

Syrian Arab Republic

National progress report on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action

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Strategic goals 1

Area 1

The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.

Strategic Goal Statement:

It has been taken into consideration that during the implementation of sustainable development policies on the national level, disaster and environmental risk management policies are being integrated into development plans, through existing different mechanisms in disaster risks reduction.

This will include providing special plans in risks transfer schemes including microfinance and adoption of environmentally safe technologies.

Area 2

The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.

Strategic Goal Statement:

The status of institutions have been reviewed in order to prepare plans to improve these institutions in case of risks, and to strengthen capacities and post disaster-recovery to manage environmental risks that might be faced in the future.

Also capacities have been enhanced at all levels to monitor potential disaster risks and to implement programs on preventive maintenance in order to guarantee dealing with disasters in a suitable and immediate way.

Area 3

The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.

Strategic Goal Statement:

Prepare emergency plans for vital institutions that includes full database of all equipments and the readiness of all equipments and individuals to deal with any disaster risks that might happen, in order to reduce physical and socioeconomic vulnerabilities for the achievement of strategic plan goals.

Priority for action 1

Ensure that disaster risk reduction is a national and a local priority with a strong institutional basis for implementation.

Core indicator 1

National policy and legal framework for disaster risk reduction exists with decentralised responsibilities and capacities at all levels.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

There are different legislative decrees and laws which organize the structures responsible on disasters and define their responsibilities. In addition to all the amendments in part of the laws to suit disaster risks in preparing and mitigating, such as: civil defense law, procedures against marine pollution, necessity of lightning rods in buildings, seismic building codes.

Context & Constraints:

Core indicator 2

Dedicated and adequate resources are available to implement disaster risk reduction plans and activities at all administrative levels

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

There are some administrations that dedicate funds for disaster risks reduction in their day to day business, but there are still some institutions that have not yet started to allocate special funds for disaster risk reduction to be used in day-to-day business.

Context & Constraints:

The context and constraints for implementing disaster risk reduction plans at all administrative levels, are the unavailability of sufficient resources to be used in disaster risks reduction activities on all institutions.

Core indicator 3

Community Participation and decentralisation is ensured through the delegation of authority and resources to local levels

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

The adoption of decentralization at administrative levels is enhanced through the delegation of authority and resources to local levels including disaster risk reduction. The participation of the local community is also promoted through encouraging NGOs in activating its role in development, raising awareness, and volunteer resources.

As an example the Syrian Red Crescent is playing a vital role through community capacity building, and employ its resources in disaster risk reduction, and enhance the role of volunteerism.

Context & Constraints:

The adoption of decentralization is still at its first stage and will take time to be improved, this constraint will lead to the inability in dealing with disaster in each region separately.

This is also the case for the NGOs adopting volunteerism in dealing with disaster.

Core indicator 4

A national multi sectoral platform for disaster risk reduction is functioning.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

There is a national multisectoral platform for disaster risk reduction, on top of this platform is the Higher Council for Civil Defense part of its mission is to define the goals and objectives of the Ministries, Administrations, & Establishments that implement the civil defense plan. Under the council comes both the National Higher Committee for Disaster Management and the Central Command for Civil Defense, their responsibilities are to coordinate and facilitate the interaction between all key parties involved in disaster risk reduction.

These two committees are encouraging and supporting all procedures and initiative to develop disaster risk reduction including cooperation with NGOs to benefit from the provided experiences.

Context & Constraints:

Priority for action 2

Identify, assess and monitor disaster risks and enhance early warning

Core indicator 1

National and local risk assessments based on hazard data and vulnerability information are available and include risk assessments for key sectors.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

Current work is on preparing assessments for national and local risks which will be feasible to decision makers and society to understand all risks that might occur, and consider the social, economical and environmental weak points which increase risk volumes.

This is based on analytical databases and maps for assessing risks, that will assist communities to take effective action according to type of risks and available capabilities. In addition to build more capacities to reduce the risks as possible and to respond in the best way.

Context & Constraints:

The constraints are the insufficient financial resources and the need to develop experiences in this field.

