



## **02** Implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action in Asia and Pacific



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### **Executive Summary**

#### **Objective:**

1. The main objective of this report is to provide a synthesized overview of some of the main achievements, challenges and issues in implementing the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA) in the Asia/ Pacific region from 2007-2009 as identified by national and regional actors.
2. The monitoring of progress serves the following main objectives:
  - Identifying existing problems/ gaps and increasing their recognition and importance on the political agenda
  - Promoting solutions through new or strengthened policies, programs, plans, capacities and resources
  - Ensuring a joint prioritization of risk reduction and recovery actions, as identified at the national, regional and global levels
  - The regional synthesis report covers the period June 2007 –April 2009 within the second biennial HFA reporting cycle. An early draft of this report was presented at the Third Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Kuala Lumpur, 2-4 December 2008.

#### **Methodology:**

3. The regional synthesis report uses the HFA, its three overall goals and five priority areas as the main frame of analysis. The structure of the report reflects the subsections and indicators of the UN/ISDR online Monitoring Tool enriched by the Regional HFA Progress Review Framework for Asia and Pacific 2008/2009. The Report *“DRR in Asia and Pacific: Overview at the Start of the HFA Implementation Decade and Progress Made 2005 – 2007”* provides an overall context for this information.
4. All reporting countries have evaluated their progress against five levels (1-5) which have been developed by UNISDR for the HFA Monitor. These are applied to all five HFA Priorities and facilitate a self-assessment of the extent to which policies, programs and

initiatives have gained momentum in facilitating risk reduction on a sustainable basis. The levels of progress are:

- a. Minor progress with few signs of forward action in plans or policy.
  - b. Some progress but without systematic policy and/or institutional commitment.
  - c. Institutional commitment attained but achievements are neither comprehensive nor substantial.
  - d. Substantial achievement attained but with recognized limitations in capacities and resources.
  - e. Comprehensive achievement with sustained commitment and capacities at all levels.
5. The report is based on a review of reports provided by 3 regional and 17 national actors via the HFA Monitor tool, which is coordinated by UNISDR and hosted online at PreventionWeb. Regional organizations and initiatives that provided information are: the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). National reports originate from the following countries: Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Hong Kong China, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Lao's Peoples Democratic Republic, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Marshall Islands, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Yemen. Pakistan, Cambodia, Viet Nam, Singapore and Tajikistan also finalized national reports however these became available at a later date in 2009 and could not be considered for this report. 10 more countries prepared reports in draft form and agreed to finalize them at a later date.
6. Additional information on risk profiles and progress on DRR and HFA emanating from national and regional disaster risk reduction agencies as well as research institutions and multi-lateral and bilateral agencies has been taken into account.
7. While referring to selected country examples for the purpose of illustration, this report seeks to identify common themes and challenges across the Asia and Pacific region. Against a backdrop of limited national reporting these issues are, however, indicative rather than comprehensive<sup>1</sup>. Insights into progress made on key 'cross-cutting' issues, such as gender equity, social justice and governance, are highlighted where significant information has been provided in national or other reports. A number of key issues and important initiatives are highlighted in 10 additional text-boxes.

## Findings:

8. The report finds that there are "**pockets**" of progress that are concentrated within the first three priority areas of the HFA. These are: priority area one and here in particular the policy and legal framework for DRR; priority area two with substantial progress in Early Warning, and priority area three where work on disaster management information systems figures prominently.

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to acknowledge that countries that responded to the on-line monitoring tool represent a sub-group of countries with above average interest, higher capacity in risk reduction and/ or access to technical assistance in preparing the national HFA progress reports.

