

After Action Review
Second Session
Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction 2009



International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

Global Platform Team

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After Action Review
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1. Introduction

From all accounts the Second Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction was a success and met the majority of expectations. Participants found that the second session provided a coherent programme, good organization and conference facilities, wide stakeholder representation, an effective communications strategy, an Informal Plenary that won praise for its support of open dialogue around issues of importance for the up-coming midterm review of the HFA¹ and, recognition of the Global Platform as a major international meeting with increasing impact at the national and local level. These findings are drawn from an after meeting survey, attendance review, analysis of ALL official statements² and, currently, an After-Action Review which looks closely at the organization and management of the Platform and for which this summary of coordination lessons is part. The Review includes lessons and recommendations for future planning, budget, staffing, venue, logistics, registration and security, travel support as well as participation, partners, volunteers and task distribution among UNISDR colleagues.

2. Issues of particular concern drawn from Official Statements

2.1 An analysis of Official Statements confirms that the Global Platform is viewed as an important forum for sharing of experiences, cross-fertilization, lessons learned, stock-taking of progress and challenges including North-South and South-South exchanges. Equally, participants fully endorsed the focus on disaster risk reduction in a changing climate and look for the revision of indicator metrics to incorporate climate change adaptation characteristics ahead of the Global Platform in 2011. They see Copenhagen as the window of opportunity to drive home the link between disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation/mitigation. Comparing first and second sessions, it was evident that disaster risk is now clearly identified as the problem of national governments and the need to mainstream disaster risk reduction is not simply a concept but an imperative.

2.2 At the same time, a number of participants pointed out that more needs to be done around collaborative action at the regional level. Others want recognition of the rights of at-risk women and children, who are agents of change, to engage in planning and decision-making processes linked to

¹ Key legend: DRR – disaster risk reduction; HFA – Hyogo Framework for Action 2005 -2015: ‘Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters’, GP – Second Session, Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2009, GAR – *Global Assessment Report: Risk and Poverty in a Changing Climate*

² A survey was handed out on the final day of the Global Platform and is online at www.preventionweb.int Seventy-nine (79%) of those surveyed responded that the Second Session either met or exceeded their expectations. On organization, 89% acknowledged that the organization was good and 69% that it was excellent. As for facilities, ninety-five percent rated the conference facilities as good and 63% said they were excellent. When respondents were asked which aspect they liked best about the conference, the most frequently mentioned were high level panels, special/side events, marketplace and networking.

Attendance, like product use, is one indicator of success. The final count of participants was 1688 which included all those registered plus those who attended from Permanent Missions and UN agencies (additional to their registered colleagues) who entered on the strength of their UN badge. The breakdown was: governments – 150; UN and IOs – 44; Regional/Inter-governmental organizations – 22; civil society – 68. UNISDR has analyzed the official statements from governments, regional, UN, scientific and technical and civil society partners with a view to assessing the key issues and interests of partners. The findings of this analysis inform this lessons learnt exercise.

direct action, especially public structures. Still others looked to national platforms as a case that still needs building, while taking into account parallel national mechanisms. Several voices underlined the need for a legal framework for international cooperation on disaster risk reduction. Still others saw this as subsumed under the need for the UN to ‘act as one.’

2.3 Top among issues of major consideration for the Mid-term Review was recognition that the Review is an important opportunity for stock-taking of HFA implementation not as simply a process but as a process that leads to commitment among partners. This was followed up by calls for binding standards on disaster risk reduction including: the setting of specific, time-bound targets with clear responsibilities and delegated authority at the national level closely connected to a global financing mechanism with a focus on developing countries. The central importance of community level engagement in support of HFA implementation strategies was underlined and connected to the call for decentralization of authority and resources to appropriate administrative levels.

2.4 Most importantly, UNISDR’s leadership in coordinating the engagement of stakeholders was viewed as critical to forward movement on these issues. Global Platform 2011 is an important element in future planning. A significant challenge facing UNISDR post-Global Platform 2009 relates to how best to manage resources and planning to support the third session of the Global Platform for Risk Reduction in the light of 1) raised expectations from the second session 2) the increasing engagement of diverse partners whose interests are *inter alia* drr in a changing climate and, 3) preparations for the Mid-Term Review of the HFA in 2010, the second edition of the GAR and all other important work in HFA monitoring, advocacy, communications, regional and thematic platforms and the joint work programme.

2.5 Driving this process between platforms requires early and sustainable planning and support from ISDR system partners and donors. The intention of the After-Action Review is to ensure that support and planning for the Third Session of the Global Platform 2011 is mainstreamed within UNISDR and among system partners. The implications of mainstreaming are several.