Core indicator 2

Systems are in place to monitor, archive and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

The availability of systems to monitor and disseminate data on key hazards and vulnerabilities are

varied, there are multi hazard mapping system which includes:

1. Digital maps for Epidemics: these maps include data about common diseases, their location, and the number of infections in each region. These maps are frequently modernized in order to know the increase or decreased of infections depending on prevention.
2. Digital maps for seismic events: these maps include data about different seismic events in all regions, and its strength, this will highlight the most critical places.
3. Data and Digital maps for forest fires: these maps include locations, frequency of wildfires, and estimating the vulnerable locations.
4. Data on Informal settlements: includes locations, number of inhabitants, probable risks that might occur because of natural disasters.

Context & Constraints:

Constraints include: insufficient financial resources which helps in developing these systems in order to cover all risks in all regions, in addition to the need to capacity building.

Core indicator 3

Early warning systems are in place for all major hazards, with outreach to communities.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

There aren't early warning systems for all hazards, but if we take the elements of early warning individually (risk knowledge, monitoring and warning services, dissemination and communication, and response capabilities) we can consider that some of them are available in some regions such as monitoring services for forests where there are many centers for monitoring wild fires 24 hrs. For the element of response capabilities, there are some means which are available to deal with disasters such as alternative routes in forests for facilitating the mission of fire fighters during wildfires.

Another example on early warning systems is the earthquake early warning systems (GPS systems) placed near active faults that give seismic data on the location, depth, and strength of the earthquake if it occurs.

Context & Constraints:

Constraints are the insufficient financial resources according to the high costs of these systems.

Core indicator 4

National and local risk assessments take account of regional / trans boundary risks, with a view to regional cooperation on risk reduction.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

The government is attempting to strengthen the regional and international cooperation in regard to risks reduction through holding cooperation agreements in the field of exchanging experiences and information and providing aids during disasters. In this context Syria has cooperation agreements with Jordan, Tunisia, Malta and Switzerland. In addition to the mentioned agreements there is a direct cooperation with Turkey in the field of forest fires including direct contact in order to adopt the immediate procedures for firefighting besides providing technical equipments.

Context & Constraints:

The means of communications and customs procedures are factors that constraint the implementation of monitoring regional and trans-boundaries risks.

Priority for action 3

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

Core indicator 1

Relevant information on disasters is available and accessible at all levels, to all stakeholders (through networks, development of information sharing systems etc)

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

This issue hasn't been considered during the last decade, the collapse of Zeyzoun Dam in 2002 highlighted the importance of knowledge in reducing disaster risks, although 18 persons collapsed during the disaster but the knowledge of one of the residents who warned the people from a high place to escape after he assessed the imminent collapse of the dam because of the leakage of water from its sides, has helped many residents of the village to survive.

This in turn emphasized the importance of spreading knowledge on disaster reasons and the way of dealing with it in order to reduce the risks and save lives.

Context & Constraints:

The constraints are the availability of comprehensive vision on the definitions of risks and how to deal with it in all institutions and the continuation to introduce awareness culture against different risks and the certainty of the importance of this culture to all society members beside shortage of experience in the field of raising awareness.

Core indicator 2

School curricula , education material and relevant trainings include disaster risk reduction and recovery concepts and practices.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

The Ministry of Education is currently modernizing the curriculums for all levels, this has created a good opportunity to incorporate disaster risk related issues into curricula in an easy way which suits the age and levels of students. The method of teaching disaster risk reduction include three stages: preparation, dealing, and recovery.

Context & Constraints:

The constraints are in transferring the proper knowledge effectively and sufficiently, and to qualify instructors to teach disaster risks related issues theoretically and practically.

All these require qualified humanitarian teams to implement training courses to instructors in this field.

Core indicator 3

Research methods and tools for multi-risk assessments and cost benefit analysis are developed and strengthened.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

Context & Constraints:

The constraints are the non existence of specialized institutions for research and tools for multi risk assessment and cost benefit analysis, whereby some academic institutions play a modest role in this field.

Core indicator 4

Countrywide public awareness strategy exists to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience, with outreach to urban and rural communities.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

There is no national public awareness strategy to stimulate a culture of disaster resilience which includes urban and rural communities and the only field that is currently undergoing is incorporating disaster risk related issues into curricula in order to guarantee publicizing awareness culture against disaster for all generations.