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9. Altogether five countries revised or established new bills and acts on risk reduction in 2007/08. Similarly nine new policies or strategic plans were drafted in 2007/08. Maybe most importantly the policy frameworks and plans that were created 2005/06 in three reporting countries are in the process of implementation with a number of accomplishments in 2007/08. However not all national plans are well synchronized with national policy, or sufficiently coordinated among the different stakeholders. Together with a lack of institutional and human capacity as well as financial resources this results in slow implementation.
  10. A recent mapping exercise on Tsunami Early Warning Systems (TEWS) in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia published by UNESCAP finds considerable progress with *governance and institutional arrangements* and *monitoring and warning* both at international and national levels. Though important advances have been made in some countries (Indonesia reports substantial achievements) *dissemination of early warning* and *community preparedness and response strategies* require further strengthening.
  11. The establishment of disaster information management systems has attracted much attention during the reporting period. Eight countries report concrete initiatives in this area with important achievements in establishing an entirely new system (1), establishing important data-bases for the system (2), making important improvements to existing systems (2) or having initiated the development a new system (2). These national efforts are complemented by sub-regional disaster management information systems: the Pacific Disaster Net and the ASEAN Disaster Information Sharing and Communication Network that have been launched respectively further developed during the reporting period.
  12. However while there are “pockets” of progress there are also **“holes” of stagnation** where very little progress or even activity is reported. Under priority 4 “Reduce the underlying risk factors” only a small group of well-advanced countries report important levels of achievement and continuing progress. While all country reports illustrate a reasonable level of commitment to “mainstream” DRR into development plans and projects, translating hazard and risk information into integrated policies across sectors and undertaking coordinated and concerted action is a challenge. Of particular concern is the slow progress in acting upon the DRR challenges of climate change. Overall low achievements in this area should not come as a surprise since priority 4 signifies the biggest departure from the previous emphasis upon response and depends upon the preceding priorities i.e. solid risk assessments and information management systems, clear risk reduction strategies, strong institutions, awareness of risks and risk reduction options and capacity to implement/enforce and evaluate.
  13. Surprisingly the self-assessment of progress in priority area 5, disaster preparedness and response, an area that most countries have more solid experience of than risk reduction, is not very high. Yet this area scores lower than both HFA priority areas 1 and 3. While institutional and policy development<sup>2</sup> and planning at the national level have been stronger, the areas of financial resources and mechanisms for local level preparedness and risk

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<sup>2</sup> Already highlighted under priority 1.

reduction capacities are lagging behind. Strategies and policies increasingly acknowledge the crucial significance of community preparedness and risk management; however capacities are often not in place to pursue nation-wide implementation. Emergency response and contingency plans currently focus on response and do not cover the key areas of recovery and reconstruction potentially leading to delayed recovery processes where the integration of risk reduction is easily pushed aside.

14. The report analyzes some of the shortcomings of the current HFA reporting practices and format. There seems to be –particularly from a country perspective - too much concern with identifying the absolute levels of achievement rather than tracking progress. Country-level self-assessments tend to be overly positive in some cases, in other cases too self-critical and are not always backed up by quantified or qualified evidence. Furthermore, despite improvements in facilitating country-level reporting through the HFA monitor the work-load caused by HFA reporting is still substantial particularly for countries with lower capacities and/ or larger countries. The report suggests assisting with the formulation of more tangible reporting benchmarks and indicators of progress at national levels. This will avoid or at least minimize the work-load caused by the HFA reporting. Translating and generalizing the information provided in national reports into more general up-dates on progress could then be undertaken at sub-regional levels and constitute an important support function of sub-regional organizations.
15. Reviewing and reporting guidelines need to be further improved to address redundancies in the HFA reporting format. The section “drivers of progress” requires specific guidelines to explain the meaning and relevance of some of the terminology that does not translate well into other languages. To this date it seems that such core concepts as “mainstreaming” and “risk” are interpreted differently in different countries. This shows that emphasis needs to be on translation and adaptation of such concepts to national and local contexts. Revision of guidelines may include specifying roles of non government actors in the reporting process.

## Conclusions

16. The following highlights some key challenges in making progress on the three strategic HFA goals based on observations from national and sub-regional actors and the preceding analysis of their reports.

### **Goal 1: The more effective integration of disaster risk considerations into sustainable development policies, planning and programming at all levels, with a special emphasis on disaster prevention mitigation, preparedness and vulnerability reduction**

17. The shift from disaster preparedness and response to an emphasis on risk reduction and development represents a major departure in many countries of the Asia Pacific region. Translating the HFA into a strategy that fits the conditions in each country and giving it the necessary legislative and political support is not trivial. There has been an impressive range of initiatives to design and enact new DRR policies, plans and legislation and these achievements should not be under-estimated. However policies and plans have only rarely been based upon comprehensive multi-hazard risk assessments and capacity assessments.

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Policies and plans are not backed up by adequate budgets and implementation is often dependent upon external support that tends to be selective. In addition stakeholder buy-in, particularly in line ministries and sectoral departments is not yet strong. Consequently there are so far only few examples of using existing national planning or development mechanisms to “mainstream” risk reduction. Local governments, who are, eventually, the government entities most critical to the progress of risk reduction often have no or little knowledge of the policy changes and/ or lack the instruments and capacity to translate them into local realities and enforce them. Only few countries have undertaken concerted efforts to discuss and consult DRR draft policies and legislation with key stakeholders and critically assess their enforceability. Last but not least resources outside the government are not sufficiently tapped into and cooperation with non-governmental actors is not based upon clear strategies and cooperation agreements.