3. Mainstreaming

3.1 As GP is a cross-cutting organizational process, the cost plan for GP11 should be included in the Secretariat’s work plan and budget for the biennium. To this end, all unit biennial work and cost plans should include staff and non-staff costs relating to the Global Platform to cover support for Regional Platforms, GP planning meetings, invitation and travel support for regional participants and etc. Regions should include associated costs for taking on GP-related responsibilities in their cost planning

3.2 UNISDR regional offices should be involved in all aspects of the GP from inception through rollout. Most specifically, decisions in relation to participation, speakers, pre-session and special events, regional meetings, bi-laterals, travel and visas, require expertise that is best carried out by regional colleagues in their various domains..

3.3 Relative to ensuring that the GP is a process and not an event means ensuring effective organization and processes between platforms. One way could be the identification of a GP Focal Point within the Secretariat.³ A potential home might be the Communications Unit with additional resources for a public information liaison officer among whose major tasks, based on agreed follow-up actions, from the Chair’s Summary and Proceedings Report, would be to build partner relations, themes, lead on a GP communications plan as well as on bringing the private sector to the GP. A year

³ A GP Focal Point is an officer residing in UNISDR, preferably in the Communications Unit as a Public Information Liaison Officer. whose job it would be to prepare and implement a communications plan for GP 2011 and maintain consistent messaging on GP-related issues and events between Platforms.

before the GP, the post-holder would, with an event coordination company (out-sourced), lead the organization of all GP communications including lead up meetings and talking points, speeches, communications planning and work closely with other units on the publishing of documents and the rollout of the programme. Or, if the decision is taken to continue to manage the GP in-house, then the GP Focal Point would play a communications role within the GP team described under Staffing 24. There may also be merit to considering a GP unit, like for the GAR, which could serve as a conference services unit for all of UNISDR but whose main responsibility would be to keep planning sustained in-between platforms. Where such a unit would sit and work in the current set-up is not clear but most probably it should be attached to Partnerships.

3.4 Administration of the platform within the existing system should be considered in the light of how best to manage the Third and subsequent Platforms. From experience, it is clear that continuing with internal (UNISDR) management of the next Global Platform will require human resources additional to what exists including the abovementioned addition of a public information liaison officer. Logistics and administration resources will need boosting. IMU will require additional assistance for information related activities before and during the platform, and a coordinator and deputy-coordinator are also advised.

3.5 As the cornerstones of policy and practice, an integrated approach to planning and development of the GAR and Global Platform would be well supported by an integrated communications strategy. In the light of its strong, target-oriented message potential, the GAR gives the GP the hook it needs to attract media attention. The GP without the GAR is like “an orange without sunshine”.

4. Partners

4.1 Partners at all levels need to feel included from the outset of planning for the GP. A stream-lined communications plan is needed to ensure that partners are engaged in ways consistent with harnessing their strengths to GP outcomes.

4.2 The MOB, UNISDR Support Group and GP Advisory group all made contributions to Global Platform 2009. But the support was mostly passive albeit for select contributions. The Support Group especially should be early engaged to take up the challenge of the next GP which will be by all counts bigger and involve new stakeholders at all levels. The Inter-Agency Group (IAG) has a key role to play in ensuring engagement as does the MOB. Activities focused on the engagement of partners for planning GP 2011 should be included in all unit and regional work plans⁴.

4.3 How best to engage donors NOW requires some reflection and prediction regarding focus/theme(s) for GP2011; clearly the GAR’s upcoming research agenda will offer some ideas as will the various forums meeting around subject of climate change adaptation where drr is increasingly viewed as a major tool in the climate change adaptation tool box. Convergence of donor interest with political and financial commitments for measurable change (practical ways to ensure that governments include drr initiatives with climate change adaptation in their fiscal planning) is the way forward backed up by empirical evidence of cost benefits hopefully supplied by the upcoming economic study⁵, and the benefits of managing risk using drr tools from the IPCC study. The mid-term review in 2010 will provide ground-proofing for themes going forward to GP2011.

⁴ Consider identifying and winning a GP Champion, like Bill Clinton, who would figure in press releases, appear at the General Assembly and bring in the private sector.

⁵ The study is not an end in itself but the impetus for drr research and projects globally.

5. Budget estimate for 2011

5.1 Budget estimate

Currently, staff support is the main driver behind the successful rollout of the Global Platform. Planning for the next one starts as soon as the last Platform ends. The budget estimate below reflects a disaggregation of staff time over fifteen months in support of planning for the Global Platform.