Context & Constraints:

Priority for action 4

Reduce the underlying risk factors

Core indicator 1

Disaster risk reduction is an integral objective of environment related policies and plans, including for land use natural resource management and adaptation to climate change.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

Context & Constraints:

Core indicator 2

Social development policies and plans are being implemented to reduce the vulnerability of populations

most at risk.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

Context & Constraints:

Core indicator 3

Economic and productive sectorial policies and plans have been implemented to reduce the vulnerability of economic activities

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

Context & Constraints:

Core indicator 4

Planning and management of human settlements incorporate disaster risk reduction elements, including enforcement of building codes.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

The first seismic code was issued in 1995 for designing and executing buildings to prevent earthquakes and reducing its impacts. It is still being developed in order to practically approach a suitable design for earthquake prevention.

Last year the Arabic unified building code was issued from the Arab League to prevent earthquakes, where it will be developed in order to take into consideration the International development.

Context & Constraints:

Core indicator 5

Disaster risk reduction measures are integrated into post disaster recovery and rehabilitation processes

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

Context & Constraints:

Core indicator 6

Procedures are in place to assess the disaster risk impacts of major development projects, especially infrastructure.

Level of Progress achieved:

2: Some progress, but without systematic policy and/ or institutional commitment

Description:

Recently Ministry of Local Administration & Environment started in assessing the disaster risks impacts on major development projects including infrastructure and the way to respond to disaster in these institutions through providing emergency plans for each institution. Besides strengthening buildings and institutions that require maintenance.

Context & Constraints:

Priority for action 5

Strengthen disaster preparedness for effective response at all levels

Core indicator 1

Strong policy, technical and institutional capacities and mechanisms for disaster risk management, with a disaster risk reduction perspective are in place.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

Context & Constraints:

Core indicator 2

Disaster preparedness plans and contingency plans are in place at all administrative levels, and regular training drills and rehearsals are held to test and develop disaster response programmes.

Level of Progress achieved:

4: Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in key aspects, such as financial resources and/ or operational capacities

Description:

Contingency plans are available for all administrative levels. These plans are linked with database which include all data that might be used to deal with disasters (fire department, hospitals...etc). This data is updated every quarter.

As for the available contingency plans, field training are conducted by using crisis management

techniques listed in contingency plans, these trainings are evaluated in order to locate strength and weakness points.

Context & Constraints:

Core indicator 3

Financial reserves and contingency mechanisms are in place to support effective response and recovery when required.

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

It has been taken into consideration that a budget is allocated in the financial reserves for effective response and recovery to disaster. This include quick assessment of damage and needs, rescue and provide shelters to injured people.

Context & Constraints:

The financial reserves are only allocated for disaster management following a disaster event, not for restoration of critical infrastructure and livelihood.

Core indicator 4

Procedures are in place to exchange relevant information during hazard events and disasters, and to undertake post-event reviews

Level of Progress achieved:

3: Institutional commitment attained, but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial

Description:

It has been taken into consideration the lessons learned from previous disasters, and to stand on the reasons and weak points and the way of exchange relevant information during hazard events and disasters. As an example the lessons learned from Zeyzoun dam collapse.

Context & Constraints:

Drivers of Progress

a) Multi-hazard integrated approach to disaster risk reduction and development

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Do studies/ reports/ atlases on multi-hazard analyses exist in the country/ for the sub region?:

Yes

If yes, are these being applied to development planning/ informing policy?:

No

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

According to the guiding questions above: work is going on preparing reports about the various hazards in the country and focus on geographic maps that include Seismic events and Epidemics and these maps are updated periodically.

