

Towards a post-2015 framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

BUILDING THE RESILIENCE OF NATIONS AND COMMUNITIES TO DISASTERS



OPENING REMARKS FROM THE FACILITATOR

Critical issues and priorities needed to address urban risks and local governance for disaster resilience - Opening on 22 March 2013

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Welcome to the next online dialogue in this series on the Post 2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction organized by UNISDR. I welcome all your comments and hope we will have a dynamic conversation!

Why do we value your inputs: The results of this online dialogue will inform the next version of the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA), the post-2015 framework for DRR. It will also help us prepare for the 4th Session of the Global Platform held in Geneva from 19-23 May 2013. We hope you can attend this Platform as well.

Context: Cities will be home to nearly three-quarters of the global population by 2050, with the vast majority of urban growth occurring in developing nations in Africa and Asia. As disaster risks and impacts are always experienced locally first, the opinions and experience of local governments and city managers are important markers to guide future national and global development agendas on DRR. Likewise local community institutions such as citizen volunteer groups can be important stakeholders in ensuring mutual accountability and lasting positive change.

Some of the main findings from Post 2015 consultations so far include:

- **Good local governance:** Sustainable urban development practices and effective decentralization of resources to the local level are key to building the resilience of nations, cities and communities. Institutionalizing DRR into city budgets and responsibilities will be of essence. Joining efforts among local governments who face similar risks or share common development objectives can help overcome interconnected problems (river basins, fault-lines, metropolitan areas).
- **Short-term vs. long-term:** Locally elected city councils and Mayors continue to deliver short-term solutions to maintain the support and protection of the communities who elected them to office. At the same time, successful DRR is built over a long-term period. Therefore, one of the recommendations is that the next DRR Framework should be longer term, combining short-term benefits with long-term transformational targets, preferably aiming for the next 20 years (through 2035).
- **Community, bottom-up approach:** Local governments need to engage with community leaders, women's groups, local development players and local businesses, in identifying risks, planning and resilience and risk reduction activities. One element to ensure the sustainability of DRR planning and programs, as well as to integrate climate change adaptation, is to engage with volunteers and various stakeholders, such as fire departments,

health organizations, the private sector, and other community groups. Citizen volunteer groups can be potential source in identifying underlying causes for risks, and help identify most important priorities for their local areas. A conscious approach to engage with such citizen groups would serve as a catalyst for lasting change.

- **National-local, top-down approaches:** National policies and legislation is equally of essence to improve local governance and address urban development standards, risk management frameworks, major infrastructure programmes and budget allocations. At the same time, Mayors and local governments need to have access to more consistent disaster risk information, including national policy decisions that impact local level decision-making, tools and knowledge to build capacity and better educate and prepare their communities about disaster risk.

You might have participated in the recent online survey that preceded this dialogue. More than 1300 respondents highlighted the lack of legal or institutional mechanisms and inadequate technical capacity at the urban and local level as challenges to DRR. In addition, 86% of respondents (the majority from local and city governments) indicated that allocated budgets, if any, are 'not sufficient' for activities planned.

As **solutions** the survey indicated the need to institutionalize disaster risk reduction locally by:

- providing legislative and legal responsibilities to Local and City Governments with adequate resource allocation, and
- conducting local and urban risk assessments as a basis for local development plans and disaster preparedness.

Based on this summary of recommendations so far, I invite you to share your views in any of the fields below, and elaborate as you see fit with specific examples or other areas you consider a priority. The questions for this round of dialogue are:

How do we

- **motivate** Local Government leaders to **invest in DRR and resilience**? Examples welcome
- **encourage national actions** to improve DRR implementation at local level?
- **enhance collaboration** between **citizen groups** and local governments for effective risk reduction?

Thank you very much. We look forward to receiving your inputs.

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