Travel aid provides an opportunity for drr partners to express their views, share lessons and create valuable links at the Global Platform. Without this aid, the majority would not be able to attend the event. The total number of participants who received financial aid in 2009 numbered 165. The planning estimate for 2011 is 175 (to be further discussed and refined with partners).

Budget Estimate for Third Session, Global Platform, 2011		USD 2'623.584
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6. Check List

A check list of recommended actions for supporting the next Global Platform has been developed following meetings and interviews with UNISDR colleagues and partners. The list which follows below underlines the need for early, coordinated and coherent planning, learning from past lessons, and the importance of archiving files and 'how to' documents in the interests of smooth planning and roll out next time around.

Global Platform 2011: Provisional Key Organizational Milestones		
Timeframe	Milestones	Comments
2010		
1st week of May	Ensure participation of SG to the opening of the Global Platform	Invitation letter send to SG's office to obtain first positive indication of attendance.
2nd week May	Launch Global Platform 2011 website.	Completed. The website will be kept up-to date with all official announcements and news. A secure portal would be available to help partner organizations and UNISDR in the regions and Geneva organize ourselves for the session.
1st week June	Map main processes and inputs to the Global Platform.	An on-going effort by Geneva and the regions will be needed to ensure regional platform and other processes are geared to channel inputs into the Global Platform.
2nd week of June	Draft concept note shared with key partners for comment.	Issues covered: Theme(s); time schedule for the week. Partners include IAG, the Chair of the Support Group and selected others.
4th week June	Revised concept note cleared by USG.	
On-going	Use ISDR Inter-Agency Group (IAG) as agency sounding board for preparations.	Send first update to "IAG"
1st week July	Note on status of preparations sent to MOB prior to meeting.	

10 July	Note on status of preparations reviewed at MOB meeting.	The issue of the Global Platform meeting is not on MOB's agenda but, taking into account the timing, it would be timely to share a note on preparations with MOB.
2nd week July	Disseminate preliminary announcement.	The preliminary announcement would be sent to all governments, agencies and organizations which participated in the 2007 Global Platform.
3rd week July	Identify core secretariat team to manage the preparations including new coordinator to take over from RGM.	The new coordinator needs to be in place as soon as possible, but no later than November so that he/she can become fully involved and ready to lead the process from January when preparation "heats up."
July - September	Identify partners (agency, government, NGO etc.) to lead particular aspects of the session (eg workshops).	This process has already started and will continue through the early Fall.
July - September	Special invited high level participants identified and contacted.	
8 September	Support Group briefed on preparations. Informal working group of Member States convened to act as sounding board on preparations.	The informal working group would involve interested participants from the ISDR Support Group.
October (date tbd)	MOB reviews the status of the preparations and the Formal Announcement and provides their advice and commitment.	Preparations should be well along at this point. IAG would have been fully involved so there should be no surprises at MOB.
October - November	Keep Member States informed about the progress.	Through Support Group, briefings in NY during time of ISDR resolutions discussions and bilateral briefings.
3rd week November	Issue Formal Announcement (including agenda and timetable for the week) following MOB approval.	The Formal Announcement will be sent to all governments, agencies and organizations which participated in the 2007 Global Platform using a corrected / adjusted list since the issuance of the Preliminary Announcement.
4th week November	New Coordinator for the Global Platform takes over from RGM.	It would be best if the hand-over could take place from September or as early as possible.
11 December	Brief ISDR Support Group on Global Platform preparations.	
2nd week December	Fund raising for variable costs.	E.g. funding travel of developing country delegations.
2011		
2nd week January	Issue Formal Invitation from USG to Permanent Missions in Geneva / head of invited organizations.	Parallel communications will be sent to established list of government and organization contacts including national platforms, HFA focal points, working level contacts in organizations etc.
4th week January	Finalize budget available to support developing country delegates.	
January - March	Follow-up on the invitations to ensure that they get to the right	This is particularly important for governments, since we would like to have strong delegations

	hands.	which reflect, if possible, a “virtual national platform”. Follow-up will be a key responsibility of UN/ISDR regional offices.
3rd week February	All major organizational and logistical issues in place and under contract as required.	This includes CICG logistical support (offices, materials etc.), interpretation, editing, translation, printing, reporting, web broadcasting, hotel rooms, social events etc.
1st week March	All major partner contributions on track.	This includes workshop and side event organization.
2nd week March	Session and background documents ready in original language.	
2nd week April	Identify developing county participants who will be funded by UN/ISDR.	Processing of travel authorizations for participants funded by UN/ISDR by the administration needs to begin before the end of April.
4th week April	Make session documents available to delegations (most in E, F & S)	
11 – 17 July	Global Platform session at CICG in Geneva.	The third session would take place 11 – 17 July. Two days before will be used for preparatory meetings and setup.