These reports will be applied in future development planning.

b) Gender perspectives on risk reduction and recovery adopted and institutionalized

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

Gender perspective is growing in development plans that the government is implementing especially in the projects which are implemented with Non-governmental organizations. There is no clear guidance about giving Gender full attention as relevant to disaster reduction but it has been taking into consideration that women are more exposed to negative impacts of natural & man-made disasters especially in rural areas. As a result guidance to hold training courses is available specially courses to identify and deal with disasters for women. This will lead to publicizing awareness culture towards disaster and dealing with it correctly and spreading it to the new generation through mothers.

c) Capacities for risk reduction and recovery identified and strengthened

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

d) Human security and social equity approaches integrated into disaster risk reduction and recovery activities

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

e) Engagement and partnerships with non-governmental actors; civil society, private sector, amongst others, have been fostered at all levels

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

Here we mention the cooperation between the governmental sector & non- governmental organization as UNDP and the projects which are implemented:

Comprehensive Disaster Reduction Programme (CDRP): which aims to adopt a comprehensive vision for building a national strategy plan to reduce the effects of disasters and to increase the level of awareness in the society.

Sub-regional Facility For Cooperation in Disaster Reduction Among the Arab States project which aims to strengthen regional & national capacities for disaster risks reduction through: Developing a sub-regional platform for knowledge sharing, networking and the development of common approaches to training and capacity building based on good practices, Disseminate the experiences gained in Syria to other participating countries.

Support to the Design of an Improved Crisis Preparedness, Management & Recovery Institutional System in Syria project which aims to design a unified and efficient national crisis management structure and policy framework for preparedness and response.

f) Contextual Drivers of Progress

Levels of Reliance:

Partial/ some reliance: Full acknowledgement of the issue; strategy/ framework for action developed to address it; application still not fully implemented across policy and practice; complete buy in not achieved from key stakeholders.

Description (Please provide evidence of where, how and who):

In this context Seismic code and the procedure taken by the ministry of Education (Directorate of education buildings) by taking into consideration earthquakes resistance, safety exits and various hazards while designing and building new schools, could be mentioned.

In addition to that disasters reduction has become an important part in development plans adopted by the government and have been included in chapter 18 of the 10th five years plan which includes disasters Statistics, previous disasters, number of victims, assessment of the 9th five years plan about disaster management and setting up the future objectives and work plan for developing disaster management in the 10th five years plan to accomplish sustainable development in all parts.

Future outlook

Area 1

The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention, mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction.

Overall Challenges:

Challenges & Constraints in the field of disasters reduction:

- Laws & legislations which organize the work of disasters and coordination mechanisms among them on the local & national levels.
- Lack of public awareness on general safety rules & procedure and the way to deal with disasters.
- Lack of general safety rules in designing building, establishments and infrastructure.

Future Outlook Statement:

Disaster negative affect on human & material loses has a huge impact on national economy therefore we should consider developing disaster reduction mechanism and to fulfill in the future decades the following:

- Obtain a high ability in disaster reduction & mitigation.

- The ability to analyze disasters for future benefits.
- providing all citizens with needed awareness level in case of any disaster occurs and dealing with it correctly before, during and after disaster.

Area 2

The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels, in particular at the community level, that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards.

Overall Challenges:

- Lack of qualified & well trained staffs that contributes to different disaster mitigation.
- Lack in equipments needed for disaster mitigation.
- Weakness of specialized centers in conducting studies & measurements for disasters prediction and the ability to analyze previous disasters for future benefits.

Future Outlook Statement:

Disaster negative affect on human & material loses has a huge impact on national economy therefore we should consider developing disaster reduction mechanism and to fulfill in the future decades the following:

- Obtain a high ability in disaster reduction & mitigation.
- The ability to analyze disasters for future benefits.
- providing all citizens with needed awareness level in case of any disaster occurs and dealing with it correctly before, during and after disaster.

Area 3

The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programmes in the reconstruction of affected communities.

Overall Challenges:

- Lack in accuracy of the available databases of governorates equipment necessary for dealing with disasters.
- Lack of using modern systems & techniques in disasters management and lack of qualified staff to work on these systems.

Future Outlook Statement:

Disaster negative affect on human & material loses has a huge impact on national economy therefore we should consider developing disaster reduction mechanism and to fulfill in the future decades the following:

- Obtain a high ability in disaster reduction & mitigation.
- The ability to analyze disasters for future benefits.
- providing all citizens with needed awareness level in case of any disaster occurs and dealing with it correctly before, during and after disaster.