

Background Note
Central Asia Multi-stakeholder meetings on
National Coordinating Mechanisms for Disaster Risk Reduction
(National Platforms)

Organization: Governments of the Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)

In partnership with: OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and other ISDR partners

Venue and timing: Kazakhstan, 24-25 July 2009 - Kyrgyzstan, 27 July 2009
Tajikistan, 30-31 July 2009

Overall Goal

Support the development of multi-stakeholder National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction in Central Asia

Specific Objectives

1. Strengthen existing national coordination mechanisms for Disaster Management to expand their Disaster Risk Reduction focus and activities;
2. Clarify and apply the basic principles of National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction to enhance the work of existing multi-sectoral coordination structures;
3. Expand fields of activities of the existing National Platform in line with the Hyogo Framework for Action.

Background

Strong multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral national coordinating mechanisms (National Platforms) have been identified in the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA) as crucial elements to effectively and efficiently advance on Disaster risk reduction and build the resilience of nations and communities to disasters. The implementation of the HFA in Central Asian countries would be more targeted, efficient and expedient with functioning National Platforms for disaster risk reduction, i.e. a nationally owned and nationally led forums or committees for advocacy, coordination, analysis and advice on Disaster risk reduction with involvement of multiple government and non-government stakeholders from various sectors.

The efficiency of the National Platforms as such would be determined by the qualities or features outlined above. Each of the outlined aspects comprises a lot, and if broken down would translate in a spectre of skills, knowledge, and abilities.

The UNISDR office in Central Asia has been asked to expand its technical assistance to the Governments of Central Asia states. The priority in assistance was set on the support and establishment of multi-stakeholder National Platforms for Disaster risk reduction.

Planned National Platforms would be built on existing Commissions or similar mechanisms that the four countries of Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan have already established as the national coordination mechanisms for disaster management; these are defined by national legislations as State or Inter-Agency Commission for Emergency Situations. These entities consist of a range of state institutions, ministries and agencies, and sometimes involve civil society and academia.

Traditionally, these commissions are more response-oriented, reacting to emergencies as they happen, and preparing for the recurring seasonal hazards. The mobilization of resources and reserves – both internal and external aid – is a time and resource consuming process; the delivery of humanitarian aid and assistance in recovery are often insufficient and delayed.

Disaster risk reduction is a quite new approach for these entities. However, Central Asian Governments have expressed their interest to refocus their disaster management approach by expanding risk reduction activities (prevention, preparedness, mitigation). This includes the

transformation of existing national coordinating mechanisms into full-fledged multi-stakeholder National Platform for Disaster risk reduction as a more formal and more inclusive tool for coordination and advice. The involvement of a broader spectrum of stakeholders, in particular civil society, has been identified as critical to mobilize all existing potential for Disaster risk reduction.

With the notable exception of Kazakhstan which formally reported on the establishment of its National Platform to the UNISDR secretariat in January 2008 – these coordination mechanisms in the three countries would need to be substantially amended, as they do not fully meet basic requirements set forth in the ISDR Guidelines for National Platforms¹, which have been developed and adopted in a joint effort by national governments, UNISDR and UNDP.

The proposed activity is aiming at addressing some of the issues, by way of identifying and focusing the attention of the participants to specific needs and areas of improvement in the composition and operational practices of the national coordination mechanisms.

The proposed activity consists of two-day workshops with representatives of the national coordination mechanisms and potential other DRR stakeholders, who might join them. The activity will aim at identifying the areas and aspects to be aligned to better comply with ISDR recommendations for National Platforms.

Expected outcomes

It is expected that by the end of the workshops participants will have

1. Agreed on a list of areas for consecutive revision and functional adjustments of existing national coordinating mechanisms to pave the way for the development of fully-fledged National Platforms, in particular a strengthened mandate of its secretariat and mode of operation
2. Identified priority action for Disaster risk reduction in the respective countries and included those in a draft work plan for the existing/ future National Platform
3. Devised working groups of the incipient National Platforms with designated responsibility to provide follow up to multi-stakeholder meetings in their respective area to further elaborate a work plan. These plans will be reported back at a future meeting for which time will be agreed upon.

Proposed programme topics

- Review the ISDR Guidelines for National Platforms and the basic provisions of the Hyogo Framework for Action
- Review and expand the composition of national coordination mechanisms
- Review the mandate and operational capacities of the HFA coordinator/ focal point institution
- Improve capacity and mechanisms for advocacy on DRR and the HFA in respective sectors and among member agencies of prospective National Platform (focal points of member organizations). This includes a better implication and activities within the framework of the World Disaster Reduction Campaigns (e.g. Safe Hospitals campaign in 2008/2009 and Urban Risk reduction in 2010/2011)
- Enhance the importance and quality of data collection and analysis by the HFA coordinator; strengthening of the mechanism of reporting on implementation of HFA
- Create the consultative and steering capacity for Disaster risk reduction in the prospective National Platform, with a relevant mandate
- Improve the ability to work with international partners
- Present the Global Assessment Report

The activity is part of the DIPECHO V project (Strengthening capacities for disaster risk reduction and the implementation of Hyogo Framework for Action in Central Asia.), implemented in Central Asia by the UNISDR sub-regional office in Dushanbe, Tajikistan; it is supported by the UNDP Disaster Risk Management Programme in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

¹ Please access the document through the following website:
<http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/publications/v.php?id=601&pid:184>