7. Registration

7.1 Registration Guide

An authorized guide to registration containing clear guidance as to who can attend and under what conditions should be posted on Prevention Web immediately following the issuance of the Second Announcement mid-December of 2010

8. Plenary Management

8.1 HFA Recommendations and Coordination Role of UNISDR

- Visibility in plenary is required for recommendations from the HFA monitor and reporting process. It is important to highlight the coordination role of UNISDR and system partners at a country level to highlight priorities and accomplishments of the ISDR system mechanisms as part of programming and monitoring.
- Links between GAR and HFA should be clearly highlighted. More discussion in the plenary and in the Informal Plenary should be dedicated to the subject of linkages, their implications and how best to utilize to accelerate HFA implementation. There is a need for cross-sectoral sharing of lessons and practices in this regard.
- Children should contribute again with their personal experiences in DRR.
- In order to profit from the multi-stakeholder nature of the Global Platform, we should identify and invite more speakers from other stakeholder groups (local leaders, climate change gurus, and private sector lights).

8.2 Closing ceremony

- The Closing Ceremony should be used to launch initiatives agreed upon during the GP and led, if possible, by a government who has formed a coalition around a particularly important issue as did Columbia in the Second Session. For the closing ceremony, the Chair's summary should be available in French and Spanish.

9. Special Events (SE)

- A decision is required as to whether or not SEs should run parallel to plenary sessions. Several participants complained about the dilemma created by parallel SEs and the conflict posed with other events, especially regional events. Morning sessions were very much appreciated and should be kept for next GP. A good reason to keep SEs is that they serve as opportunities for partners to discuss technical issues that are not necessarily discussed during the plenary.

10. Round Tables (RT)

- Topics: Should be agreed earlier in the preparation process and linked to clear objectives and functional modalities of the GP overall (Are they technical, policy or consultative? How are they different from the HLP or side events?). Invitations sent out for the RT should provide guidance regarding preparation of topics and objectives to attain within these discussions.

11. Select Logistics

- If held in Geneva, additional funds will be required to cover coffee breaks, receptions, bilateral meetings of USG and ASG, and other events (croissants and coffee for SE morning meetings).
- The venue needs to be reserved two years in advance. It may be more in the case of CICG as they are not available in 2011 for our preferred dates.

12. Travel for Funded Participants

12.1 STEPS

- Review all applicants against set criteria and verify if participants (FP, NP experts, Government delegates, NGOs, foundations or even private sector candidates) are eligible for funding.
- A final list of approved for funding participants is needed before travel processing can begin. That list should come with an authorization dully signed and approved by the Deputy Director or her delegate.

13. Visas

- Schengen Constraints: Switzerland is now part of Schengen visa system countries, thus it takes longer to obtain a visa than before.
- Health Insurance: Bear in mind that the required overseas health insurance must cover the entire Schengen area and not just Switzerland.
- Countries lacking Swiss Diplomatic Representation: In Guinea and Central Africa a special request must be sent to the French consul of the country if possible to ensure that a French

Schengen Visa is issued. This is valid for Geneva Airport as the participant can check out through the French section. The same may also apply for the PACIFIC islands which do not have a Swiss consul.

14. Web Presence and Technical Assistance

14.1 Market Place, Prevention Web Booth, Survey and Document Distribution

- Most of the Market Place vendors said they gave away 200-300 docs/brochures (views from the frontline – 300) -- a good indicator of participant interest.
- Survey – for next time develop a shorter, more precise survey that is more easily assessed/analyzed. Although time consuming, having the survey filled out by as many participants as possible at the Closing is important to immediately supporting our analysis of lessons regarding participant preference to the Support Group and others.
- Better pre-planning of which documents, in which languages are to be made available is required. The document desk requires strong arms to assist in the movement of documents from storage. A follow-up assessment of distribution numbers and impact is required to assess the value of continuing to distribute documents at the GP.

15. Communications

- Information: People were daily informed in Geneva and elsewhere about what was going on in the GP. Communication partners were mobilized. Website coverage was excellent with some duplication between UNISDR and Prevention Web that will require better controls next time. What was missing was journalists ‘in situ’ which we strongly urge Communications Unit to budget for in 2011.
- Regional Media Engagement: In order to create a regional network of journalists who will be motivated to cover the next GP, we need to engage more regional media in DRR activities before the GP
- Lack of Hard News: The main difficulty we faced was that there was insufficient hard news to feed the press. Visual elements were good at the venue, on IISD and Prevention Web. In order to attract more media, we need a hook. Next time we need to consider having either a celebrity or the launch of the GAR, or a new statistics announcement at the GP. To attract greater media coverage, it would also be helpful for us to be able to share with the Press clear targets and identified outcomes.
- Timing of the GP: The timing of the GP was not the best since it clashed with other conferences. Next time it would be good to try to manage dates for better media coverage of the GP11. Overall, GP09 achieved a reasonable level of media visibility and coverage over a quite competitive week.
- Publishing requires commitment to timeframes by all staff if the event programme and related publications are to be drafted, cleared, translated, published and printed in a timely manner. Timelines for GP09 provide good guidance.

