction to theme objectives and expected outcome, Zubair Murshed, UNDP</p> <p><u>Urbanization and Urban Risks in the Arab Region</u></p> <p>Chair: Ansa Masaud, Human Settlement Officer, UN-HABITAT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Katja Schaefer, Human Settlement Officer, UN-HABITAT – Professor Dr. Djillali Benouar, Director of the Built Environment Research Laboratory, University of Science and Technology Houari Boumediene, Algeria – Professor Dr. Jalal Al Dabeek, Director, Urban Planning and Disaster Risk Reduction Center at An Najah National University, Palestine – Q&A
16:00 – 16:30	<i>Tea / Coffee Break</i>
16:30 – 18:00	<p>Institutional and Legislative systems for urban risk management in the region</p> <p><i>Chair: Dr. Hamad Babiker, Under-Secretary Ministry of Environment and Local Administration, Sudan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Institutional and legislative systems for Urban Risk Management, study on the cities of Beirut, Djibouti and Aqaba, Dr Fadi Hamdan, Disaster Risk Management Advisor – Disaster Risk Reduction in Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), Engineer Khalid Abu-Aisheh, Director of Urban Development and Planning – Q & A
Day 3 : Thursday 21 March 2013 – Al Murjan Hall	
08:30 – 09:00	<p><i>Side Event (Al Salam Room):</i></p> <p>Presentation of a Case Study on Flood Hazard Mapping in Lebanon</p> <p>Dr Chadi Abdallah and Dr Talal Darwish, The National Center for Scientific Research, Lebanon</p>
09:00 – 09:45	<p>World Disaster Reduction Campaign “Making Cities Resilient”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Introduction on the Campaign on Making Cities Resilient and the Ten Essentials to Reduce Risk in Cities , Luna Abu-Swaireh, Regional Office for Arab States, UNISDR – Local Government Self-Assessment as experienced by the City of Saida, Lebanon, Mustafa Hijazi, Municipal Council Member, Lebanon – Q & A
9:45 – 11:00	<p>Good Practices in Urban Risk Reduction</p> <p><i>Chair: Beat Von Däniken, Regional Director, Swiss Development Cooperation Agency (SDC) Jordan</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Safer Construction Manual, Eng. Mohammad Abu Afeefee, Jordan Engineers Association

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Urban Search and Rescue Jordan, Col. Marwan Bader, Jordan Civil Defense – Experience of Petra in reducing risk and protecting cultural heritage, Eng. Hussein Alhassanat, Director of Strategic Planning and Research, Head of Disaster Risk Reduction Unit, Petra Development & Tourism Region Authority – Voluntary Relief Workers Scheme in Fès, Mohammed Khalfi, Chief Division of Urban Planning and Environment, Fès-Boulemane, Morocco – Q & A
11:00 – 11:15	<i>Tea / Coffee Break</i>
11:15 – 12:30	<p>Good Practices in Urban Risk Reduction cont'd</p> <p><i>Chair: Khalil Hajal, Director of Municipalities and Local Governance, Ministry of Interior, Lebanon</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Experience of Chile in earthquake preparedness, Andrés Ibaceta, Head of Civil Protection of Los Lagos, National Office for Emergencies, Chile – Experience of Yemen in flash floods protection, Abdallah Mutaafi, Executive Director of the Reconstruction Fund for Hadramout and Al-Mahara – Reducing urban risk in the City of Nablus, Architect Sameh Assi, City Engineer, Nablus Municipality, Palestine – Q & A
12:30 – 13:00	<i>Check out from Hotel Participants departing 21/3</i>
13:00– 14:00	<i>Lunch Break - Palm Court Restaurant on the Ground Floor</i>
14:00 – 15:30	<p>Local Governments committing to Disaster Risk Reduction –</p> <p>The Arab Declaration on DRR in Cities</p> <p>Chair: Jo Scheuer, UNDP</p> <p>(a) Working group discussion on identification of priorities for commitments and finalization of the Local Government Declaration (1 hour with 5 WGs)</p> <p>(b) Finalization and Adoption of the Arab Declaration on Disaster Risk Reduction in Cities</p>
15:30 – 16:00	<i>Tea / Coffee Break</i>
16:00 – 17:30	Closing Session of the 1st Arab Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction