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United Nations  
International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

**“BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR  
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION  
AND NATURAL HAZARD RISK  
MANAGEMENT IN THE MIDDLE  
EAST AND NORTH AFRICA”**

**Regional workshop, Cairo, 18-21 April 2007**

ISDR/GP/2007/Inf.10

Session documents are available on the Global Platform website

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**Report of Regional Workshop on  
Building Partnerships for Disaster Risk Reduction and Natural Hazard Risk Management  
in the Middle East and North Africa  
Cairo, 18-21 April 2008**

**Co-organized by:  
United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the World Bank**

### **Workshop Objectives**

The Workshop “Building Partnership for Disaster Risk Reduction and Natural Hazard Risk Management in the Middle East and North Africa” was held in Cairo from 18 to 21 April 2007. The Workshop was generously hosted by the Government of Egypt and organised jointly by the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the World Bank (WB).

This activity, the first in a proposed series of activities in the region, has been undertaken in the context of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities (HFA) and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR).

The workshop had a number of intentions as a preliminary activity to encourage and support work in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

The Workshop's objectives included:

- **launching a longer-term regional partnership** to promote an integrated approach to disaster risk reduction (DRR), including natural hazard risk management, prevention, mitigation, preparedness and effective recovery policies and measures;
- **providing an initial opportunity** to share, analyse and reflect on disaster management practices in the region and to discuss the scope for a shift towards strengthened natural disaster risk reduction;
- **identifying strengths and gaps** in long-term and effective disaster risk reduction at national and regional levels; and
- **exploring opportunities and potentials** for strengthening regional cooperation on disaster risk reduction and hazards risk management.
- **identifying trends in hazard exposure** and disaster risk in the region were identified
- **considering national institutional arrangements** and disaster risk reduction
- **discuss issues and priorities for capacity development** within the MENA region and in conjunction with partners

### **General issues for the Middle East and North Africa raised during the Workshop**

The participants of the Cairo Workshop (including governments, regional and international organizations, and experts) highlighted a series of important disaster risk reduction themes for the region and these are described below.

Their importance of these issues is that they were mentioned frequently, referred to Disaster risk reduction holistically rather than to particular sectors, activities or geographic areas.

- **Raise the profile of Disaster Risk Reduction:** It is important to increase the visibility of disaster risk reduction amongst policy makers and budget-holding agencies within the government;
- **Embed Disaster Risk Reduction in institutional arrangements:** institutional capacity varies considerably across the MENA region and there is a need for all agencies, and not just focal points or disaster management agencies, to embed disaster risk reduction in institutional arrangements making it part of their core business and informing all other practice, including agency mandates and programmes;

- **Strengthen collaboration:**
  - stronger partnerships need to be established in priority areas including: the development of research and databases for recording hazards, risks and related losses in MENA (including human, economic, social, infrastructure, environmental, population growth, urbanization);
  - developing new and sharing existing research on disaster reduction in the MENA region;
  - sharing knowledge, skills and expertise between countries and creating a register of such resources;
  - building and sharing a regional experience on public awareness and education in relation to disaster risk reduction; and
  - enhancing participatory approaches to disaster risk reduction.
- **Increase and strengthen national and agency coordination:**
  - between neighbouring countries on issues of Hazard Risk Management, this may include mutual aid in the event of a major event and sharing skills and knowledge and resources;
  - between development agencies, NGOs and civil society
- **Increase financial sustainability and budgetary support** provided to government agencies and institutions charged with responsibilities in disaster risk reduction;
- **Better understand disaster risk**, the causes of risk, including
  - Explore links between disaster risk reduction, development and environmental degradation with a view to developing integrated policies and management strategies
  - Investigate climate change implications for risks and development in the MENA region;
  - Identify and assess ‘hotspots’ within the MENA region and appropriate strategies for reducing their risk exposure
- **Identify existing or develop financial instruments** for disaster risk reduction;
- **Identify obstacles** to disaster risk reduction in the MENA region and develop strategies to overcome these obstacles, including:
  - technological options (including alternative technologies) for reducing the risk of MENA populations.

**Recommendations of the  
Middle East and North Africa Regional Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction  
and Natural Hazard Risk Management  
Cairo, 18-21 April 2007**

The participants at the first Middle East and North Africa Regional Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction and Natural Hazard Risk Management in Cairo from 18 to 21 April 2007, expressing their gratitude to the Government of Arab Republic of Egypt for hosting the workshop and to the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the World Bank for co-organizing this event, after three days of deliberations on disaster risk reduction and hazard risk management in the region, wish to make the following recommendations:

1. Encourage the governments of the region to reinforce disaster risk reduction at national level, and implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action through various measures and means such as adoption or reinforcement of appropriate policies, rules and regulations, and implementation mechanisms,
2. Encourage the governments of the region to establish or strengthen National Platforms for Disaster Risk Reduction,
3. Encourage the governments of the region to exchange information, knowledge and experience on disaster risk reduction and hazard risk management through appropriate mechanisms such as conducting joint regional training courses and sharing lessons learned,

4. To develop programmes for education and public awareness raising on disaster risk reduction at national and community levels,
5. To embed disaster risk reduction in institutional development and arrangements at national level and promote participation of civil society including non-governmental organization, private sector and community based institutions.
6. Encourage development of national capacities on disaster risk reduction by various means such as use of modern technology and securing stronger financial instruments.
7. To strengthen and support national, regional and international cooperation on disaster risk reduction in a multi stakeholder approach, and promote closer cooperation with regional organizations such as the League of Arab States,
8. To develop a regional platform on disaster risk reduction to promote and facilitate cross border collaboration and exchange of capacities on disaster risk reduction in a multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach.
9. To create a network of experts on disaster risk reduction in the region and institutionalize regional cooperation among various stakeholders at regional level.
10. To develop a regional data base on disaster risk reduction to serve various purposes such as producing regional risk report,
11. To develop a specific disaster risk reduction network for the Middle East and North Africa region including mapping of risks, needs, and capacities at national level,
12. Encourage more support to disaster management disaster risk reduction capacities in Palestine and Iraq.
13. Request the UN/ISDR and the World Bank to provide their technical and financial support to develop national and regional capacities on disaster risk reduction through various means including the UN/ISDR Regional Office for West Asia and North Africa.

Cairo, 21 April 2007

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To access all documents on the Cairo Workshop, please visit the following webpage:

<http://www.unisdr.org/eng/wana/wana.htm>

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