16. Reporting and Chair's Summary

- The Chair's Summary should be available in at least three UN languages (Eng, FR, SP)
- There was strong commitment in getting the right document, to the right place at the right time. Reporting was standardized and reporters were requested to bring their reports to the UNISDR Secretariat as soon as possible following events.

17. Informal Plenary

- The Informal Plenary, by all accounts, provided a forum for fruitful communication super-charged discussions. Partners commented on its usefulness most importantly as an open forum with no evident hierarchy and plenty of opportunity to offer statements, opinions and ask questions. Repeat for next GP.

18. STAFFING for Global Platform

As mentioned above, staffing continuity for GP organization between Platforms is essential as is proactive recruitment of the GP team well in advance of the event.

- It may be worth considering outsourcing the GP, an option mentioned above. ILO uses an event planning firm and they may be able to offer some information as to costs. The downside of this option is that UNISDR will still need to provide substantive guidance and to produce the substantive documentation. Another option is to consider a permanent GP unit and a third is to manage the process internally as in the past. The staffing for this option with timelines is provided below. The value of the permanent unit would be that it would provide a conference service-type support which could be useful for UNISDR Secretariat.
- Another related consideration is the view of some of the need to hire a team of 10-15 people specifically for GP assistance, so that staff can fully participate in the GP with no constraint. Staff from the regions should not be brought specifically to cover for so many tasks that at the end they cannot participate in the GP. Interns could usefully provide assistance here but will require clear guidance.
- For the next GP, the communications team will need at least 3 additional staff. If publication continues in-house then an additional designer is required at least 3 months in advance. In addition, a speech writer may also be required who could also include speeches to support the GAR at least 3 – 4 months in advance.

18.1 Global Platform Team (Short term or contractor status) and suggested recruitment dates:

- P5 Coordinator – June 2010
- P4 Deputy-Coordinator, back-up to Coordinator, responsible for underpinning organization of regional and national platforms, Inter-Agency and Support Group liaison and planning; and oversight on invitations, volunteer coordination and official statements – June 2010
- P3 (with Communications Unit), Public Information Liaison Officer, to support communications plan for GP. --- As soon as possible
- P3 Organizing Pre-session, special events, reporting from events, Volunteers --- October 2010
- P3 VIP and high level focal point, receptions, luncheon, Registration – December 2010
- P2 Registration, Travel – 6 months in advance – December 2010
- P2 Administrative Assistant – to support Coordinator and Deputy, December 2010

- G6 logistics including budgetary oversight, all arrangements at venue including devis – October 2010
- Secretary – Focal point for maintaining excel on all invitations, working closely with Registration -- October 2010

18.2 IMU staff/time ratios as an example of mainstreaming

IMU has estimated staff time and consultant the total time in person months devoted to the project management, design, development, implementation of and training on applications and processes directly supporting the 2009 Global Platform including: GP delegation and focal point management, website, intranet and content management in addition to Market Place oversight and staffing.

- The total investment was over 21 person-months. Systems development started in July 2008, and follow up included 2 person-months of work after the conference. Main tasks included the development of a focal point management for ISDR system partners (necessary for invitations), and the registration and delegation management system with its related reports and dashboard. (60% of effort) The website and content management system for uploading of conference outputs took 40% of the effort.
- These estimates do not include ongoing regular work tied to 2009 Global Platform indicators, e.g. all HFA reports published promoted by country and HFA indicator by GP2009. The narrative below describes how support to the GP is aggregated.
- A core function of the Information Management Unit (IMU) is to support the internal UNISDR secretariat and external ISDR System processes such as the Global Platform. On average, we estimate spending 65% of our total staff time to maintenance of core information products and projects. Among them are many that directly support the Global Platform including: Contact Directory, HFA Monitor, workspaces and listserv, Prevention Web content management (country/region and Hyogo Framework sections explicitly); training of and support to staff in using internal applications. In the first half of 2009, all activities were prioritized by indicator of support to the 2009 Global Platform.

Global Platform Team 2009
September 2009