**Goal 2: The development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms and capacities at all levels in particular at the community level that can systematically contribute to building resilience to hazards**

18. In many countries national efforts have so far focused upon the strengthening of national-level capacities often concentrating on the national “Disaster Management” or “DRR” agency. While this effort sometimes involves the institution and/ or strengthening of local satellite offices more needs to be done to build the capacity of a) local government actors and the community and b) of key sectors. This includes the understanding and commitment that such capacity building is not a one off exercise but an ongoing task that requires dedicated budgets. Furthermore multi-stakeholder platforms with clear tasks need to be created not only at national but also at the sub-national and local levels. Solid systems that would guarantee the dialogue, information exchange and strategic and operational coordination between different administrative levels and across key sectors are yet to emerge. This involves the need for better coordination and dialogue between government agencies and NGOs and CBOs. The effectiveness of public awareness campaigns and formal education programs has suffered from a lack of clear long-term strategies and harmonization of the various objectives pursued by key players. There is need for more targeted, hazard- and sector-specific inputs into curricula and training modules and for the identification and activation of local knowledge. In several countries this includes the requirement to address training of the informal sector, for example, in safe building techniques. With the exception of some community based DRR programs<sup>3</sup> learning about and applying risk reduction measures is too often pursued in separation. Last but not least the role of women in the prevention, mitigation, preparedness and response and recovery is largely ignored and their capacities remain under-utilized.

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<sup>3</sup> Some, because most CBDRR programs tend to focus upon preparedness and response.

### **Goal 3: The systematic incorporation of risk reduction approaches into the design and implementation of emergency preparedness, response and recovery programs in the reconstruction of affected communities**

19. There is as of yet an insufficient linkage between hazard monitoring, risk identification and analysis and disaster preparedness and response including Early Warning. There is a need to design preparedness activities that are informed by both an understanding of risk and local capacities and of local knowledge including social factors that influence the decisions of communities to act upon hazard information and take precautionary measures. Such activities or programs are contingent upon local monitoring and risk management capacity which is still in short supply as national level capacity building efforts are rarely matched by sufficiently supported parallel efforts at local levels. Budgets for local planning and preparedness are highly inadequate in a majority of countries.
20. There is a need to intensify the exploration of alternative financial instruments to relieve address the burdens of response and recovery on communities and governments including micro-finance, micro-insurance and reinsurance options. Contingency plans currently focus on response and do not cover the key areas of recovery and reconstruction leading to delayed and inefficient recovery processes where local actors tend to get side-lined. If not properly considered beforehand and backed up by regulations and standards the integration of risk reduction gets easily pushed aside in the aftermath of a disaster. Business continuity plans for key local government agencies and solid coordination structures for both response and recovery require more attention.

#### **Recommendations:**

21. Analyzing these key gaps in HFA follow up the report concludes that there is need for a **smaller list of prioritized recommendations and more specific and time-bound targets per country**. These can realistically only be generated at the national level. The support given to the creation of National Action Plans at country levels, particularly in low capacity/high risk countries has been a good start but requires substantial follow-up, consolidation and support. Core gaps and limitations that require special attention and more specific interventions at country level are:
  - Adapt risk reduction strategies and agree on national action plans that create a consensus amongst all key stakeholders on an **all of government risk reduction agenda covering national and local levels (HFA priority area 1)**
  - Continue to gradually strengthen **multi-hazard and risk monitoring capability** while emphasizing the creation of integrated, user-friendly information management systems that can inform the design and regular review of national and local risk reduction strategies and initiatives (**HFA Priority Area 2**)
  - Urge governments to create **comprehensive risk reduction programs in the educational sector**<sup>4</sup> through primary, secondary and higher education; address informal

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<sup>4</sup> Possibly as a sub-section of national action plans

education needs; as well as interventions to increase structural resilience of educational buildings (HFA priority Area 3)

- Promote the **systematic integration of DRR and Climate Change Adaptation** in priority countries (HFA priority Area 4)
  - Initiate or accelerate the design of programs and initiatives to **address underlying risk while prioritizing sector(s)** and areas that are at **high risk** and/ or **demonstrate particular interest in risk reduction and cooperation** (HFA priority Area 4)
  - Ensure that **communities are at the centre of all aspects of preparedness, response and recovery strategies and planning** (HFA priority Area 5)
  - Develop **more specific benchmarks and indicators of progress at national levels** against national targets and **strengthen national and sub-regional monitoring and reporting capacity**
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