



**Duryog Nivaran**  
South Asian Network for Disaster  
Risk Reduction

## **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction: A Rejoinder by Duryog Nivaran June 5, 2007 Geneva**

It is earnestly recognized that Global Platform for DDR is a step forward in galvanizing the skills, resources, insights and knowledge towards global risk reduction. Taking this opportunity Duryog Nivaran intends to highlight following three critical points which need to be prioritized in policy debates and practical options with special reference to disaster risk reduction in South Asian context.

1. **Disaster-Development Linkages** – From IDNDR to the WCDR the relationship between disasters and development patterns is discussed, debated and agreed upon at conceptual level. Satisfactory progress on mainstreaming DRR was presented by the countries at the Global Platform. However, considerable gaps in disaster development linkages were not explicitly mentioned. Duryog Nivaran (DN) believes that development can hardly be a neutral phenomenon in vulnerability-stricken areas, countries and communities. The development, in this context, either increases the vulnerability or decreases it. Therefore it is urged that development choices by the national governments needs to be revisited in the context of disasters and vulnerability. Informed by its experience in the region, DN recommends two-pronged strategy in putting the DRR in mainstream development context: a) national governments mobilize their respective planning bodies at national, state, provincial, district, division and further lower level to integrate disaster risk reduction in the development project designing and implementation; and b) International Financing Institutions (IFIs) ensure through their own financing policies, that mega development projects are not financed and encouraged without putting in place the disaster risk and vulnerability assessment (DRVA) systems and structures in the relevant tiers of governance. Experiences show that investments by the IFI in some cases led to development induced disasters in South Asia.
2. **Decentralized Disaster Risk Management (DDRM)** -- The geo-topographical diversity of South Asian countries, strongly demands that disaster management systems and structures should be devolved at the lowest tiers of the governance. The enthusiastic progress on community participation driven by national bodies,

governments, INGOs showed low emphasis on local government's role. Local governments should be strengthened and provided with greater financial autonomy and planning space to deal with micro level disasters which are downplayed or overlooked in the macro management regimes. Through decentralized disaster risk management, local municipalities, line departments, front managers and local communities can better be engaged in disaster risk reduction and management. By serving the principle of subsidiarity, this mechanism would also provide an entry point to build the capacity of first responders not only to respond to the disasters but reduce the risk of disaster through better land-use planning, implementing building codes and better spatial planning at local level.

Similarly, local NGOs get wakened as a result of interventions of INGOs and large national NGOs in post disaster situations. There is need to pay attention to the affect this has on the principle of subsidiary and find ways to build on local strengths, and capacitating local NGOS for risk reduction at local level,

3. **Accountability of Disaster Aid** – In the recent mega disasters in South Asia – Indian Ocean tsunami and earthquake in Himalayan range – it has been realized that citizenry of the world responded to these disaster in an impressive way. Most of this money mobilized for the relief, recovery and rehabilitation of disaster-hit communities was routed through INGOs and NGOs. In various observation reports of Duryog Nivaran, it was indicated that there are poor or no mechanisms of the accountability of disaster aid, particularly in the international development community as well as in public sector spending. Many examples of inappropriate interventions, ill-informed rehabilitation choices and misappropriation in disaster response planning were reported in local media. For example, earthquake-hit communities, particularly in Kashmir and North Western Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan, recently had to opt for public protests against the well-intended organizations dedicated to humanitarian assistance. It happened so, because there were no grievance redressing mechanisms in place, where local communities could register their concerns on the interventions undertaken by the INGOs.

Given the ethical dimension attached to disaster aid, Duryog Nivaran, demands for an early debate to develop an accountability mechanism of financing related to disaster and development.

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